

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Restaurant Re-Opening

## COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for Re-Opening your Restaurant

August 14, 2020

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### Key Points

- Staff should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift and reminded to stay home if they are sick
  - Ensure the functionality of your facility before re-opening, clean and disinfect the premise, and discard any unfit food products
  - Require all staff to wear a face covering when in enclosed public spaces and when physical distancing is not possible in enclosed employee spaces. All patrons are required to wear a face covering when in enclosed public spaces. This can be removed while eating and drinking.
  - Ensure physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained by customers from others
  - Ensure staff are trained on best practices to serve food and beverages while maximizing physical distancing and avoiding unnecessary handling
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This document provides guidance for businesses re-opening their restaurant, or other food premises, after being closed or limited to take-out and delivery only.

**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 additional guidance.**

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.

On July 30, 2020, Southwestern Public Health issued a letter of instruction to businesses to implement mandatory face coverings in all enclosed public spaces in Oxford County, Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas. Employees must also wear a face covering in enclosed employee spaces if physical distancing is not possible. Businesses have a one-week grace period to prepare and train staff. All

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Restaurant Re-Opening

policies are required to be in place by 12:00 a.m. on August 6, 2020. Here are [additional details](#) and [FAQ](#) about this Letter of Instruction.

## Staff Screening

- Before each shift, please actively **screen** staff to identify if they:
  1. Have **symptoms of COVID-19** such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing
  2. Have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days
  3. Have been instructed by public health to self-isolate due to travel or contact history

**Any staff that answers “yes” to any of these conditions should be sent home and advised to follow public health guidance.**

- Staff should be reminded to stay home if they are sick

## Before Re-Opening

If your premises has been closed, the following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening:

- Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes
- Ensure hand washing stations are adequate and functional
- Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation
- Thoroughly clean the premises before opening
  - Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces
  - Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas, such as, door handles and equipment knobs
- Clean and disinfect washrooms and ensure adequate supplies are available
- Check the condition of all food and discard unfit products
- Ensure all equipment is in good working condition (including dishwashers, coolers, hot holding units)
- Ensure adequate amounts of detergents and sanitizers are available on-site for cleaning, sanitizing, and dishwashing

## Indoor Dining Spaces – Permitted to Re-Open July 17, 2020

- All restaurants, bars, concession stands, and other food and drink establishments may open for indoor dine-in as part of the Province of Ontario's [Framework for Reopening Plan: Stage 3](#)
- Nightclubs are not yet safe to open, except for the purpose of serving food or drinks to patrons in accordance with the conditions that apply to restaurants and bars
- Buffet-style service is not allowed

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Restaurant Re-Opening

- All patrons must be seated when eating or drinking
- Live singing, dancing or music performances are only allowed with restrictions. (See entertainment below)
- In the case of adverse weather, customers are permitted to move inside only if the capacity of the indoor dining spaces has not been reached
- Patrons may also enter the indoor space to make payment, arrange for rides or to pick-up food
- Please contact your local municipality to discuss any building, fire, or by-law requirements, before adding, extending, or altering an outdoor dining area or patio

## Entertainment

- Live dancing, singing or music performance by someone under contract (i.e. employed) with the facility may be performed with restrictions:
  - Barriers between the performers and patrons
  - Physical distancing must be in place
- Karaoke is permitted only outside private karaoke rooms. Physical distancing, barriers and increased cleaning and disinfecting are required.

## Physical Distancing and Face Coverings

- All patrons are required to wear a face covering when in enclosed public spaces. This can be removed while eating and drinking.
- Ensure customers maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others
  - Ensure at least 2 metres between groups, unless separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier
  - Limit each group to 10 or people or less
- Limit the number of people in the food premises
  - Consider using reservations and/or
  - Having customers wait outside until their table is ready
- Consider the flow of traffic throughout the space to facilitate physical distancing
  - Where possible, create separate entrance and exit points
  - Allow enough space for staff movement
- Minimize the time staff spend within 2 metres/6 feet of customers

## Signage

- Post a **sign** at the entrance reminding customers who are sick to delay their visit

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Restaurant Re-Opening

- Post a **sign** at the entrance indicating that all persons entering or remaining inside the Enclosed Public Space must wear a Face Covering.
- Post simple signage to clearly communicate to customers the safety precautions and physical distancing measures that are being taken
  - Consider directional arrows to indicate flow and/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 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

- Staff are required to wear a face covering (covering the nose, mouth and chin) when in all public enclosed spaces. If physical distancing is not possible in enclosed employee spaces, a face covering is also required.
- Train staff on how best to serve food and beverages while maximizing physical distancing and avoiding unnecessary handling (i.e. avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers)
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them
- Strongly encourage staff to maintain physical distancing (2 metres or 6 feet) from other staff and customers.
- Train staff on the proper use of gloves and face coverings. Gloves are not required, but if used, must be changed between tasks and frequently, with handwashing between uses

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Restaurant Re-Opening

- 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)

## 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
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer to customers
- Bars and restaurants are **required** to keep client logs for a period of 30 days.
  - 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
    - location of seating
  - On request, this information must be disclosed to the Medical Officer of Health or a public health inspector for the purposes of contact tracing.

## Additional Resources

Government of Ontario. A framework for reopening out province: stage 3. Toronto Ontario. Queen's Printer for Ontario. Available at: <https://files.ontario.ca/mof-framework-reopening-province-stage-3-en-2020-07-13.pdf>

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>.

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>