

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance: Events and Gatherings

Last Updated September 17, 2021

This document outlines guidance for events and gatherings 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 Reopen 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 events and gatherings for Step 3. For specific questions about COVID-19 provincial regulations, please contact the **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

Step 3

- Maximum 100 people permitted for outdoor public event and social gatherings
- Maximum 25 people permitted for indoor public event and social gatherings
- A social gathering or reception associated with religious services, rites or ceremonies is subject to the above restrictions
 - If the gathering or reception is held at a meeting or event space or at a food or drink establishment, then it is subject to the rules specific to those facilities

Facilities that host events must also follow relevant requirements and legislation including the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Consolidated By-law 47-20](#).

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](#).

Maximize physical distance

- Ensure a minimum physical distance of two metres (six feet) is maintained at all times by all people who are not from the same household.
- Use [signage](#) to support physical distancing. Organize your space to allow for a one-way flow of people from entrance to exit.
- Encourage guests to remain seated and stay within their dedicated space unless using the washroom.
- For multi-day events, guests should remain with the same group.
- Encourage guests to download the [COVID Alert app](#).

Reduce physical contact

- Conduct registration, check-in and payment using online or contactless options.
- Avoid or limit the sharing of equipment (for example, audiovisual equipment).
- Access to the facility should only be permitted to staff and registered guests attending the event. Public access to event spaces should not be permitted.
- Keep doors and windows open, where possible and while maintaining the appropriate security, to minimize the touching of door handles and to increase ventilation.

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 feeling ill.

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- Post [signage](#) to encourage guests to wash their hands frequently for at least 15 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based (60-90%alcohol) hand rub. Washing with soap and water is preferred, if hands are visibly dirty.
- Provide adequate hand hygiene supplies, including alcohol-based (60-90%alcohol) hand rub at entrances and exits and throughout the facility, including high-traffic areas such as lobbies and washrooms.

- Refer to [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) for further guidance on cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Be mindful when serving food

For private gatherings:

- Wash hands before and frequently during preparation. Wash hands before and after eating.
- Consider serving individually plated meals or prepackaged food and drink to minimize handling. Avoid self-serve buffets.

For professional meeting and event facilities:

- All food premises must comply with the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises](#).
- For COVID-19 guidance please refer to [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Restaurants and other Food and Drink Establishments](#).
- Guests must remain seated when eating or drinking except while entering or exiting the area, placing, picking up or paying for an order, using the washroom, or for a health and safety reason.

Ensure building ventilation is properly maintained

- Ensure heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are maintained and operating as designed.
- Maximize fresh air intake by opening windows, if possible.
- 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.

Additional resources

- Halton Region Public Health:
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Restaurants, Bars and other Food and Drink Establishments](#) (if food, snacks and/or beverages are offered at your facility)
 - [Instructions for businesses and organizations issued by Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health](#)
 - Poster: [Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- Government of Ontario:
 - [Roadmap to Reopen](#)
 - [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#): Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (Rules for Areas at Step 3).
- Workplace Safety & Prevention Services
 - [Psychological Safety Resources for Leaders During COVID-19](#)