

COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Multi-Unit Housing, Hotels and Motels

Updated December 10, 2020

This document provides guidance for owners and operators of residential and commercial multi-unit buildings (including hotels, motels, condominiums and apartment buildings) to ensure resident safety while using indoor and outdoor amenities (e.g. pool, fitness centre, laundry facility).

Refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Recreational Water Facilities](#) for guidance on the safe operation of recreational water facilities (for example, pools and splash pads).

Refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Public Washrooms](#) for guidance on safely maintaining washrooms used by the public.

Refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Sports and Recreational Fitness](#) for guidance on the safe operation of indoor recreational facilities (for example, gyms).

Residential building owners and operators must also abide by:

- Provincial [Sector-Specific Guidance Documents](#) and [COVID-19: Precautions When Working as a Janitor, Caretaker or Superintendent](#)
- Relevant legislation, including the Halton Region [Mask By-Law 47-20](#), and Ontario's [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#).

COVID-19 transmission

COVID-19 is spread mainly from person-to-person through the respiratory droplets of someone 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.

Gathering in groups poses a risk for spreading COVID-19 to people in our community, including those most vulnerable. At this time, it is recommended that all Halton residents limit close contact to only those people within their household and limit non-essential activities. This includes minimizing interactions with those outside of their household and avoiding social gatherings and organized public events.

Screen for COVID-19 symptoms

- Place [signage](#) at amenity entrances informing residents that they should not use the amenity if they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Recommend that residents complete Ontario's [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) prior to using amenities.
- Individuals who are required to self-isolate under a [class order](#) issued by Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health, must stay in their home and avoid contact with others, including using common spaces such as shared laundry facilities, until after their period of self-isolation has concluded.
- If feasible, maintain a log of the residents who use building amenities (including names, unit numbers, contact information, dates and times). These records should be kept for a minimum of 30 days to support contact tracing by public health.

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.
- Use visual markers (for example, floor markings or pylons) to encourage appropriate physical distancing while using building amenities.
- Organize the space to allow for a one-way flow of residents from entrance to exit by using ground markings and barriers. If possible, designate a separate entrance and exit.
- Post [signage](#) for residents as a reminder to physically distance from others (including limiting the number of people in the elevator at any one time).
- Limit the number of residents who may use building amenities at one time to ensure a distance of two metres (six feet) can be maintained between people within the space.
 - Refer to Ontario's [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#) to determine the gathering limits for indoor and outdoor spaces under the current framework level. The following guidance documents may also be helpful in determining the number of residents who may use building amenities at one time:
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guideline: Sports and Recreational Fitness](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guideline: Outdoor Recreational Spaces](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Recreational Water Facilities](#)
 - Indoor gathering limits apply to events that are fully or partially indoors (for example, party rooms with an attached outdoor patio). Indoor and outdoor limits cannot be combined.
- For indoor recreational amenities:
 - Set capacity limits on change rooms, and adjust lockers in change rooms to support physical distancing (for example, remove some lockers from use).
 - Assign spaces for fitness activities by marking circles on the floor to encourage physical distancing of two metres (six feet) apart.
 - For more strategies refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Sports and Recreational Fitness](#).
 - Ensure your recreational water facilities (e.g. pools) meet public health requirements. Refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Recreational Water Facilities](#) for guidance on swimming pools, wading pools and spas.
- Ensure staff/residents/guests are aware of and comply with various emergency orders, directives and bylaws related to gathering sizes and physical distancing (for example, posting signage, resident notices etc.).

Reduce physical contact

- Restrict access to amenities to residents only.
- Implement an online booking system for use of amenities that allows people to book a specified time slot.
- Keep doors and windows open, where possible and while maintaining the appropriate security, to minimize the touching of door handles and to increase ventilation.
- For outdoor BBQ areas, encourage individuals to bring their own equipment (for example, lighters and utensils).
- If residents are self-isolating and unable to leave their units, ensure they can receive deliveries of essential goods such as, medications and groceries/meals at their unit door so they can avoid non-essential trips outside their unit.
- Property management should provide advanced notification to tenants of impending work.
- In-house food service preparing food for room service should use single-use containers and cutlery.
- Room service staff should not interact with hotel guests and should leave food orders at the door to be picked up by the guests.
- Install plexiglas or other barriers, if possible, where there may be close contact between staff and patrons at service counters or security desks.

Cleaning and disinfection

- In addition to routine cleaning practices, ensure high-touch surfaces throughout the building are [cleaned and disinfected](#) twice per day and when visibly dirty (for example, door handles, counters, elevator buttons, light switches, faucets, toilet handles, hand rails, pens, touch screens and keypads).
- Provide disinfectant wipes or disinfectant in a spray bottle and paper towels, for residents to disinfect common area equipment and surfaces between users (for example, fitness equipment).
- Use cleaning products that are approved by [Health Canada](#), with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use.
- Remove all shared items that are difficult to disinfect (for example, torn mats or equipment, foam rollers, yoga blocks, straps, pool toys, etc.).

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Encourage proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette by including hand hygiene messaging in building communications and posting [signage](#).
- Ensure common hand wash sinks are supplied with hot and cold running water, liquid soap in a dispenser and paper towels.
- Provide alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub at entrances and throughout the building, where possible.
- Provide no touch waste receptacles in common areas and within amenities.

Non-medical masks

- The Halton Region [Consolidated By-law No. 47-20](#) requires the wearing of masks or other face coverings within enclosed, common areas of apartment buildings and condominium buildings, unless exempt. This includes lobbies, elevators, laundry rooms, meeting rooms, and mailrooms. Masks are also required in the public and shared spaces of hotels, motels, and premises used for open houses.
- Learn more about non-medical masks and face coverings, including how to properly wear, fit, remove and clean your mask:
 - [Ontario.ca – Face coverings and face masks](#)
 - [Canada.ca - Non-medical masks and face coverings](#)
 - [Do's and don'ts of wearing a face mask infographic](#)
- Masks can be removed when actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity.
- Owners and operators should:
 - Post signs, such as the [mandatory mask or face covering poster](#), that contain text included in the [Consolidated By-law No. 47-20](#) at all entrances to enclosed spaces.
 - Create a [mask policy](#) for all employees. Ensure all persons working at the apartment building, condominium, hotel, motel or other accommodation service are trained in the requirements of the policy and the provisions of the bylaw that apply to apartment buildings, condominium buildings and other multi-unit accommodation buildings.
- During a visit into a tenant's unit or guest's room, staff must wear a non-medical mask.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (such as a mask, face shield, eye protection) that covers the eyes, nose and mouth must be worn by staff if, while providing service in an indoor area, they:
 - Are required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering; and
 - Are not separated by plexiglas or other impermeable barrier from a person described above.

Building ventilation

- Ensure heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are maintained and operating as designed.
- Any changes to ventilation systems should be carried out in consultation with a professional.

- Limit the use of overhead ceiling fans especially ceiling fans on low ceilings. Avoid the use of pedestal or high-powered fans on/near the floor.

Shared laundry facilities

- Post [Using Shared Laundry Facilities](#) poster in shared laundry rooms.
- Consider limiting the number of residents using shared laundry facilities at the same time in order to maintain a physical distance of two metres (six feet) between residents.
- Encourage residents to sort and fold clothing in their units, instead of the laundry facility.

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.
- Maintain flexible policies to allow staff to stay home to care for a sick family member, or if they need to self-isolate.
- Stagger shifts or offer flexible work hours and schedules to reduce the number of staff at any one time.
- Where shifts are established, prevent mixing of staff between shifts.
- Discourage staff from congregating and limit the use of lunch and meeting rooms.
- Building operators should postpone non-urgent in-unit service requests if a resident is self-isolating, until their isolation period is over. If a request is urgent and someone is self isolating, the service workers should wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Moving in/moving out considerations

- If moving is necessary during the pandemic, public health precautions including physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced at all times. The following resources may provide helpful tips:
 - [COVID-19: Movers - Preventive Measures in the Workplace](#)
 - [Open House Safety. Real Estate Council of Ontario](#)

More Information

For more information and updates, visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID19) or call 311.