

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Guidance for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

How to Keep your Residents and Buildings Safe and Clean During a Pandemic in Step 3

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People living in multi-unit residential buildings may find it challenging to avoid contact with other residents. Avoiding contact with others in the same building is difficult due to access to common areas like entrances and elevators and using shared facilities such as laundry rooms. Landlords, property owners, and building managers are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread among residents and staff. This guidance is for areas in Step 3 as outlined in [Ontario's Roadmap to Reopen](#) and [Ontario Regulation 364/20 Rules for Areas in Step 3](#).

Key Points

- Face coverings are mandatory in common areas of dwellings (including apartment buildings and condominiums) where people cannot maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from other people.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection in common areas and high-touch areas are best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Post and share information regarding laundry facilities, swimming pools, indoor fitness areas and playgrounds.
- Ask residents to limit social gatherings within the building and adhere to applicable gathering limits. Physical distance should be maintained with those outside of their household.
- Communicate important messages with residents using signs and materials from public health officials.

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The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly. This guidance is subject to change. Please visit the Southwestern Public Health website (www.swpublichealth.ca/) regularly for updates and additional guidance.

What you should do:

Cleaning and Disinfection of Common Areas

- Routine cleaning and disinfection are the best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Residential buildings should follow their protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Be sure to check the expiry date before using cleaners and disinfectants, and always follow the manufacturer's directions to ensure their effectiveness. Products that have a drug identification number are effective and have been approved for use in Canada.
- Gloves should be worn when handling cleaning and disinfectant products.
- In addition to routine cleaning, high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty. Examples of high-touch surfaces in multi-unit residential buildings include enter phones/touchpads, elevator panels and buttons, indoor and outdoor handrails, mailboxes, door handles, recycling and garbage chute handles, and laundry machines.
- Placing hand sanitizer stations in high-traffic areas may be useful for tenants and staff.



Refer to [Public Health Ontario: Cleaning and Disinfection Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Special Use Areas

- Frequently clean all common areas, including elevators, stairwells, and laundry facilities.
- Post [signage](#) by elevators to remind residents and staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Post [signage](#) reminding residents and staff to wear a face covering in common areas when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Share information with residents on [tips for using shared laundry facilities](#). A schedule or sign-up sheet could be used to minimize the number of people in the laundry room at one time.
- In **Step 3**, multi-purpose/community rooms, if regularly cleaned and disinfected, can re-open for gatherings in accordance with provincial gathering limits of a maximum of 25 people indoors.

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The use of multi-purpose and games rooms should only occur if gathering and physical distancing requirements are met, and there are no shared items required.

- Indoor pools are permitted to open in **Step 3**, after a Public Health Inspector has completed an opening inspection, with capacity limited to permit physical distancing of 2 metres. See our [guidance document on splash pads, pools, and wading areas](#) for more information on maintaining pools during COVID-19. To notify public health of your planned reopening, [complete this form](#).
- Indoor fitness facilities are permitted to open in Step 3: See our [guidance document on gyms and indoor fitness facilities](#).
- Playgrounds: See our [guidance document on play structures](#).

Building Ventilation

- Changes to building ventilation, temperature, and humidity are currently not recommended in response to COVID-19. However, these systems in multi-unit residential buildings must be functioning as intended. Additional information on building ventilation is below:
 - Ensure mechanical ventilation is working as intended to supply its designed ventilation rates.
 - Ensure corridor pressurization is enough to prevent air in infected units from flowing out into hallways.
 - Make sure the filters are clean.
 - Suggest that residents increase natural ventilation in units by opening windows.
 - Consult with an HVAC professional prior to making any changes.

Visitor Restrictions

- Ask residents to limit social gatherings and adhere to applicable gathering limits. Individuals are advised to allow close contact only with people living in their household and to maintain physical distance from everyone else. Individuals who live alone may consider having close contact with another household.
 - In **Step 3**, indoor gatherings of up to 25 people are permitted and outdoor gatherings and organized public events of up to 100 people are permitted with restrictions.
 - Please see our [Gathering Limit Guidance](#) for more information.
- The viewing of units for rent or sale should be done virtually, or by appointment only

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- Ensure the needs of vulnerable residents are taken into consideration when restricting visitors, especially those who may require outside assistance such as grocery delivery, medication delivery, and home care.
- Post an “attention visitors” sign to discourage visitors with symptoms of COVID-19 from entering.

Residents Positive for COVID-19

- If someone is positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for 10 days from symptom onset as directed by Southwestern Public Health. It is important that building management protects the privacy of residents, including individuals positive for COVID-19.
- Southwestern Public Health will identify close contacts of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 and provide appropriate instructions for self-isolation.

Health Promotion Messaging

- Communicate important messages with residents. There are many materials for your use that have been created by public health officials.
 - What you need to know to keep you and your family healthy
 - Practice physical distancing
 - Coping with stress
 - Wash your hands
 - COVID-19: What to do in Oxford County, Elgin County, and St. Thomas
 - Food access in Elgin St. Thomas
 - Food access in Oxford

**For more information on COVID-19 from Southwestern Public Health,
please visit our website: www.swpublichealth.ca**

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