



## COVID-19 Guidelines for Reopening and Operating your Food Establishment October 15, 2020

PLEASE NOTE: Effective October 10, 2020 the Province of Ontario has placed further restrictions on social gatherings, events and other establishments.

- Outdoor gatherings are now restricted to a maximum of 25 people and indoor gatherings are now restricted to maximum of 10 people (where physical distancing can be maintained).
- Capacity limits also reduced to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors for tour guide services, real estate open houses, meeting and event spaces, in-person teaching and instruction where physical distancing can be maintained (with exemptions for schools, childcare centres, colleges, etc.).
- Indoor and outdoor events or gatherings cannot be merged together (ex. gathering of 35 people, with 25 people outdoors and 10 people indoors is not permissible).
- Indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bar and other food and drink establishments is now prohibited.
- The following indoor sites are now closed: gyms and fitness centres (i.e. exercise classes and weight and exercise rooms), casino's, indoor cinemas, performing arts centres and venues, spectator areas in racing venues, interactive exhibits in museums, galleries, zoos, mall food courts etc.
- Indoor fitness, exercise or dance classes cannot be provided.
- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in a class, organized program or organized activity at any facility (including arenas and multi-purpose facilities) cannot exceed 10 people and each class, organized program or organized activity must take place in a separate room.
- Personal care services, where face coverings must be removed (like makeup application, beard trimming), are now prohibited.
- Team sports now limited to training sessions only (no games or scrimmages) and no spectators are permitted.

The Provincial Government has announced that Ottawa is included in [Reopening our Province – Stage 3](#). This guide provides you with the information you need to reopen your restaurant, or other food premise, after being closed, limited to take-out and delivery only, or restricted to outdoor dining. Part 1 provides advice on preparing your restaurant for food service, and Part 2 helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to supersede the [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#) in place by the Government of Ontario.

The provincial government announced that on July 17, 2020, restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food and drink establishments (e.g., wineries, breweries and distilleries or food service in



a banquet facility) can open for dining in both indoor and outdoor areas, when public health and provincial guidance is followed. **Buffet- style service is not yet permitted.**

**Note:**

- Nightclubs are not yet safe to open, except for the purpose of serving food or drinks to patrons in accordance with the conditions that apply to restaurants and bars.
- Private Karaoke rooms are not yet able to open in Stage 3. Karaoke is permitted only outside of private karaoke rooms, with restrictions including barriers, physical distancing and increased cleaning and disinfecting.

Please note that future Provincial announcement may contain conditions which may result in amendments to Part 2 of this document. Please check [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus) for updates and new information.

**What is COVID-19?**

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is known to cause infection in the respiratory system. COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person through direct contact or over short distances by droplets through coughing or sneezing. A person may also get COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes. COVID-19 may have classic symptoms such as feeling feverish, new or worsening cough, pneumonia, and/or difficulty breathing. Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion, among others. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19, although carriers may also show no symptoms. OPH encourages all organizations and agencies to implement their own internal policies for the protection of staff, volunteers, and clients. If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, use the [Ontario Government self-assessment tool](#) to help determine how to seek further care.



## Support and encourage behaviours to reduce the spread of germs

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a two metre/six feet distance from others.
- Limit the number of people you come into close contact with.
- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when you are in a public setting and when physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. Please refer to [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/coronavirus) to stay up-to-date on the latest information.

## Part 1: Food Premises Pre-Opening Checklist

The following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening your establishment for business:

- ✓ Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- ✓ Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- ✓ Ensure hand washing stations are adequately supplied and functional.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles, touchscreens and equipment knobs.
- ✓ Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- ✓ Clean, sanitize and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.
- ✓ Ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
- ✓ Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
- ✓ Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
- ✓ Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes.
- ✓ Consider training staff on new procedures/requirements.

**Operators are responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry of Labour guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from OPH about food safety, or the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation](#).**

There is no requirement for those restaurants whom were operating prior to the pandemic to be inspected by Ottawa Public Health (OPH) before reopening. However, if you have a new restaurant, you must contact OPH before opening to arrange for an inspection.



## Mask Requirements

- Effective **October 3, 2020**, the Province updated the [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) that mandates the use of masks in all public indoor settings across Ontario which includes workplaces.
- Building on the current Ottawa [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law](#), which requires masks to be worn in all publicly-accessed indoor spaces, the new provincial measures now extends this requirement to all indoor areas including those not accessible to the public, where a two-meter distance from others cannot be maintained at all times.
- Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of [masks](#). See the new [Directive](#) and the [Temporary Mandatory Mask Bylaw](#) .
- The use of cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering are required in all indoor public spaces.
- Patrons are required to wear a cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when indoors at all times (e.g. when inside waiting for a table, walking to and from the table, washroom or when paying the bill) except when eating or drinking.
- As an operator of an enclosed public space you must:
  - ensure that every person who is not wearing a mask while in the premises is provided with a verbal reminder following entry. No person is required to provide proof of exemption.
  - post at every public entrance/exit signage that states all persons entering the premises must wear a mask under the city of Ottawa By-law 2020-186.
  - ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at all public entrances/exits.

## Before Reopening

### Prepare the physical space

- Establishments must take appropriate measures to ensure physical distancing of at least two meters between patrons from different tables, unless separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure a minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table and to maintain two metres/six feet between patrons of different tables (e.g., maintain two metres between the backs of seating when occupied)
- Consider reservations only.
- No more than six (6) people may be seated together at a table in the establishment.
- Remove waiting area seating and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
- Use visible floor markers for any areas where a line up may occur.



- Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
- Prior to opening, rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six-foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff should wear masks, cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering.
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
- Where necessary, install barriers (e.g. plexiglass) to protect staff and customers when physical distancing can not be maintained.
- Remove buffets and self-serve locations
- Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Discourage staff from congregating during lunch and break times, where physical distancing of 2m/6ft cannot be maintained
- Provide direction to customers:
  - install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
  - put up signage for physical distancing, [passive screening](#),<sup>1</sup> and any policies affecting them.

## ***Develop Protocols***

- Policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitize between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc., avoid decorative centrepieces.
  - Staffing: for example, stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences. Note that [active screening](#)<sup>ii</sup> and not allowing staff to work if showing symptoms of COVID-19 are required policies. Staff must report any symptoms developed during a shift immediately to their supervisor.
  - Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage: post signage on [mandatory masks](#), [handwashing](#), [physical distancing](#), and reporting symptom. Make them visible to staff and customers.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment.
  - clean and sanitize tables after each use from clients.



- give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, touch screens, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
- shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
- consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps, etc.
- specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning products.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the premises before opening.
  - more details on cleaning and disinfection are available at [Public Health Ontario's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).
- Supply dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to staff and customers, including at the door.
- Minimize unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves).
- Minimize the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers.

### ***Maintain logs for customer and staff contact information***

- Under [Ontario Regulation 364/20 : RULES FOR AREAS IN STAGE 3](#) the person responsible for the establishment must, record the name and contact information of every patron that enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, this does not include patrons who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order, these records must be maintained for a period of at least one month, and the business is only to disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law
- Limited-service establishments (that require all dine-in patrons to order or select their food or drink at a counter, food bar or cafeteria line and pay before receiving their order) must continue to collect the name and contact information of at least one member of every party of patrons.
  - *A sample COVID-19 Customer Log template can be found [here](#).*
- OPH strongly encourages restaurants and food premises to also keep a daily log of names, contact information, shift start and end times of your staff to assist in contact tracing should there be a positive patron or staff at our establishment.
  - *A sample COVID-19 Workplace Staff Log template can be found [here](#).*

### **Train Staff**

- Train staff on how best to serve food, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary



handling (e.g. serve to front of table and let customers distribute, avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers).

- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Practice [physical distancing](#) during breaks and in break rooms.
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to gloves and masks as needed.
  - train staff in proper use of gloves and [masks](#). Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Encourage frequent [handwashing](#) using the correct technique, and to avoid touching face.
- Keep an up to date staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.

## During Active Operation

- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- [Screening](#) staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and colleagues.
- Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift
- Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick, they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#), contact their primary health provider and/or get tested.
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting to be seated; have those waiting for a table wait outdoors and, ensure that they do not enter the dining space on the patio. Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter the establishment.
  - display [posters](#) telling customers that if they have symptoms, they cannot enter.
- Patrons are required to wear a, cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when indoors at all times, except when eating or drinking: e.g. a mask is required to be worn when inside waiting for a table, walking to and from the table or washroom, or when paying the bill.
- The total number of patrons permitted to be indoors in the establishment must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two meters from every other person in the establishment, **and in any event cannot exceed 100 patrons.**
- [Ontario Regulation 364/20 : Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#) states patrons must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except, while entering the area and while moving to their table, while placing or picking up an order, while paying for an order,



while exiting the area, while going to or returning from a washroom, while lining up to do anything in the previous list, or where necessary for the purposes of health and safety. [“Stay Seated” Signage can be found here.](#)

- Clean and sanitize tabletops between sittings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation for any indoor operations.
- No person shall dance, sing or perform music at the establishment except where stated in [ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20.](#)
- If amplification used, keep volume low so patrons do not have to raise voices or lean towards each other when talking to each other.
- No dancing may be permitted in the indoor or outdoor dining areas by patrons.
- The establishment must be closed to the public between the hours of 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. except as may be necessary to:
  - allow patrons to temporarily enter the establishment to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order,
  - provide delivery service,
  - provide dine-in service only for persons who are performing work for the business or place in which the establishment is located, or
  - provide access to washrooms.

## Patios/Outdoor Dining Area

The rules for distancing, service, and cleaning and sanitation that apply to the indoor area of the food premise also apply to patios/outdoor dining areas.

- If the outdoor dining area is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning or other element, at least 2 sides of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers. The covering should be as high as possible from the ground – **a height of 3 metres** is recommended as a minimum.
- If the outdoor dining area is equipped with a retractable roof, the roof must be fully retracted and at least one full side of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers.
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure a minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table and to maintain two metres/six feet between patrons of different tables (e.g., maintain two metres between the backs of seating when occupied).
  - Patrons of one table must be seated two metres/six feet from patrons of other tables.
- Co-mingling between patrons of different groups should be avoided.



- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers.
- Allow space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
- Consider a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come close to patio customers.
- Use visible markers on the floor (e.g. stickers) where a line-up may occur.
- Mark directions of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Post [signage](#) promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Provide one or more means of egress.
- In the event of severe weather, patrons may go inside the restaurant to:
  - Take temporary shelter
  - Pack their meal for takeout
  - Pay for their meals
  - Dine indoors if physical distancing permits
- \* Patrons must maintain appropriate physical distancing (at least 2 metres separation) while indoors. Establishments are encouraged to develop plans to put in place during severe weather situations. The protocol may include considerations such as: floor markings to indicate physical distancing, mask requirements, and having multiple staff processing final payments to facilitate patrons leaving quickly.

## Capacity

- The total number of patrons permitted to be indoors in the establishment must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two meters from every other person in the establishment, **and in any event cannot exceed 100 patrons**. For Social gatherings refer to the Gathering limits for Social Gatherings below.

## Gathering Limits for Social Gatherings

- Outdoor gatherings are now restricted to a maximum of 25 people (previous limit of 100), and indoor gatherings are now restricted to maximum of 10 people (previous limit of 50).
- Indoor and outdoor events or gatherings cannot be merged together (ex. Gathering of 35 people, with 25 people outdoors and 10 people indoors is not permissible).
- The new limits do not apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities such as restaurants, cinemas, banquet halls, gyms and places of worship.
- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in all of the rentable meeting or event space in the business or place at any one time is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two meters from every other person in the business or place, and in



any event is not permitted to exceed 50 persons for an indoor meeting or event or 100 persons for an outdoor meeting or event. This rule does not apply to the rental of meeting or event space for the purpose of a wedding, funeral or religious service, rite or ceremony.

- businesses must ensure than no more than six people are seated together at any table in the rented space.

## Download and Print Signage for your Restaurant

- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Stop the spread of germs](#)
- [Mandatory Mask Requirements](#)
- [How to put on and take off a Mask or face covering](#)
- [Employee Screening Questionnaire](#)
- [Customer Passive Screening Signage](#)
- [COVID-19 Stay Seated Poster](#)

## Additional Resources

- [Province of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)
- [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c. 17](#)
- [A Framework for Reopening our Province – Stage 3](#)
- [ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20](#)
- [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law: Info for businesses and operators \(pdf - 219 KB\)](#)

Visit our website [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus) , or call us at 613-580-6744.

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<sup>i</sup>Passive screening: Customers screen themselves by following steps described on a poster

<sup>ii</sup> Active Screening: Staff are screened by someone prompting them with questions, or actively completing a questionnaire