



Updated: September 5, 2020

COVID-19 Guidelines for Reopening your Food Establishment

The Provincial Government has announced that Ottawa is included in [Reopening our Province – Stage 3](#). This guide provides you with the information you need to reopen your restaurant, or other food premise, after being closed, limited to take-out and delivery only, or restricted to outdoor dining. Part 1 provides advice on preparing your restaurant for food service, and Part 2 helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to supersede the [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#) in place by the Government of Ontario.

The provincial government announced that on July 17, 2020, restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food and drink establishments (e.g., wineries, breweries and distilleries or food service in a banquet facility) can open for dining in both indoor and outdoor areas, when public health and provincial guidance is followed. **Buffet-style service is not yet permitted.**

Note:

- 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.
- Private Karaoke rooms are not yet able to open in Stage 3. Karaoke is permitted only outside of private karaoke rooms, with restrictions including barriers, physical distancing and increased cleaning and disinfecting.

Please note that future Provincial announcement may contain conditions which may result in amendments to Part 2 of this document. Please check OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for updates and new information.

What is COVID-19?

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is known to cause infection in the respiratory system. COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person through direct contact or over short distances by droplets through coughing or sneezing. A person may also get COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes. COVID-19 may have classic symptoms such as feeling feverish, new or worsening cough, pneumonia, and/or difficulty breathing. Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion, among others. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19, although carriers may also show no symptoms. OPH encourages all organizations and agencies to implement their own internal policies for the protection of staff, volunteers, and clients. If you think you have COVID-19



symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, use the [Ontario Government self-assessment tool](#) to help determine how to seek further care.

Support and encourage behaviours to reduce the spread of germs

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a two metre/six feet distance from others.
- Limit the number of people you come into close contact with.
- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when you are in a public setting and when physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. Please refer to OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus to stay up-to-date on the latest information.

Part 1: Food Premises Pre-Opening Checklist

The following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening your establishment for business:

- ✓ Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- ✓ Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- ✓ Ensure hand washing stations are adequately supplied and functional.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles, touchscreens and equipment knobs.
- ✓ Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- ✓ Clean, sanitize and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.
- ✓ Ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
- ✓ Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
- ✓ Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
- ✓ Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes.
- ✓ Consider training staff on new procedures/requirements.



Part 2: Guidance for the Reopening of Food Premises

Operators are responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry of Labour guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from OPH about food safety, or the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation](#).

There is no requirement for those restaurants whom were operating prior to the pandemic to be inspected by Ottawa Public Health (OPH) before reopening. However, if you have a new restaurant, you must contact OPH before opening to arrange for an inspection.

Mask Requirements

- Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of [masks](#). See the new [Directive](#) and the [Temporary Mandatory Mask Bylaw](#) .
- The use of cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering are required in all indoor public spaces.
- Employees are not required (although still recommended) to wear a mask while in areas of the premises that are not designated for public access.
- Employees are not required to wear a mask while within or behind a physical a barrier (Including, but not limited to a plexiglass barrier).
- Patrons are required to wear a cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when indoors at all times, except when eating or drinking: e.g. when inside waiting for a table, walking to and from the table, washroom or when paying the bill.
- As an operator of an enclosed public space you must:
 - ensure that every person who is not wearing a mask while in the premises is provided with a verbal reminder following entry. No person is required to provide proof of exemption.
 - post at every public entrance/exit signage that states all persons entering the premises must wear a mask under the city of Ottawa By-law 2020-186.
 - ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at all public entrances/exits.

Before Reopening

Prepare the physical space

- Establishments must take appropriate measures to ensure physical distancing of at least two meters between patrons from different tables, unless separated by



plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.

- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure a minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table and to maintain two metres/six feet between patrons of different tables (e.g., maintain two metres between the backs of seating when occupied)
- Consider reservations only.
- Maximum of ten (10) patrons per table. OPH recommends four (4) - six (6) patrons per table to limit the number of close contacts.
- Remove waiting area seating and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
- Use visible floor markers for any areas where a line up may occur.
- Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
- Prior to opening, rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six-foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff should wear masks, cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering.
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
- Where necessary, install barriers (e.g. plexiglass) to protect staff and customers when physical distancing can not be maintained.
- Remove buffets and self-serve locations
- Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Discourage staff from congregating during lunch and break times, where physical distancing of 2m/6ft cannot be maintained
- Provide direction to customers:
 - Install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
 - Put up signage for physical distancing, [passive screening](#),¹ and any policies affecting them.

Develop Protocols

- Policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitize between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc., avoid decorative centrepieces.
- Staffing: for example, stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences.



- Note that [active screening](#) and not allowing staff to work if showing symptoms of COVID-19 are required policies. Staff must report any symptoms developed during shift immediately to their supervisor.
- Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage: post signage on, [mandatory masks](#), [handwashing](#), [physical distancing](#), reporting symptoms, and make them visible to staff and customers.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment.
 - Clean and sanitize tables after each use from clients.
 - Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, touch screens, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
 - Shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
 - Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps, etc.
 - Specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning products.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the premises before opening.
 - More details on cleaning and disinfection are available at [Public Health Ontario's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).
- Supply dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to staff and customers, including at the door.
- Minimize unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves).
- Minimize the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers.

Maintain logs for customer and staff contact information

- Under **Ontario Regulation 364/20 : RULES FOR AREAS IN STAGE 3** the person responsible for the establishment must, record the name and contact information of at least one member of every party of patrons that enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, this does not include patrons who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order, these records must be maintained for a period of at least one month, and the business is only to disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law.
 - A sample COVID-19 Customer Log template can be found [here](#).



- OPH strongly encourages restaurants and food premises to also keep a daily log of names, contact information, shift start and end times of your staff to assist in contact tracing should there be a positive patron or staff at our establishment.
 - A sample COVID-19 Workplace Staff Log template can be found [here](#).

Train Staff

- Train staff on how best to serve food, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary handling (e.g. serve to front of table and let customers distribute, avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers).
- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Practice [physical distancing](#) during breaks and in break rooms.
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to gloves and masks as needed.
 - Train staff in proper use of gloves and [masks](#). Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Encourage frequent [handwashing](#) using the correct technique, and to avoid touching face.
- Keep an up to date staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.

During Active Operation

- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- [Screening](#) staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and colleagues.
- Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift
- Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick, they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#), contact their primary health provider and/or get tested.
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting to be seated; have those waiting for a table wait outdoors and, ensure that they do not enter the dining space on the patio. Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter the establishment.
 - Display [posters](#) telling customers that if they have symptoms, they cannot enter.



- Patrons are required to wear a, cloth (non-medical) mask, a disposable mask or other face covering when indoors at all times, except when eating or drinking: e.g. a mask is required to be worn when inside waiting for a table, walking to and from the table, washroom or when paying the bill.
- [Ontario Regulation 364/20 : Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#) states patrons must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except, while entering the area and while moving to their table, while placing or picking up an order, while paying for an order, while exiting the area, while going to or returning from a washroom, while lining up to do anything in the previous list, or where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- Clean and sanitize tabletops between sittings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation for any indoor operations.
- No person shall dance, sing or perform music at the establishment except where stated in [ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20](#).
- If amplification used, keep volume low so patrons do not have to raise voices or lean towards each other when talking to each other.
- No dancing may be permitted in the indoor or outdoor dining areas by patrons.

Patios/Outdoor Dining Area

The rules for distancing, service, and cleaning and sanitation that apply to the indoor area of the food premise also apply to patios/outdoor dining areas.

- If the outdoor dining area is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning or other element, at least two full sides 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. The covering should be as high as possible from the ground – a **height of 3 metres** is recommended as a minimum.
- If the outdoor dining area is equipped with a retractable roof, the roof must be fully retracted and 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.
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure a minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table and to maintain two metres/six feet between patrons of different tables (e.g., maintain two metres between the backs of seating when occupied).
 - Patrons of one table must be seated two metres/six feet from patrons of other tables.



Co-mingling between patrons of different groups should be avoided.

- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers.
- Allow space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
- Consider a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come close to patio customers.
- Use visible markers on the floor (e.g. stickers) where a line-up may occur.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Post [signage](#) promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Provide one or more means of egress.
- In the event of severe weather, patrons may go inside the restaurant to:
 - Take temporary shelter
 - Pack their meal for takeout
 - Pay for their meals
 - Dine indoors if physical distancing permits

* Patrons must maintain appropriate physical distancing (at least 2 metres separation) while indoors. Establishments are encouraged to develop plans to put in place during severe weather situations. The protocol may include considerations such as: floor markings to indicate physical distancing, mask requirements, and having multiple staff processing final payments to facilitate patrons leaving quickly.

Download and Print Signage for your Restaurant

- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Stop the spread of germs](#)
- [Mandatory Mask Requirements](#)
- [How to put on and take off a Mask or face covering](#)
- [Employee Screening Questionnaire](#)
- [Customer Passive Screening Signage](#)

Additional Resources

- [Province of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)
- [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c. 17](#)
- [A Framework for Reopening our Province – Stage 3](#)
- [ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20](#)
- [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law: Info for businesses and operators \(pdf - 219 KB\)](#)



More information

Visit our website OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus , or call us at 613-580-6744.

ⁱPassive screening: Customers screen themselves by following steps described on a poster

ⁱⁱ Active Screening: Staff are screened by someone prompting them with questions, or actively completing a questionnaire

