

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Restaurants, Bars and other Food and Drink Establishments

Updated September 17, 2021

This document outlines guidance for owners and operators of dining establishments including restaurants, bars, food courts, concession stands and other food and drink establishments to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It does not replace guidance from the Province. This document is for information purposes only, and shall not be construed as legal advice.

Provincial Roadmap to Reopening at a glance

On July 16, Ontario moved into Step 3 of the [Roadmap to Reopen](#). Residents, organizations and businesses must abide by the public health measures for Step 3. See [O. Reg. 364/20, Schedules 1, 2 and 3](#), for regulations for Step 3. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts will continue to monitor the data to determine when it is safe to exit the Roadmap.

Below are some of the activities that may apply to restaurant, bars and food and drink establishments. For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

Step 3

- Indoor dining permitted
- No limits on the number of patrons per table
- Capacity limited to the number of patrons that can maintain a physical distance of 2 metres
- Dining area must be configured so patrons at different tables are 2 metres apart or separated by an impermeable barrier
- Patron dancing not permitted
- Food or drink establishments with dance facilities are permitted with specific restrictions
- Buffets are permitted
- Maximum capacity must be posted

Owners and operators are also responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements outlined in the [Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises](#) and other applicable legislation, including municipal by-laws and the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

Ontario's enhanced COVID-19 vaccine certificate

Starting September 22, 2021, the provincial government will require certain businesses and settings to obtain proof of vaccination from customers/patrons. For more information refer to the [Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#).

Instructions for workplaces from Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health

Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health (MOH) issued [amended Instructions to businesses and organizations](#) to help keep staff and customers/patrons safe. The instructions take effect at 12:01 a.m. on **Friday, September 10, 2021**. They combine key existing requirements from the Province and Halton Region Public Health, with some new requirements. **Compliance with these instructions is mandatory.**

Workplace vaccination

Workplace vaccination policy

To reduce COVID-19 transmission in the workplace, Halton Region's MOH recommends all local employers have a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#). For workplaces with more than 100 workers physically present, Halton Region Public Health requires mandatory [COVID-19 safety plans](#) and vaccination policies in place by September 22, 2021.

Encourage everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine

Getting vaccinated is one of the ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. Here are some ways you can support vaccination at your workplace:

- Develop a [workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy](#)
- Ensure employees are aware that everyone in Canada is eligible to receive a vaccine for free. Proof of identity is required but a health card is not required for vaccination.

Share [COVID-19 vaccine resources](#), with staff, available in multiple languages

Additional COVID-19 public health measures

The following COVID-19 Public Health Measures are recommended by Halton Region Public Health and should be considered in all steps of Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- Post [signage](#) to encourage proper hand washing.
- Provide adequate hand hygiene supplies, including alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand sanitizer at entrances, exits, server stations and in washrooms.
- Ensure frequent [cleaning and disinfecting](#) of high-touch surfaces, washrooms and common areas
- Use a disinfectant with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Use paper towel dispensers instead of hand dryers in washrooms where hands-free taps are not available in order to prevent recontamination of hands when turning off taps.

Maximize physical distancing and reduce physical contact

- Ensure that a minimum distance of at least two metres (six feet) is kept between people at entrances/exits and in washrooms.
- When arranging the dining space, position chairs to be at least two metres (six feet) between patrons seated at different tables, unless they can be separated by Plexiglas or another impermeable barrier, in order to ensure physical distancing.
- Implement a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers are not close to seated customers and use ground markings (floor decals or tape markings) to encourage physical distancing.
- Do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Use single-use paper menus, electronic menus, menu-boards, or chalkboards, instead of regular menus.
- Avoid shared table items (for example, condiment bottles and salt and pepper shakers). Consider using single-serve versions.

Wear a mask and use personal protective equipment (PPE)

- [Consolidated By-law 47-20](#) requires individuals to wear a mask in indoor workplaces and public spaces, unless exempt.
- Workers are recommended to wear a mask when they cannot maintain physical distance of 2 metres (six feet) and cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- PPE (surgical/procedure mask and eye protection i.e. goggles or face shield) is required to be worn by workers when a distance of 2 metres (six feet) cannot be maintained from another person not wearing a mask indoors and cannot be separated by Plexiglass or a barrier.
- Masks can be removed when eating or drinking, but individuals must maintain physical distancing of two metres (six feet) between them.
- Masks do not replace other important public health measures such as screening, physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, and staying home when sick.

Additional resources

- Halton Region Public Health
 - [Mental Health Resources and Supports](#)
- Government of Ontario
 - [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020 \(Rules for Areas at Step 3\).](#)
 - [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Guidance](#)
- Ministry of Health
 - [Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
 - [Tip sheet: restaurants and food service](#)
- Workplace Safety & Prevention Services
 - [Guidance on health and safety for restaurant servers, cooks and dishwashers during COVID-19](#)
 - [Psychological Safety Resources for Leaders During COVID-19](#)