

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Guidance for Food Premises

COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for Food Premises; including Patios, Bars and Nightclubs

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Version 14.0

Key Points

- Some requirements for food premises will vary depending on which step the province is in of the [Roadmap to Reopen](#).
- Staff must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift and reminded to stay home and get tested if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- All staff and patrons must wear a face covering when in the indoor area of a food premises.
 - Patrons may temporarily remove face coverings while eating and drinking.
 - Staff working in employee-only spaces who can physically distance themselves from all other staff members in that space do not need to mask while in this area.
- Tables and seating should be arranged so that seated customers are positioned at least 2 metres from other seated customers at all times, unless physical barriers are installed.
- Ensure staff are trained on best practices to serve food and beverages while maximizing physical distancing and avoiding unnecessary handling.

The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly. This guidance is subject to change. Please visit the Southwestern Public Health website (<https://www.swpublichealth.ca/>) regularly for updates and announcements. This guidance is to support owners/operators on how to keep food premises operating safely and includes mandated restrictions and capacity limits in place in Step One of Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#). Timelines for the start of each step of the roadmap are subject to change based on provincial direction.

All Food Premises are responsible for following food safety requirements to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, as outlined in the [Ontario Regulation 493/17 - Food Premises](#). Increased cleaning and sanitizing within premises and proper personal hygiene (e.g. frequent handwashing, covering sneeze) among staff and clients will help to prevent the spread of illness.

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COVID-19 Roadmap to Reopen

Restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments must follow the requirements outlined in the [Roadmap to Reopen](#). The below chart provides an overview of restrictions in place in each step of the Roadmap. More details on the specific requirements in Step 2 and Step 3 are pending the release of the associated regulations.

Step in Roadmap	Requirements
<p>General Public Health Measures for Businesses and Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All workplaces must develop a COVID-19 workplace safety plan and have it available should an inspector or compliance officer request to see it during an inspection. ✓ Workplaces must screen all workers and essential visitors entering the work environment. See the COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces for more information. ✓ Face coverings are required to be worn by members of the public and workers in indoor public places and workplaces, with limited exceptions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patrons are permitted to remove face coverings when eating or drinking. ✓ Personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings and eye protection, is required when a worker must come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering. ✓ All businesses or facilities must limit capacity so that every member of the public can maintain 2 metres of physical distance from every other person. ✓ All businesses or organizations must post signs at all entrances to the premises in a conspicuous location visible to the public that inform individuals on how to screen themselves for COVID-19 prior to entering the premises. ✓ Ensure that washrooms that are accessible to the public are cleaned and disinfected at least 2x per day or as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. ✓ Ensure that patrons in lines outside are able to maintain physical distancing from other patrons/groups. Patrons in lines inside must also be wearing face coverings.
<p>Step 1</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No indoor dining permitted. • Must actively screen dine-in patrons before they enter the premises. See COVID-19 Customer Screening tool for more information. • Must record the contact information for every patron for outdoor dining. Record must be kept for 30 days. • Patrons must be seated at all time, few exceptions apply. • No more than 4 people per table for outdoor dining, unless everyone at the table is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a member of the same household, ○ a member of up to one other household who lives alone, or ○ a caregiver for any member of either household. • The total number of patrons permitted to be seated outdoors limited to the number that can maintain a physical distancing. • Must post a sign in a conspicuous location which states the maximum capacity. • All tables/groups of seated patrons must have a minimum of 2 metres between tables, unless there is a physical barrier.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an outdoor dining area is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning or other element: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at least two full sides of the entire outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers. • If an outdoor dining area at the establishment is equipped with a retractable roof and the roof is retracted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at least one full side of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers. • Karaoke is not permitted. • Buffets are not permitted. • Dancing, singing, and performing music is not permitted. • Music must not be played at a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible. • Night clubs are only permitted to operate as a restaurant or bar
<p>Step 2</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Outdoor dining with 6 people per table permitted. ✓ Karaoke permitted with restrictions (outdoor)
<p>Step 3</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Indoor dining permitted with restrictions ✓ Outdoor dining permitted with restrictions ✓ Buffets permitted with restrictions ✓ Karaoke permitted with restrictions (outdoor)

Note: contact your local municipality to discuss any building, fire, or by-law requirements before adding, extending, or altering an outdoor dining area or patio.

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Guidance for Step One of the Roadmap to Reopen

General Requirements

- A safety plan must be prepared and available upon request. Information on how to create a safety plan is [found here](#).
 - The safety plan should describe the measures and procedures implemented or will be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It should include information on screening, face coverings, physical distancing, use of personal protective equipment and cleaning and disinfection.
 - A copy of the safety plan must be posted in a conspicuous place.
- Workplaces must screen all workers and essential visitors entering the work environment in accordance with [instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health](#)
 - Online version of screening available: [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#)
- For outdoor dinings areas:
 - If outdoor dining area is covered by a roof, canopy, tent or awning, at least 2 full sides must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or barriers.
 - If an outdoor dining area has a retractable roof and the roof is retracted, at least one full side of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or barriers.
- Patrons on the patio may enter the indoor space to use the washroom, make a payment, arrange for rides, and/or pick-up food.

Capacity and Dining Restrictions

- The total number of patrons permitted to be seated outdoors limited to the number that can maintain a physical distancing.
- Must post a sign in a conspicuous location which states the maximum capacity.
- No more than 4 people per table for outdoor dining, unless everyone at the table is:
 - a member of the same household,
 - a member of up to one other household who lives alone, or
 - a caregiver for any member of either household.
- Patrons must be seated at all times:
 - Patrons are not required to be seated while entering or exiting the area or moving to their table, placing or picking up an order, paying for an order, going to or returning from a washroom, or where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- There must be a minimum of 2 metres between tables unless there is a physical barrier. See physical distancing section for more details.

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Physical Distancing

- Limit the number of people in the food premises to allow for physical distancing.
 - Consider requiring reservations and discouraging walk-in dining to manage capacity.
- Minimize the time staff spend within 2 metres of customers.
- Ensure customers maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others.
 - Distance between tables or groups must be at least 2 metres and allow sufficient space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
 - If a distance of 2 metres between tables or groups cannot be easily maintained, plexiglass or another impermeable barrier may be used. See [Guidance for Physical Barriers](#) for more information.
 - The co-mingling of groups should be avoided.
- Consider creating a one-way flow of traffic throughout the space to facilitate physical distancing.
 - Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come within two metres of patio customers.
 - Where possible, create a separate entrance and exit points.
 - Allow enough space for staff movement.
- Venues are responsible for ensuring patrons lining up or congregating outside the venue maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.

During Active Operation

- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to public health protocols.
- Bars and restaurants are **required** to keep customer logs for 30 days.
 - Contact information for all patrons who are seated is required.
 - The following information must be collected:
 - name and contact information of at least one person in each party,
 - date,
 - check-in and check-out times, and
 - location of seating.
 - On request, this information must be disclosed to the Medical Officer of Health or a public health inspector for contact tracing.
 - Consider posting this [Data Collection Notice](#) to alert customers of this requirement.
- Active screening of patrons in accordance with [instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health](#) is required.
 - Online version of screening available: [COVID-19 Customer Screening Tool](#)
 - This screening tool can be used in advance or on-site before the patron enters the business.

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- If the screening is on-site, ensure that screeners receive information and instructions on how to perform this work safely and what to do if a person is not permitted to enter.
- The result of screening must be reviewed to determine whether a person may enter the business or organization.
- Restaurants, bars and food or drink establishments must manage patrons lined up or congregating outside the venue to ensure 2 metres of physical distance is maintained. If patrons are lined up inside, face coverings are also required.
- As per the [Southwestern Public Health Letter of Instruction](#), businesses must ensure the availability of alcohol-based hand rub (60% alcohol or more) at all entrances and exits.
 - Recommend providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer to customers at tables, if feasible.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment

- The person responsible for the business must ensure that any person in the indoor area of the premises of the business wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area.
 - Certain exemptions apply. See Schedule 6 section 2(5) of [O. Reg 82/20](#) for more information.
 - Please note staff working in indoor areas accessible only to employees who can physically distance (at least 2 metres) from all other staff members in that space do not need to wear a face covering while in this area.
- Patrons are not required to wear face coverings while dining outdoors.
 - Patrons should wear face coverings outdoors whenever they are not seated at their table e.g. when entering to pay.
- Personal protective equipment covering the eyes, mouth and nose is required when a worker must come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering (i.e. because they are eating or drinking). At a minimum, this would include a **medical mask and eye protection** (face shield, goggles or safety glasses). If a plexiglass or impermeable barrier separates the worker from the person not wearing a face covering, additional PPE is not mandatory (but a face covering is still required).
- Southwestern Public Health strongly recommends that eye protection be worn by employees whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. See our [Eye Protection Guidelines](#) for more information.
- Employers should:
 - Have a policy in place outlining how the provincial face covering requirements will be implemented as per the [Southwestern Public Health Letter of Instruction](#).
 - Provide staff with a sufficient supply of face coverings.
 - Consider having a supply of face coverings for customers.

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- Train staff on how to implement the provincial face covering regulation, including how to manage individuals claiming exemptions.
- Provide all staff with information on [proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings](#).
- Post [signs](#) at entrances to remind customers of [face covering requirements](#).

Signage

- Post a [sign](#) at the entrance reminding customers who are sick to delay their visit.
- Post a [sign](#) at the entrance indicating that all persons in the food premises' indoor area must wear a Face Covering.
- Post simple signage to communicate to customers the safety precautions and physical distancing measures that are being taken.
- Consider directional arrows to indicate flow or setting up tape or ropes to organize potential line ups, respecting physical distancing.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Menus: reusable menus should be cleaned and disinfected between customers.
 - Consider alternatives such as single-use paper, online, menu-boards or chalkboards.
- Tables: tables must be cleared and then cleaned and disinfected between customers.
 - If tables cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. picnic tables), use tablecloths or table covers, or posting signage indicating that tables are not disinfected.
 - Replace condiments (e.g. ketchup bottle) or seasoning (e.g. salt and pepper shakers) with single-serve options or sanitize between uses.
 - Consider rolling or packaging utensils.
- Clean and sanitize high-touch surfaces frequently (door handles, countertops).
 - Wipe down the debit machine between customers with a disinfectant/sanitizer.
- [Washrooms](#) must be available for customer use and must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.

Staff

- Screening employees for COVID-19 is currently mandatory. Please see the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#) for more information. Ensure all staff complete screening before each shift and do not attend work while sick. **Before each shift, staff must be screened** to identify if they:
 - Have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
 - Have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - Have been instructed by public health to self-isolate due to travel or contact history.

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Any staff member that answers "yes" to any of these conditions must be sent home and advised to contact their local public health unit.

- Staff should be reminded to stay home if they are sick. If an employee becomes ill with COVID-19 **symptoms** while at work, they must go home right away to **self-isolate** and should contact their health care provider or an **Assessment Centre** to get tested.
- Workers with a household member who has symptoms and awaiting COVID-19 test results should self-isolate and not attend work until results are known. If the household members' results are positive, the worker must self-isolate as directed by public health. For more information, visit the **Self-Isolating section of our website**.
- Work in a manner that facilitates physical distancing between staff members and patrons as best as possible.
 - Encourage staff to maintain physical distancing (2 metres or 6 feet) from other staff and customers.
 - Train staff on how to best serve food and beverages while maximizing physical distancing and avoiding unnecessary handling (e.g. avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customers fill/pack leftovers in containers).
 - Assign staff to specific tasks to minimize contact between them.
- When workers remove their face covering temporarily to consume food or drink (i.e. on lunch break) they must be separated by others by at least 2 metres or by plexiglass or other impermeable barrier.
- Train staff on the proper use of gloves and face coverings. Gloves are not required, but if used, they must be changed between tasks and frequently, with handwashing between uses.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the **correct technique** and to avoid touching one's face with unwashed hands.
- Practice safe respiratory etiquette (i.e. cough or sneeze into a bent elbow, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water).

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

- Increase the introduction and circulation of outdoor air by maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or by opening windows and doors, where possible. Avoid recirculating air.
- Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk.
- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Where provided, use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear. Seating and activities should be arranged away from high airflow areas (i.e. not in front of air vents).
- Rooms, where indoor ceiling fans are used, should have an upward airflow rotation.

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- If portable fans are used, limit the blowing of air across people and surfaces by positioning them to provide an upward movement of air.

Entertainment

- Karaoke is not permitted.
- Buffets are not permitted.
- Dancing, singing, and live music performances not permitted.
- Music must not be played at a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible.

Additional Guidance for Bars and Nightclubs

- Night clubs are only permitted to operate as a restaurant or bar.
- Physical distancing must also be maintained when patrons order drinks.
- Recommend table service only i.e. not allowing patrons to line up for drinks. It may be difficult to manage physical distancing in line ups.
- If patrons are permitted to order drinks at the bar, patrons must return to table immediately after receiving drinks. Ensure that there is a plan in place to address physical distancing:
 - Use visual cues on the floor that are 2m apart.
 - Use posters to remind patrons to physical distance.
 - Block off chairs or sections of the bar to ensure that patrons will not be standing next to each other while ordering.
 - Designate staff to ensure patrons are physically distancing. If the bar staff is unable to monitor continually, additional staff must be available.
 - Patrons must immediately return to their table after receiving their order.
- Do not permit patrons to sit at the bar – unless the area is delineated for seating purposes, and it is clear to other patrons that they are not permitted to enter this area to order drinks.

Additional Resources

If you have further questions or concerns related to alcohol, contact the AGCO at 1-800-522-2876 or www.agco.ca/

Government of Ontario. Roadmap to Reopen. Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>

Government of Ontario. Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario. Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/restaurant-and-food-services-health-and-safety-during-covid-19>.

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Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Restaurant and Food Service: Guidance for Health and Safety. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario. Available at: <https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-restaurants-covid-tip-sheet-en-2020-05-19.pdf>