

COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Outdoor Recreational Spaces

Updated January 15, 2021

This document provides guidance for operators of outdoor recreational spaces including, public parks, ski facilities, hiking paths and trails, dog parks, and outdoor skating rinks. This document does not replace guidance from the Province, including [O. Reg. 11/21](#) and [O. Reg. 82/20](#). For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

On site food premises must comply with the requirements of [O. Reg. 493/17: Food Premises](#).

COVID-19 transmission

COVID-19 is spread mainly from person-to-person through the respiratory droplets of someone infected with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres (six feet) through coughing, sneezing or talking. COVID-19 can also be transmitted when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes.

State of Emergency and Stay-At-Home Order

On [January 12](#), 2021, the Ontario government declared a State of Emergency and issued a stay-at-home order under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), [O. Reg. 11/21: Stay-At-Home Order](#), which came into effect January 14, 2021.

Businesses and organizations must also continue to abide by the public health measures outlined in [O. Reg. 82/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 1](#) including:

- No person shall use an outdoor recreational amenity that is required to be closed.
- All indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities will be closed except for:
 - Facilities operated or for the sole use of high performance athletes, including parasport athletes*, and specified professional leagues (e.g., NHL, CFL, MLS, NBA) and
 - Facilities opened solely for specified purposes (e.g. child care).
 - Some outdoor recreational amenities (for a complete list, refer to Ontario's [Enhancing Public Health and Workplace Safety Measures in the Province-wide Shutdown](#))
- Community centres and multi-purpose facilities (e.g., YMCA) are allowed to be open for permitted activities (e.g., child care services, mental health and addiction support services [limited to 10 people maximum], social services).
- A permitted outdoor recreational amenity may only open if:
 - Any person who enters or uses the amenity maintains a physical distance of at least two metres (six feet) from other person using the amenity (excluding members of the same household)
 - Team sports, or other sports or games where people may come within two metres of each other, are not practiced or played within the amenity
 - Any locker rooms, change rooms, showers and clubhouses remain closed, except to the extent they provide access to equipment storage, a washroom or a portion of the amenity that is used to provide first aid.
- Ski hills are closed.
- Non-medical masks or face coverings are required by all staff and visitors if indoors, outdoors and unable to maintain physical distancing, or in an area requiring a mask.
- All staff must complete the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#) before entering.
- A [safety plan](#) must be developed and made available.

- Equipment and washrooms must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

* Paraspport athletes are persons who are athletes, coaches or officials training or competing to be a part of Team Canada at the next summer or winter Olympic Games or Paralympic Games. High performance athletes are athletes who play in professional sports leagues such as the NHL, CFL, MLS or NBA.

Additional COVID-19 Public Health Measures

The following COVID-19 Public Health Measures are also recommended by Halton Region Public Health.

Provide visitor education

- Educate visitors about the public health measures in place at your outdoor space to protect public health and safety. Consider using social media, websites, and public service announcements.
- Advise visitors to stay home (and not visit the space) if they are experiencing [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Post signage in visible locations at the outdoor space, considering roadways and/or sidewalks used to access the space, for example:
 - [Entrance screening signs](#) (at entrances)
 - [Hand washing posters](#)
 - [Physical distancing posters](#) to remind the public to keep a distance of two metres (six feet) from others in areas where people tend to congregate, such as parking lots, washrooms, and trailheads. Consider including a maximum occupancy, where appropriate.
- If feasible, keep a record of individuals (including names, contact information, dates and times) who attend the space. These records must comply with any applicable privacy requirements and could support case and contact tracing by the local public health unit in the event of an outbreak.

Maximize physical distancing

- A physical distance of two metres (six feet) must be maintained at all times by all people who are not from the same household. Evaluate the outdoor space and implement strategies to ensure physical distancing.
- Use ground markings and barriers to manage the flow of people through the space and consider making paths and staircases unidirectional. If possible, dedicate a separate entrance and exit.
- Where possible, assign seating or mark spaces to help visitors keep their distance.
- Where there are lines of waiting visitors (for example, at washrooms), ensure that patrons stand at least two metres (six feet) apart while waiting.

Reduce physical contact

- Consider installing Plexiglas or other transparent barriers where there will be close contact between people (for example, at skate rental areas or concession stands).
- Encourage the use of contactless payments whenever possible. If handling cash, use alcohol-based hand rub (60-90% alcohol) after each transaction.
- If feasible or when required:
 - Create a booking system that allows people to book a specified time slot to attend the outdoor space. Ensure there is sufficient time between time slots to allow for cleaning and disinfection of the space if needed and to reduce crowding when entering or checking in.
- If food, snacks and/or beverages are offered, provide single-use individually wrapped utensils, condiments and items such as straws and napkins from behind the counter.

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- Provide handwashing stations and/or alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub stations, wherever possible.
- Post [signage](#) to encourage patrons to [wash hands](#) frequently for at least 15 seconds with soap and water or alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub. Washing with soap and water is preferred, if hands are visibly dirty.
- Encourage visitors to bring their own alcohol-based hand rub (60-90% alcohol) and disinfectant wipes.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting, including cleaning washrooms and water fountains, at least twice a day and when visibly dirty. Please see [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Public Washrooms](#) for more information.
- Use products that are [approved by Health Canada](#), with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use.
- Remove equipment that may be difficult to clean and disinfect and limit shared equipment.
 - Ensure that any items or equipment that are shared are cleaned and disinfected between users (for example, skate aids).
 - Encourage patrons to bring their own equipment, if possible (for example, skates).
- Consider additional enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols for the facility overnight.

Wear a non-medical mask

- [Halton Region By-law 47-20](#) and [O. Reg. 82/20](#) requires individuals to wear a non-medical mask or face covering in indoor workplaces and public spaces, unless exempt.
- Non-medical masks or face coverings should also be worn in other situations (for example, crowded outdoor spaces) when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks can be removed when actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity.
- Non-medical masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve and staying home when feeling ill.
- A face shield is not a substitute for wearing a face mask as it does not filter respiratory droplets, that can be inhaled or expelled around the shield. Wearing a face shield alone does not meet the requirements of [Halton Region By-law 47-20](#). If a face shield is worn, it is recommended that a non-medical mask or face covering also be worn.

Employee health and safety

- Use the provincial [screening tool for workplaces](#) to actively screen staff before each shift. If a staff member screens positive and/or if they develop [symptoms](#), direct them to:
 - return or stay home;
 - contact their health care provider or book an appointment at a local [Assessment Centre](#) for testing; and
 - [self-isolate](#) at home.
- Stagger workers' schedules and breaks and provide sufficient space for staff to remain physically distanced on breaks and while on the job, to the extent possible.
- Maintain flexible policies to allow people to stay home to care for a sick family member or self-isolate if required.
- [Educate staff](#) on public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning and disinfection.
- Require staff to wear non-medical masks or a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge:
 - Provide [training](#) on proper use, removal and disposal.
- Establish protocols for people who develop COVID-19 symptoms while at the outdoor recreation space, including:
 - Immediately isolating the person from others and asking them to wear a mask.

- Limiting contact with the person and maintaining a physical distance of two metres (six feet) as much as possible.
- Wearing appropriate personal protective equipment if providing first aid for someone who may have COVID-19.
- Following care, first aid providers should [safely](#) remove and discard the mask and gloves and perform proper hand hygiene protocols.
- If lifesaving efforts are required, follow Heart and Stroke guidelines and using [hands-only CPR](#).
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that may have come into contact with the symptomatic person.
- If a positive COVID-19 case is reported, follow the steps outlined in [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Managing COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace](#).

Additional Resources

- Halton Region Public Health:
 - [Cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Public Washrooms](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Managing COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace](#)
- Government of Ontario:
 - [Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan](#)
 - [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
 - [Ontario Regulation 82/20](#): Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (Rules for Areas in Stage 1).
 - [Ontario Regulation 11/21](#): Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (Stay-At-Home Order).
- Public Health Agency of Canada:
 - [Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

More information

For more information and updates, visit halton.ca/COVID19 or call 311.