COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants and Food Services

RESTRICT LEVEL

This document provides public health information, guidance and recommendation on prevention of COVID-19 as issued by Ottawa Public Health and should not be considered a regulatory document. The information included here is intended for readers in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. For information on regulatory restrictions in place for the regions of Ontario and the City of Ottawa, please see the Government of Ontario response framework and the City of Ottawa Provincial and City Rules.

Preparing to open your establishment

 Operators are responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and should also refer to the restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19 guidance from the Government of Ontario. Government of Ontario guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from Ottawa Public Health about food safety, or the Ontario Food Premises Regulation.

Does my establishment need to be inspected prior to opening?

Your establishment requires inspection by Ottawa Public Health prior to opening if:

- It is opening new since the pandemic began, and
- It has not been previously inspected.

If your establishment meets both above points, please contact Ottawa Public Health to arrange an inspection with a Public Health Inspector.
Recording customer and staff contact information

The person responsible for the establishment must collect the names and contact information of:

- all patrons that enter the dining area(s) with table service, unless the patron is entering only to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order and will not be remaining in the dining area
- at least one patron from each party, if the establishment does not provide table service and instead requires ordering or food selection, and payment, at a common counter, food bar or cafeteria line.

This information, which can be collected using a tool such as the COVID-19 Customer Log, may help further protect your staff members and patrons by allowing Ottawa Public Health to trace the contacts of someone who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Collected patron information is confidential and must be retained by the business for at least 30 days. The information may only be released to a Medical Officer of Health or a Public Health Inspector by request under the Health Protection and Promotion Act for a purpose specified in Section 2 of that Act, or as otherwise required by law.

In addition to collecting patron names and contact information, Ottawa Public Health strongly recommends keeping a daily record of staff names, contact information, shift start and end times, and has made available a COVID-19 Workplace Staff Log to collect this information, if needed.

Required policies and procedures

Prior to opening, your business will need policies and procedures to address the following:

- Active staff screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and
- Preventing staff from working if they show signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19

Ottawa Public Health offers an employee screening questionnaire that can be used to actively screen each employee before each of their shifts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
Gathering limits for your establishment

Indoor and outdoor gathering limits depend on the type of establishment and/or activity and are determined by the Government of Ontario. Please review the COVID-19 response framework for gathering limits in place for the Restrict (Orange) level.

Note that provincial limits are maximums and that the actual gathering limit for your establishment is the maximum number of people who can occupy the space at one time while still maintaining 2 metre physical distance, or the stated provincial limit in regulation, whichever number is less.

The owner and/or operator is responsible for determining the specific limit for their venue based on its layout, equipment, structure, traffic flow, the activities hosted, and requirements to maintain physical distance.

The specific gathering limit for your establishment should be posted and clearly visible in all areas of the space, such as near entrances, exits, seating areas and washrooms.

Do not allow sick staff members into the work environment

In addition to the above requirements, consider updating your business policies for managing staff member absences and for backfilling shifts in case of absence.

All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before being allowed to interact with patrons and/or colleagues. Staff members who are sick should remain at home. Staff who develop symptoms and/or who become sick during their shift must report to their supervisor immediately. They should also be advised to complete the COVID-19 self-assessment tool, to contact their primary health provider and/or to get tested.
Adapting your Equipment and Logistics

Consider changes to the equipment and logistical systems used at your business to enhance the ability of staff members and patrons to protect one another from COVID-19. Such changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Using chalkboard, electronic, web-based, disposable or other non-contact or single-use menu formats
- Installing automatic, no-touch devices such as doors, faucets and lights
- Accepting patrons by reservation only to minimize line ups and/or crowds
- Supplying rolled or packaged utensils and disposable napkins
- Replacing condiment and spice containers for patrons with single-use packets
- Numbering tables to allow patrons to seat themselves
- Limiting payment methods to credit and/or debit, where possible
- Setting up additional food transfer stations to minimize close contact between servers
- Serving food at one end of a table for patrons to distribute themselves
- Supplying hand sanitizer at all entrances, exits and other high traffic areas
- Discontinuing the practice of pre-setting tables
- Removing decorative items from table settings
- Avoiding handling coffee cups or other items when providing refills or assistance
- Allowing patrons to pack their own leftovers
- Refreshing staff training and education on proper hand hygiene

Remember to include staff office areas, break rooms and other non-public areas of the establishment when adapting your space for operation. These areas should also allow for physical distance, traffic control and other key preventive measures meant to protect staff from illness.
Staff Training and Education

It is essential that all staff members receive training and education on all modified and new policies, procedures and practices prior to working directly with patrons and colleagues. Ottawa Public Health recommends that employers pay close attention in particular to ensuring that all staff working have current training on and are familiar with:

- Active screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Actions to take if they experience symptoms of illness
- Proper use of approved cleaning and disinfecting products
- Cleaning protocols to sanitize reusable items between uses
- Procedures for environmental cleaning
- How to properly wear and use masks and face coverings
- How to properly use gloves, face shields and other personal protective equipment if required by the employer
- Maintaining physical distance of at least 2 metres when possible
- Adapted procedures for food and bar service, where needed

Information and resources are available through Ottawa Public Health to help support staff learning and training, such as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings information sheet.

Signs and Floor Markers

Using clear signage in high visibility locations in your establishment helps inform staff and patrons of safety measures and requirements for service at your place of business. Combining signage with markers on the floor or other surfaces to help control traffic flow through the establishment and encourage physical distance while waiting, can help further protect your staff and patrons from COVID-19.

To help all businesses operating in Ottawa be COVID Wise Together, Ottawa Public Health provides ready-made signage for use in your establishment in addition to its other online resources for business to help them protect the health of their staff, patrons and communities.
Patios and Other Outdoor Dining Areas

The Government of Ontario regulates how patio and other outdoor dining areas must be configured if using roofs, awnings, walls or other structural elements. These regulations can be viewed at the COVID-19 response framework online resource.

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

- Do not co-mingle lineups with patrons being seated indoors
- Keep waiting patrons distanced from seated patrons
- Mark direction of travel to designated entrances, exits, pick-up areas and washrooms
- Include signage to remind people to maintain physical distance
- Have 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

Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment

The City of Ottawa has introduced a temporary mandatory mask by-law requiring that masks be worn indoors and in some outdoor situations. Information on the by-law, access to mask signage for use in your establishment and other resources related to masks is available at the Wearing a Mask online resource from the City of Ottawa.
Delivery and Takeout Services

Ottawa Public Health recommends these additional measures for establishments that offer delivery and/or takeout services:

- Limit the number of patrons allowed in the takeout area.
- Practice hand hygiene after
  - picking up a used delivery bin
  - providing items for pick-up or delivery
- Ask patrons to call ahead to schedule a pick-up time.
- Place takeout orders in a non-contact collection area for patrons to pick up.
- Schedule delivery and/or takeout staff to minimize the number of people on-site.
- Leave deliveries at the patron’s door and move at least 2 metres away after knocking or ringing the doorbell.
- Clean and disinfect reusable items, and high contact surfaces and objects in delivery vehicles as often as necessary to maintain sanitation.

Mobile Food Services

Ottawa Public Health recommends these additional measures for mobile food services:

- Limit occupants in the mobile unit to maintain 2 metres physical distance.
- Consider installing an impermeable barrier, such as a plexiglass window, at checkout stations.
- Encourage waiting customers to remain
  - At least 2 metres away from the order window and from other patrons, or
  - In their vehicle while waiting for their order to complete, if possible
- Remove all product sampling stations
- Replace self-serve condiment stations with single-serve condiment packets and/or offer toppings at the time of ordering.
Pre-opening Checklist

Ottawa Public Health recommends using the following checklist prior to opening your establishment for business:

✓ Expired and otherwise unfit products discarded
✓ Cleaned and disinfected
  o Food contact surfaces
  o Non-food contact surfaces
  o Hot holding facilities/equipment
  o Cold holding facilities/equipment
  o Washrooms
  o Frequently touched objects
    ▪ door handles
    ▪ touch screens
    ▪ switches
    ▪ tabletops
    ▪ chairs
    ▪ condiment containers
    ▪ sneeze guards
    ▪ taps
    ▪ utensils
    ▪ glassware
    ▪ dispensers
    ▪ credit card machines
    ▪ cash registers
✓ Hand hygiene stations supplied and working
✓ Pest control checks completed
✓ Hot and cold holding facilities/equipment functioning safely
✓ Dishwashing machines functioning safely
✓ Sanitizers and detergents available for manual dishwashing
✓ Garbage storage areas clean and large enough
✓ Washroom supplies available
✓ Faucets working properly
✓ Pipes flushed for at least five minutes.
✓ All staff trained on new procedures/requirements
✓ Seating removed or closed off in high traffic areas
✓ Tables or other eating areas spaced at least 2 metres apart
✓ Signage posted for masks, handwashing, physical distancing, and reporting symptoms
✓ Staff logs ready for use
✓ Customer logs ready for use

Consider using a dedicated service provider to complete technical or complex tasks such as pest control checks.
While Open to the Public
Ottawa Public Health recommends the following measures so that the person responsible for the establishment can best ensure that all regulations, policies, procedures and best practices are followed while open to the public:

- Prevent patrons showing symptoms of COVID-19 from entering and post signage informing patrons that they may not enter if symptomatic.
- Ensure patrons wait for a table outdoors and do not enter a patio dining space while waiting, if present.
- Ensure patrons maintain physical distance while waiting to be seated.
- Reinforce the requirement that a mask or other face covering must be worn on the premises, except when eating or drinking.
- Clean and sanitize tabletops between sittings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation for any indoor operations.
- Follow provincial regulations regarding singing, dancing, performance, serving alcohol and hours of operation.
- Keep music volume low enough so that patrons can speak without needing to raise their voice or lean in to be heard.

Resources and Signage

Signage for your Establishment

- 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

- Government of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19
- Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law: Info for businesses and operators

Visit our website OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus, or call us at 613-580-6744.