

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Public Washrooms

Guidance for Public Washrooms

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Public washrooms are essential facilities in our communities., Since anyone can use public washrooms, precautions will be needed, given the risks of COVID-19.

COVID-19 transmission can occur when people are close to one another. The virus is spread through droplets or aerosols or by touching a surface infected with COVID-19. Since the virus has been found in feces, some changes in public washrooms may be necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The following mitigation guidelines can be used to reduce the risk of contracting respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

Guidelines for using public washrooms

Reduce the risk of transmission:

- Stay home if you are feeling unwell. Complete the self-assessment tool at www.covid19checkup.ca/ and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Do not visit public washrooms when feeling unwell.
- Assess your risk. If you are over the age of 70 or have a chronic health condition, you are encouraged to stay home to reduce your risk.
- Wear a face covering. Face coverings are mandatory while in indoor spaces, including public washrooms.
- Practice **Physical Distancing** (2 metres) when in line and using the public washroom.
- Respect all **Provincial Emergency Orders** that prohibit social gatherings of a specific size, including when within or outside a public washroom.
- Practice **proper hand hygiene** and respiratory etiquette (cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue, immediately throw out the tissue and wash your hands).
- When possible, use electronic push buttons or sensors to open doors, turn on sinks and flush toilets.

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- Upon entering and leaving a public washroom, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds.
- Try to minimize contact with frequently touched surfaces as much as possible.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you start to experience symptoms of COVID-19, go home and **self-isolate** immediately, and contact your local health unit.

Guidelines for maintaining public washrooms

- Post signage at the entrance indicating that face coverings are required.
- Post signage on **proper hand hygiene**.
- Ensure paper towels and soap are well stocked and restocked often in washrooms.
- Support Physical Distancing:
 - Place floor markers 2 metres (6 foot) apart in busier washrooms
 - Post maximum occupancy signs to ensure physical distancing can be maintained
 - Tape off sinks and urinals that are not able to meet the 2 metre (6 foot) distancing requirements
- Clean and disinfect regularly:
 - All high touched areas/surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected at least 2 times per day
 - This includes door handles, sink taps, toilet handles, stall doors/locks, etc.
 - The frequency of cleaning and disinfection may need to increase, dependent on the amount of use. Please refer to the **Public Health Ontario Guidance Document on Environmental Cleaning** for further guidance.
 - Create a cleaning protocol to ensure that the public washroom is kept in a clean and sanitary manner and is well stocked.

Additional Resources

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the [Southwestern Public Health website COVID-19 Public Health Principles for Public Spaces \(SWPH\)](#)