

COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Outdoor Recreational Spaces

Updated November 6, 2020

This document provides guidance for operators of outdoor recreational spaces including, public parks, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, basketball courts, community gardens, hiking paths and trails, dog parks, skate parks, splash pads and campgrounds, to ensure public safety as these spaces reopen throughout Halton region.

This document does not replace guidance from the Province, such as [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) and is subject to the requirements and restrictions outlined [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 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.

COVID-19 Response Framework Requirements

Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open outlines a graduated approach that allows for public health measures to be introduced and removed incrementally. Each region is placed in one of five levels (Prevent, Protect, Restrict, Control and Lockdown) by the provincial government, based on defined criteria. Residents, businesses and organizations must follow the public health measures for their region's level. Visit halton.ca/COVID19 for updates on Halton Region's level.

Please note: The measures are cumulative. For example, if a public health unit region is placed in the Restrict level, in addition to the Restrict measures, the measures for lower levels (Protect and Prevent) must also be followed.

First Level: PREVENT

- Capacity limits of 100 people outdoors (classes) must be followed.
- Spectator limits of 100 people outdoors must be followed.
- Team and individual sports must be modified to avoid physical contact (exceptions exist for high performance athletes and parasports).
- No more than 50 people are permitted per sports league (exceptions exist for high performance athletes and parasports).
- All staff must be screened before coming to work using the Provincial [screening tool for workplaces](#).

Second Level: PROTECT

Measures from the previous level and:

- Recreational programs must be limited to 25 outdoors.
- A [safety plan](#) must be available upon request.

Third Level: RESTRICT

Measures from the previous levels and:

- Actively screen patrons prior to entry by asking if they have COVID-19, COVID [symptoms](#), have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days, or have had close contact with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Limit the duration of stay (e.g., 60 minutes) for all patrons, with exemptions for sports.
- No spectators are permitted, with exemptions for parent/guardian supervision of children.

Fourth Level: CONTROL

Measures from the previous levels and:

- Capacity limits for gyms and fitness studios of 25 people outdoors (classes) must be followed.
- Capacity limits for all sports and recreational programs in other facilities (arenas and multiplexes) must be limited to 25 people outdoors.
- Team sports must not be practiced or played except for training (no games or scrimmage).
- No contact is permitted for team or individual sports.

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 levels of Ontario's [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#).

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 or concessions stands), 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 rental shops 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, water fountains, locker rooms and change rooms 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 [Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#) 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.

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.

Additional Resources

- Halton Region Public Health:
 - [Cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Public Washrooms](#)
- Province of Ontario:
 - [Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#)
 - [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)
 - [Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan](#)
 - [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada:
 - [Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- Workplace Safety & Prevention Services Guidance on Health and Safety During COVID-19:
 - [Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance Employees](#)

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