

STATEMENT of POLICY and PROCEDURE			
Policy Name:	COVID-19 and Events Continuity	Approved:	Jan 26, 2024
Policy Type:	Governance	Effective:	Jan 26, 2024
Scope:	Board of Directors, Secretariat, all HTAi in-person event attendees	Next Review:	June 2024
Issued to:	HTAi Board Manual, Annual Meeting Manual, All Policy Forums Manual, Employee Handbook	Responsibility for review:	Executive Director

1 POLICY

- 1.01 HTAi is committed to providing attendees at all Society events with the best possible health practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, HTAi will ensure that basic steps are taken to reduce the risk to event attendees from this communicable disease.
- 1.02 The COVID-19 pandemic is continually changing as are public health guidelines. HTAi will consider the possibility of additional restrictions and be prepared to amend this policy accordingly. HTAi will ensure that all attendees, including speakers, are aware of any newly required or recommended public health actions/measures in effect at the location of their event.
- 1.03 HTAi supports vaccination as protection against the spread of COVID. All participants at our events are, therefore, expected to comply with the rules regarding vaccination and testing (and additional measures as and if required) in place at the location of HTAi events.
- 1.04 All event attendees are required to monitor their health prior to attendance and are asked NOT to attend the event if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and/or are feeling unwell.
- 1.05 HTAi will take no responsibility and will not reimburse attendees for any COVID-19 test (rapid, PCR or antigen) associated with attendee travel and event registration fees to an HTAi event, any insurance purchase, any expenses incurred as a result of mandatory quarantine or isolation.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.01 The purpose of this Policy is to provide direction to HTAi event attendees in preparing for and attending an event during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3 SCOPE

- 3.01 This Policy applies to the Board of Directors, Secretariat staff, and all event attendees.
- 3.02 All procedures will conform to the regulations, laws, and orders regarding COVID-19 as set by national health authorities and various levels of government. HTAi will provide event attendees and employees with the best information possible and adopt prudent public health care and emergency response practices.

4 RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.01 It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to review this policy every 6 months or as needed.
- 4.02 It is the responsibility of HTAi event attendees to adhere to this policy and follow the direction of the Event Team.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.01 “**COVID-19**” means a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- 5.02 “**Quarantine**” means (i) in respect of persons, the limitation of freedom of movement and contact with other persons, and (ii) in respect of premises, the prohibition against or the limitation on entering or leaving the premises, during the incubation period of COVID-19 disease in respect of which the quarantine is imposed.
- 5.03 “**Self-isolation or isolation**” means the separation of a person infected with a COVID-19 disease from other persons in a place and under conditions that will prevent the direct or indirect conveyance of the infectious agent from the infected person to a susceptible person.

6 REFERENCES and RELATED STATEMENTS of POLICY and PROCEDURE

[Public Health Act \(Alberta\)](#)
[Communicable Disease Regulation \(Alberta\)](#)
[Emergency Management Act \(EMA\) \(Alberta\)](#)
[Health Information Act \(Alberta\)](#)
[Personal Information Protection Act \(Alberta\)](#)
[Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations \(Alberta\)](#)
[Occupational Health and Safety Code \(Alberta\)](#)
[Human Rights Act \(Alberta\)](#)
[Employment Standards Code \(Alberta\)](#)
[Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\) \(Canada\)](#)
[Emergencies Act \(Canada\)](#)
Any other regulations in the host country specifically relating to COVID-19

7 PROCEDURES

7.01 COVID-19 Control Measures

- (a) HTAi will take several steps to minimize, to the extent practicable, exposure to COVID-19 at in-person events, which is an ideal site for contagion because of attendees’ close proximity to one another. In particular, all event attendees are expected to conform with the rules regarding COVID-19 in the host country where the event is taking place.
- (b) In addition to point (a), HTAi has in place the following hierarchy of controls:
 - (i) **Elimination or substitution:** Involves removing the risk of exposure entirely from the in-person event. This could involve postponing, reorganizing, or planning work in such a way that attendees are not exposed to any risk.

- (ii) **Infection control practices:** If mandated by national, state, or local guidelines in effect during the dates of any meeting, HTAi will require masks to be worn indoors regardless of vaccination status. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available to attendees throughout the event. Social distancing measures will be considered based on attendance and meeting room size.
- (iii) **Cleaning and disinfecting in shared spaces:** Frequently in high traffic areas.
- (iv) **Paperless meeting documents:** HTAi will consider the use of QR codes, online links, event apps, and other paperless options wherever possible.
- (v) **Traffic light system:** HTAi may gauge attendee comfort levels with physical proximity and contact by providing participants with coloured stickers, lanyards, or wristbands during onsite registration. (Red = no contact, yellow = elbow bump or limited contact, green = high fives, handshakes, and high-level contact). A legend explaining each level will be provided to attendees before and during the meeting.

7.02 **Reporting Procedures**

- (a) HTAi expects all event attendees who are symptomatic, contract COVID-19, or who have been exposed to infected individuals to notify the HTAi Events Team as soon as possible and NOT to attend the event and seek medical attention as necessary and appropriate. This notification should be made by sending an email or text message directly to the Events Team. The Events Team should check with the venue and local health department to find out if any special control measures are needed when informed of an attendee who has or is suspected of having COVID-19.
- (b) Event attendees who are restricted from the event because of COVID-19 symptoms may return to the event when they are free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. It is also recommended that they wear a mask around others in indoor settings for a total of 10 days from when symptoms started.

8 **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

9 **AMENDMENT HISTORY**

26.01.2024

7.01b(v) – Onsite temperature check was removed in its entirety. The rest of the items in this section were re-numbered.

7.01b(v) – Traffic light system became a recommendation rather than a mandatory requirement.

7.02b – Requirement to present a negative COVID-19 test result is removed. The new recommendation to return to the event after 24-hours fever-free condition and wearing a mask for 10 days from the start of the symptoms. These recommendations were based on the most recent guidelines of the Alberta Government regarding COVID-19.

24.05.2023

1.05 – The provision to inform the attendees of COVID-19 cases within the event venue was removed in its entirety. The rest of the items in Section 1 were re-

numbered.

4.03. – The responsibility of the Event Team to have a procedure in place to inform event attendees of an identified COVID-19 case was removed in its entirety.

26.10.2022

1.03 – Removed the requirement of providing proof of vaccination at the registration.

1.07 – Removed in its entirety to avoid redundancy.

7.01(b)(v) – Additional traffic control element, i.e., lanyard, was included.