

Revoked on January 31, 2022

Office of the Medical Officer of Health  
City of Ottawa  
100 Constellation Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2G 6J8

Date: December 23, 2021

TO: Owners, operators, and other persons responsible for an outdoor recreational amenity as defined in this Letter of Instruction (LOI)

**Re: Capacity Limits and Additional Public Health Measures for Use of Outdoor Recreational Amenities to prevent the spread of COVID-19**

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I want to thank you for all your continued efforts in protecting the health and safety of your employees, volunteers, and patrons. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and we once again need to work together as a community to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

In response to rapidly increasing transmission of COVID-19 in Ottawa and the increased transmissibility of Omicron, and after consultation with Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, I have determined it is necessary to take additional and immediate action to further limit the spread of COVID-19 to protect our residents and reduce the impact on our health care resources.

The easing of provincial restrictions, increased number and frequency of social gatherings resulting in close contact interactions, colder temperatures bringing people indoors, the dominance of the Delta variant until now, and the emergence of the Omicron variant have contributed to high case counts in Ottawa. Evidence to date suggests a serious risk of Omicron as it is quickly becoming the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Ontario, that it is much more transmissible than Delta, and that people with two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine are not as well protected as they are against Delta and other strains. Furthermore, on December 16, 2021, the Ontario Science Table indicated that "without prompt intervention, ICU occupancy could reach unsustainable levels in early January" and that additional public health measures were needed.

While the risk of transmission of COVID-19, on average, is greater in indoor spaces compared to outdoors, the risk of transmission is elevated in outdoor spaces when there is crowding, close contact, prolonged exposure and forceful exhalation (e.g., individuals physically exerting themselves by participating in sports and recreation activities). Adopting capacity limits, physical distancing and masking requirements and other measures to reduce close contact between individuals in outdoor recreational amenities is likely to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the City of Ottawa.

I am issuing this Letter of Instruction to all owners, operators, and other persons responsible for an outdoor recreational amenity in City of Ottawa permitted to be open under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (the "ROA") and related regulations. This letter is in addition to my previous letters of instruction to all employers in the City of Ottawa dated October 6, 2021, November 8, 2021 and December 17, 2021. The instructions in this letter are being provided pursuant to

Section 2(2) of Schedule 1 of Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit made under the ROA.

All organizations, businesses, and workplaces must operate in compliance with the applicable regulatory requirements set out under the ROA. **Compliance with the additional instructions below is mandatory under the ROA. To the extent that anything in these Instructions conflicts with the ROA including regulations and Provincial directives or guidance, the more restrictive provision shall prevail.**

**Effective December 26, 2021 at 12:01am, and until further notice, I am instructing all owners, operators, and other persons responsible for an Outdoor Recreational Amenity in the City of Ottawa to implement the following measures:**

### **A: Capacity Limits, Physical Distancing and Masking Requirements:**

#### **1. Capacity Limit:**

Implement capacity limits for skating rinks other than skating trails, the maximum capacity shall be the lesser of a maximum of 25 persons or the maximum number of persons that can maintain a two (2) metre physical distance. For outdoor refrigerated rinks including City Hall Rink of Dreams, Jim Tubman Chevrolet Rink of Dreams, Lansdowne Park Skating Court and Ben Franklin Place Skating Rink, the maximum capacity shall be limited to posted capacity limits and require that the maximum number of persons indicated on the sign maintain a two (2) metre distance. For all other outdoor recreational amenities, including skating trails and ovals, capacity limits apply to where members of the public congregate such as at the top of tobogganing hills, trail heads, and access points to the amenity. The limits for each area where people congregate shall be the lesser of a maximum of 25 persons or the maximum number of persons that can maintain a two (2) metre distance.

#### **2. Physical Distancing:**

Require all persons using an Outdoor Recreational Amenity maintain a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from every other person, except from their caregiver or from members of their household, within the amenity including in all publicly accessible areas around washroom and change facilities, entrances and ice surfaces.

#### **3. Mandatory Mask:**

Require all members of the public who access the Outdoor Recreational Amenity wear a mask prior to actively participating in a recreational activity or observing other persons participate in recreational activities.

### **B: Operational Requirements:**

1. Post signage in conspicuous place(s) where it is most likely to come to the attention of individuals attending in the location. Ensure signage outlines the outdoor recreational amenities maximum capacity, requirements to maintain two (2) metres physical distance and wear a mask. This applies to all areas where the public congregate such as at the top of tobogganing hills, trail heads, and access points to the amenity.
2. Implement measures and adopt strategies to limit crowding. One-way walkways and workflows shall be provided where applicable to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between persons. Examples of workflows include, but are not limited to, directional arrows and markers for two (2) metres distance. Consider also limiting the duration members of the public are permitted to have access to the amenity and staggering entry times.
3. Indoor changerooms at Outdoor Recreational Amenities, and indoor clubhouses excluding bathrooms or to access a rental counter, are to be closed to the public and only accessed by

employees and designated volunteers for maintenance and operations of the Outdoor Recreational Amenity. The maximum number of persons at any time in indoor bathrooms is limited to the number that can maintain a two (2) metre physical distance. **Mandatory mask requirements are extended to public washrooms and signage to indicate this is required.**

4. Instances of non-compliance may be escalated to Municipal Law Enforcement when appropriate by contacting 3-1-1.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Instructions:

Any reference to “**mask**” or “**face covering**” in this Letter of instruction is as per the Province of Ontario’s COVID-19 regulatory framework requirement, under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, which require a mask or face covering to be worn “in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin”.

“**Outdoor Recreational Amenity**” means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which an authorized outdoor recreation or sport activity takes place and to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, either expressly or by implication, whether a fee is charged for entry. For greater clarity this includes but is not limited to ice rinks, tobogganing hills, snowmobile, cross country ski, ice skating, and snowshoe trails.

## ENFORCEMENT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

You are required to comply with the additional measures above, pursuant to regulations under the Reopening Ontario Act including any successor legislation or regulations.

As per the Reopening Ontario Act, individuals who do not comply with the above noted requirements may be liable for a fine up to a maximum of \$100,000 and for a term of imprisonment of not more than one year; directors or officers of a corporation who do not comply with the above noted requirements may be liable for a fine up to a maximum of \$500,000 and for a term of imprisonment of not more than one year; and in the case of the corporation, a fine up to a maximum of \$10,000,000.

Inquiries about these Instructions should be directed to:

- Ottawa Public Health: 613-580-6744 or [healthsante@ottawa.ca](mailto:healthsante@ottawa.ca)
- Municipal Law Enforcement: 3-1-1

These instructions, including any revisions to these instructions, are available on Ottawa Public Health’s website at: [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/OrdersAndInstructions](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/OrdersAndInstructions). Ottawa Public Health also posts information on its website regarding how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 that can assist local businesses and organizations in operating safely.

Sincerely,



Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health