

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

Updated September 17, 2020

Indoor dining is now permitted at restaurants, bars, food courts, concession stands and other food and drink establishments. Nightclubs can open, but only for the purpose of serving food or drinks to patrons. This fact sheet provides information for these establishments. This document does not replace guidance from the Province, and is subject to the staged and regional approach to reopening in the [Framework for Reopening our Province](#).

Owners and operators who choose to re-open their facility when permitted to do so, are responsible for ensuring measures are in place to keep staff and visitors safe from COVID-19, while ensuring compliance with the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises](#), and other applicable legislation, including the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

COVID-19 transmission

Current evidence indicates that 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 coughs, sneezes 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.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19

Screen for COVID-19 symptoms

- Display [posters](#) informing customers that they should only enter the establishment if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.
- If feasible:
 - actively screen patrons when booking reservations and prior to entry by asking if they have COVID-19, COVID [symptoms](#), have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days and are not [exempt](#) from travel restrictions, or have had close contact with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- As per [O. Reg 364/20](#), establishments are required to keep a log of patron names and contact information for one person in each party, with date, check-in and check-out times and the table number for a minimum of 30 days to support contact tracing by public health if there is a case of COVID-19.

Keep hands and surfaces clean

- [Post signage](#) to encourage people 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.
- Provide adequate hand hygiene supplies, including alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub stations at entrances, exits, server stations and in washrooms.
- 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.

- Provide tissues and no touch waste receptacles to encourage respiratory etiquette.
- Conduct frequent [cleaning and disinfection](#) of all high touch surfaces and common areas including:
 - door handles, light switches, table tops, chairs, sneeze guards, faucets, restrooms, touch screens and dispensers
 - shared equipment such as credit/debit card machines and cash registers
- Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and electronic taps to prevent the need for frequent touching.
- Refer to COVID-19 [Public Health Guidelines: Public Washrooms](#) for further guidance on safely maintaining washrooms used by the public.

Maximize physical distancing

- Ensure that a minimum distance of at least two metres (six feet) is kept between people, including at entrances/exits and in washrooms.
- As per [O. Reg 364/20](#), patrons are required to be seated at all times in any area of the establishment, unless arriving, departing, using the washroom, paying the bill, while lining up to do any of these activities, or for any other health and safety reason.
- 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.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits and washrooms.
- Encourage physical distancing among staff:
 - stagger staff work schedules, breaks and meal times
 - reconfigure breakrooms and eating areas to ensure staff can maintain appropriate physical distancing.
 - rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre (six feet) distance is achievable at all times (this may involve removing surplus equipment and furniture)
 - when physical distancing cannot be maintained, [personal protective equipment](#) must be worn by staff
 - if food take out is offered, rearrange the food pick-up area so that physical distancing can be maintained.

Reduce physical contact

- Buffet-style service is not yet permitted.
- Dancing is not yet permitted, unless it is by a performer, hired by the establishment, who is following physical distancing requirements.
- Singing or music may be performed by a person or group at the restaurant or bar, with restrictions, including barriers between the performers and patrons, physical distancing and the cleaning of equipment between uses by members of the public. Private karaoke rooms are not yet permitted.
- Do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Use single-use paper 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.
- Encourage the use of contactless payments whenever possible. If handling cash, use alcohol-based hand rub after each transaction and avoid touching your face.
- Consider installing Plexiglas or other transparent barriers in areas where there will be close contact between people (for example, Plexiglas at the host stand).

Non-medical masks or face coverings

- [Halton Region By-law 47-20](#) requires individuals five years of age and over to wear a non-medical mask or face covering in certain indoor spaces. Non-medical masks or face coverings should also be worn in other situations when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Some individuals are exempt from [Halton Region By-law 47-20](#) and are not required to provide proof of exemption. Not all exemptions are visible. Please be kind and supportive to those who may be exempt from wearing a mask or face covering.
- Exemptions include employees within an area designated for employees and not for public access, or within or behind a physical barrier.
- Masks can be removed when eating or drinking.
- Train staff on the [proper use](#), removal and disposal of non-medical masks.
- Non-medical masks do not replace other important public health measures, such as physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve and staying home when feeling ill.

Employee health and safety

- Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift, such as completion of a screening questionnaire. If the employee screens positive and/or if they develop [symptoms](#), direct them to:
 - return or stay home;
 - see Ontario's [online self-assessment tool](#) to determine if further care is required;
 - contact their health care provider or book an appointment at a local [Assessment Centre](#) for testing; and
 - [self-isolate](#) at home for 14 days.
- Ensure [appropriate personal protective equipment](#) is available on-site for staff at all times and all staff are trained on [proper use](#).
- Maintain flexible policies to allow employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or self-isolate if required.
- Educate employees on public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including physical distancing, proper frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and cleaning and disinfection.

Resources

- Government of Ontario
 - [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#): Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020
- Ministry of Health
 - [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises](#)

- [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](#)

More information

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

Adapted with permission from City of Toronto Public Health