



October 15, 2020

COVID-19 Guidance for Special Events

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 following recommendations aim to support event organizers and venue operators in their planning efforts and provide guidance to reduce risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 at events of all sizes. With community transmission of COVID-19 in Ottawa, there is a risk that transmission from both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals may occur in community settings. While health and safety measures to attempt to reduce these risks may be implemented, it is important that organizers, venue operators, staff and participants be aware of the related risks.

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) continues to follow the lead of provincial authorities, who set the guidance and protocols with respect to emergency closure orders, reopening rules and restrictions, and any relaxation of these rules. The Government of Ontario released [A Framework for Reopening our Province](#), which signals a careful stage-by-stage approach to re-opening Ontario.



Starting on July 17, most businesses and public spaces in Ottawa were allowed to gradually reopen under the Province's [Stage 3 Framework](#), with public health and workplace safety restrictions in place.

The permissibility of and operational requirements for special events are contingent on Provincial [Emergency Orders](#). Public events and large social gatherings remain a high-risk activity and many activities are highly restricted or prohibited in Ontario. [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Stage 3](#) and its amendments under [Ontario Regulation 428/20](#) of the Province's [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020 S.O. 2020 c. 17](#) sets out the rules for Stage 3 reopening. It provides direction, regulations and detailed information specific to organized public events and certain gatherings, for example weddings, funerals, performing arts, etc. Conditions specific to drive-in and drive-through cinemas and events have been included in Annex A of OPH's Guidance for Special Events document. Event organizers and venue operators are highly encouraged to consult the Regulation to ensure compliancy.

The Province has set restrictions and public gathering limits for higher risk settings and activities where people assemble. These limits apply to indoor and outdoor events and include physical distance rules of maintaining at least 2 meters with people from outside their households and/or small consistent social group. Indoor and outdoor events or gatherings cannot be combined in order to increase the applicable limit on the number of people at the event or gathering.

As per [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#), 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 that no more than six people are seated together at any table in the rented

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.

As every event and setting is likely to be different, it is ultimately the responsibility of the event organizer and operating venue to review Provincial [Emergency Orders](#), guidelines and directives as well as site specific policies and procedures in addition to any requirements issued by OPH and the City of Ottawa to ensure their event plan and venue complies with regulations. This includes

reviewing and implementing measures from OPH's [Businesses and Workplaces – COVID-19 Information](#) and the City of Ottawa's [Business Reopening Toolkit](#).

While OPH can answer specific questions or address issues for clarification, OPH review and/or approval of event plans is not required.

Questions and proposals related to event formats permissible under Provincial Orders, including drive-in and drive-thru events, can be directed to EventCentral@ottawa.ca.

OPH's guidance is subject to change as new information is received.

BUSINESS TOOLS AND INFORMATION	
COVID-19 Business Reopening Toolkit	<p>The City of Ottawa's Business Reopening Toolkit is a reference guide that touches on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Controls • Workforce health and safety information • Signage, visible markings, and controls • Physical distancing, considerations for respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and mechanisms to aid in physical distancing • Reducing touchpoints and increasing cleaning • Communication plans • Cloth mask use and PPE
Additional resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa Public Health - Information for Workplaces • Ottawa Public Health – Service Provider Reopening Plan Template and Checklist • Province of Ontario – Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace • Tool: COVID-19 workplace safety plan template
REDUCING THE RISKS OF TRANSMISSION DURING EVENT OPERATIONS	
Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to screen staff, volunteers, vendors and patrons prior to arrival on site. This includes during event operations as well as during set-up and tear-down activities. • All staff, volunteers and vendors should be screened daily prior to starting their duties. Take measures to ensure they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 before they interact with others. • Encourage patrons to complete a self-assessment prior to attending the event and at arrival • Screening can be done using the Ontario Government self-assessment tool. If the individual reports any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or the screening recommends the individual be tested or self-isolate, they must return home, follow direction and not attend the event or venue. • Visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for a full list of symptoms • Advise and reinforce message that staff, volunteers and vendors are to stay home if they are sick

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to keep a log of employee, vendors and attendee names, their contact information and time of attendance in case it is required for contact tracing by public health in the event of exposure. • Develop a contingency plan for absenteeism • Develop a protocol should someone become ill or symptomatic while on site. • Consider developing an online system to RSVP attendance for events. This may also allow for online screening of attendees and encourage people to be COVIDWise Remind staff to be practicing physical distancing, wearing cloth masks while out in the community and frequently washing their hands to decrease likelihood of being infected • Signage: post relevant health and safety signage. Visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for additional signage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mask Required Poster ○ Stop Before Entering – Self-screening Poster ○ Practice Physical Distancing ○ Steps to Prevent the Spread of Germs • Patrons who exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or who are ill should not attend the site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct attendees to the Ontario Government self-assessment tool and follow directions. ○ Consider how the event will manage reimbursement requests for ticketed events ○ Post signage at all entrances reminding people to self-assess and if they have symptoms or do not pass the screening, they should not attend the event
<p>Mask bylaw</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing a mask in indoor public spaces and non-public indoor spaces where a two-metre distance cannot always be maintain is now a mandatory requirement under the City of Ottawa’s Temporary By-law 2020-186 to limit the spread of COVID_19. There are exemptions including, but not limited to, children under two years of age and individuals with medical conditions and disabilities. Indoor spaces include, but not limited to restaurants, stores, banquet halls, places of worship, sports facilities, community venues, hotel lobbies. Read the by-law for more information. • 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. • Masks include: a cloth mask, medical mask, disposable mask or other face coverings (e.g. bandana or scarf) that securely cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping • Proof is not required from any individuals who are exempt from wearing a mask. If a patron refuses to wear a mask and is not exempted, the operator can contact the City for assistance. • Wearing a mask is not an alternative to physical distancing. Every effort should be made to keep a 2-metre distance even when wearing a mask. • Post clear and visible signage at all entrances to the premises and throughout the venue indicating mandatory mask use

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify participants of mandatory mask requirement beforehand • Consider having masks available to hand out or for purchase by attendees who do not bring their own mask • Develop a mask policy for employees • Educate and train employees on the proper use of masks including how to safely put on and take off a mask • For additional information, FAQs, resources, posters, visit ottawapublichealth.ca/masks
Physical distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a physical distancing plan so that everyone can maintain at least 2 meters (6-feet) distance from each other. Consider all measures to minimize unnecessary contact • Physical distancing includes staff to staff, attendee to staff, and attendee to attendee. Staff include those employed by the venue or event, volunteers and third-party vendors. • Physical distancing requirements apply to all components of the event space: approaches, entrances, exits, parking and within the site (including back of house operations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Within the site, consider the physical distancing measures for where crowding occurs – where lines are likely to form, spectator areas, at stages, washrooms, food/beverages, etc. ○ Seating plan: Space seating, tables, etc. so that those seated are at least 2 meters apart and so that each table is at least 2 meters apart to ensure physical distancing. ○ Managing flow within the site is central to managing physical distancing ○ Use floor markers and directional signage to promote physical distancing ○ Assign staff to monitor ○ Post signage at entrances and in highly visible areas promoting physical distancing ○ Display your plan details at entrances and throughout the event venue ○ Where distancing cannot be maintained at a common interaction point (e.g., check-in, cashier), consider use of a physical barrier (Plexiglas) to protect staff and customers • Post maximum occupancy signage to further enhance physical distancing. For more information on maintaining a small consistent social group, refer to the Ministry website here. • Will staff and patrons have access to washrooms while on site? Develop a plan to ensure physical distancing as well as cleaning and disinfection. • Consider grouping staff with the same co-workers to limit the overall number of contacts they will have.
FOLLOW PROPER HAND HYGIENE PRACTICES AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO HAND HYGIENE STATIONS AND SUPPLIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to facilitate and ensure hand hygiene on site for staff, volunteers, vendors and attendees: • Provide stations for hand hygiene at entrances and exits, within the site, at comfort stations, back of house, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep accessibility in mind for station locations and set-up • When sinks are not available (e.g. during an outdoor event), hands-free alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations are recommended • Ensure adequate supply of liquid soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels. Monitor availability and ensure items are frequently refilled. • Train employees on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including handwashing, use of hand sanitizer, covering coughs/sneezes, avoid touching face, etc. • Encourage frequent and proper handwashing • Display posters at visible locations including sinks and hand hygiene stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handwashing poster ○ How to Use Alcohol-based Hand Rub
REDUCE TOUCH POINTS AND INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan for reducing the number of touch points that occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Entrance ticket scanning, bag checks, door handles, token exchanges, handling of merchandise, etc. • If possible, encourage patrons to pay by debit or credit card (tap if possible) and have staff wipe machines and use hand sanitizer immediately before and after each interaction. • Consider the types of interactions during the event where transactions occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at ticket booths, food, beverage and merchandise vendors, etc. • Develop a thorough cleaning and disinfection plan for commonly touched surfaces. High touch surfaces and public spaces should be cleaned frequently. • Commonly touched surfaces include washrooms, hand hygiene stations, doorknobs, handrails, points of sale terminals, food and beverage areas, waste/recycling receptacle touch points, back of house offices, dressing areas, technical equipment, golf carts, etc. • Refer to Public Health Ontario's guidance for cleaning and disinfection for public settings. Additional guidance for cleaning is available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OPH - Environmental Cleaning Guidance. ○ OPH cleaning and disinfection checklist ○ PHAC - Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces ○ Health Canada's list of hard surface disinfectants
FOLLOW FOOD, DRINK, DANCING, SINGING REGULATIONS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For areas permitted to reopen in Stage 3, refer to specific rules outlined in the Ontario Regulation 364/20. • Venue operators should consult OPH's COVID-19 Guidelines for Reopening your Food Establishment
ENSURE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses and organization are responsible to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations

REVIEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for physical distancing creates challenges for existing emergency procedures. • Review the plans in place for various scenarios including, but not limited to, medical emergencies, places of refuge and evacuation scenarios. Event organizers may need to re-evaluate the size and capacity of their designated shelters in the case of an emergency, such as an extreme weather event or egress capacity that may prevent physical distancing. • Organizers may consider proactively postponing or cancelling where they cannot effectively activate emergency plans without exposing workers and patrons to greater risk of transmission. • Emergency egress plans should continue to reflect that moving patrons away from the most urgent hazard is the first order of business.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Events and Gatherings • Event Safety Alliance – Reopening Guide • Province of Ontario - Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace

This guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Event organizers and venue operators should stay up to date with the Province’s current [Emergency Orders](#) and plan to regularly check for updates and new guidance from the Province and OPH as part of their event planning.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. Please visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for up to date information.

Annex A: Drive-in and Drive-through events

As part of the Province of Ontario's move into Stage 2 recovery, all existing and new drive-in and drive-through venues were permitted to open for a variety of purposes, such as theatres, concerts, animal attractions and cultural appreciation, such as art installations. Regulations pertaining to such venues are outlined in Schedule 2 of [Regulation 364/20](#) of the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020 S.O. 2020 c. 17](#) – updated July 24, 2020 with the move into Stage 3 recovery.

The limits imposed by the Province on the number of people at the event (as outlined in Schedule 3, clause 1 (1) (a) of Regulation 364/20) does not apply with respect to a drive-in cinema, business or place that is in compliance with the conditions outlined below.

CONDITIONS FOR DRIVE-IN AND DRIVE THROUGH CINEMAS AND EVENTS	
	<p>Drive-in cinemas and businesses or places that provide drive-in or drive-through concerts, artistic events, theatrical performances or other performances may open if they comply with the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Each person in attendance at the drive-in cinema or the business or place, other than the persons who perform work for the drive-in cinema or the business or place, must remain within a motor vehicle designed to be closed to the elements except where necessary,<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. to purchase admission, food or beverages,ii. to access a washroom, oriii. for the purposes of health and safety.2. The driver of a motor vehicle at the drive-in cinema or the business or place must ensure that it is positioned at least two metres away from other motor vehicles.3. Every performer or other person who performs work at the drive-in cinema or the business or place must remain at least two meters apart from motor vehicles and from every other person, except,<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. if it is necessary for the performers to be closer to each other for the purposes of the performance,ii. where necessary for the purposes of facilitating the purchase of admission, food or beverages, oriii. where necessary for the purposes of health and safety4. Food and beverages may only be sold to persons in attendance at the drive-in cinema or the business or place if,<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. the food or beverage is sold at a concession stand that requires patrons to stand at least two meters apart while waiting to be served and that requires patrons to immediately return to their motor vehicle after being served, orii. the food or beverage is delivered directly to the person's motor vehicle.5. No materials may be exchanged between persons in attendance at the drive-in cinema or the business or place, except,<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. materials exchanged between members of the same motor vehicle,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. materials exchanged between persons who perform work for the drive-in cinema or the business or place, and iii. such materials as are necessary to facilitate the purchase of admission, food or beverages.
ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	
	<p>In addition to the guidance outlined in the main document above, organizers of drive-in cinemas and drive-in and drive-through events should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-sale of tickets for specific dates/times will minimize traffic congestion and potential driver frustration. • Hosting an event in the evening minimizes the potential health risks associated with remaining in a vehicle during the daytime heat and the potential for idling. • Duration of the event. Longer events will encourage attendees to leave their vehicle to stretch or use the washroom. • Parking stalls should be well marked and large enough to accommodate oversized vehicles. • Signage should be well placed and an appropriate font size to be visible from within a vehicle. • Alcoholic beverages are prohibited per Section 32 of the Liquor Licence Act. • Measures for maintaining physical distancing in washroom queues as well as disinfecting and cleaning. • Plans for vehicles with mechanical issues on the event site. • Ensure all attendees are informed of event rules before the event begins. • Events with over 500 persons in attendance (including staff and volunteers) require a special event permit per the Special Events on Public and Private Property By-Law.
RESOURCES	
	<p>Workplace Safety and Prevention Services – Guidance on Health for Outdoor Recreation and Drive-in/Drive-Thru Entertainment</p>