

COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings

The following guidance is intended to help organizers and permit-holders of events and gatherings prepare for reopening while reducing the spread of COVID-19. Indoor and outdoor events/gatherings covered within this guidance include:

- Concerts and live shows, including performing arts events
- Meeting or event spaces
- Movie theatres/cinemas
- All other organized or spontaneous indoor and outdoor events and social gatherings (e.g. parties, fundraisers, fairs, wedding receptions, funeral receptions).

Provincial Orders

Under the [Reopening Ontario Act – Stage 3 Orders](#), organized public events and gatherings are limited to a maximum of 50 members of the public/spectators indoors and 100 members of the public/spectators outdoors¹ with the following restrictions:

- Indoor capacity limits apply to events that are fully or partially indoors. Indoor events and gatherings cannot be combined with an outdoor event or gathering to increase the applicable gathering size.
- The number of people permitted shall be limited so that every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres/six feet from every other person outside their household or social circle.
- All staff, performers, workers and others providing service for the event/gathering must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres/six feet from every other person, except:
 - if it is necessary for the performers to be closer to each other for the purposes of the performance or rehearsal;
 - where necessary to facilitate the purchase of admission, food or beverages; or
 - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any spectators by an impermeable barrier (e.g. plexiglass) in both indoor and outdoor venues.
- The gathering limits and physical distancing requirements also apply to organized public events and social gatherings held within private dwellings.

Gathering limit exceptions²

- Indoor gatherings for the purposes of [religious services, rites or ceremonies](#), and [wedding ceremonies](#) or [funeral services](#) are limited to up to 30% of the venue's capacity.

¹ Outdoor spaces must have at least two full sides open to the outdoors and not be substantially blocked in any way.

² The capacity limits described in this guidance do not apply to places and/or events that are in compliance with plans approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. See [Stage 3 reopening consultations](#) for more details.

Revised August 19, 2020

- Social gatherings associated with [wedding, funeral](#) or religious services, rites or ceremonies (e.g. receptions) must comply with Stage 3 indoor and outdoor gathering limits.
- [Cinemas](#) may permit up to 50 customers *per auditorium*.
- Multi-purpose and large venues with multiple rooms (e.g. banquet halls, convention centres) may permit up to 50 people per room if there are separate entrances/exits and washrooms for each.
- [Drive-in and drive-thru venues](#) are not subject to gathering limits.
- Festivals are strongly discouraged due to gathering limits and difficulty monitoring/restricting entry.
- Additional information is provided in the Quick Reference Guide at the end of this document.
- Operators of an [adult entertainment club](#), billiard hall, eating or drinking establishment, entertainment establishment/nightclub or place of amusement can apply to the City of Toronto for an [Indoor Dining Capacity Exemption](#).

All planners, organizers, operators and permit-holders of events/gatherings, regardless of their purpose and size, have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with their event/gathering, and their ability to mitigate these risks. They are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who participate in their activities (e.g. staff, performers, volunteers, attendees). This includes management of lines or crowds at entrance and exit points and around the perimeter of the event space.

This document does not replace the need for applicable [City permits](#). COVID-19 mitigation and safety measures are a new consideration as part of event permitting, however, they do not replace any pre-existing permit requirements, health and safety practices, or conditions.

Provincial orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and/or guidance related to events and social gatherings may change. Please check the [City of Toronto website](#) regularly for updated guidance.

COVID-19 Transmission

Respiratory transmission: [COVID-19](#) is an illness that is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk. The *more* people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the *longer* that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of COVID-19 infection and spread.

Contaminated surfaces: It is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus can survive on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for [up to 72 hours](#). More information about COVID-19 can be found in the Toronto Public Health [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#).

Protective Measures to Keep Everyone Safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a two metre/six foot distance from others, when possible.
- Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a mask or face covering when you are in indoor public spaces, as per the City [bylaw](#), and when you cannot maintain two metre/six foot distance outdoors.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Physical Distancing

- [Physical distancing](#) means keeping a distance of two metres/six feet from others. Plan and modify the layout of your setting to ensure enough space is provided for attendees, vendors, performers and staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Calculate the maximum number of attendees permitted according to current provincial regulations or physical distancing requirements, **whichever is less**. Limit the number of attendees accordingly.
 - The maximum number of patrons that should be permitted at any one time based on physical distancing requirements can be calculated as one person per two metres squared (four square metres or 43 square feet) of publicly accessible floor space.
 - Consider a booking system or issuing tickets, even for free events.

Modify programming

- Consider virtual options (e.g. live streaming, pre-recorded shows, small acoustic concerts, solo performances, or virtual reality and other digital experiences).
- Where possible, hold events outdoors instead of indoors.
- Limit or cancel activities where distances or other appropriate controls cannot be implemented such as patrons standing by the stage, moshing and crowd surfing, photo opportunities, autographs, backstage access, etc.
- Buskers and other street performance events that attract crowds outside of a venue's controlled area are not permitted due to the difficulty of maintaining appropriate distancing and managing the size of the gathering.
- Offer more events/gatherings at a reduced capacity rather than hosting a single large event/gathering (e.g. offer multiple, staggered activities with a limit on the number of attendees).
- Allow sufficient time between events/gatherings to allow safe and distanced exit and entry, and sufficient environmental cleaning in between.
- Keep the duration of the event/gathering to a minimum to limit contact among attendees.
- Close or restrict access to non-essential common areas (e.g. photo booth with props, merchandise kiosks, concession stands, communal lounges).

Revised August 19, 2020

- Discourage activities that can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 (e.g. singing, cheering, dancing, playing wind instruments, hugging), and encourage alternative practices, where applicable (e.g. humming, clapping, noisemakers, waving).

Modify and arrange site/floor plan

- Arrange, mark and/or assign seating to ensure no more than 10 people per table, and minimum two metres/six feet distance between individuals who are not members of the same household or social circle.
- Design an attendee flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- Increase floor marking and aisle signage to allow people to find their seats more easily.
- Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas, between chairs, tables, and places where people may gather.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies or bathrooms, and use volunteers, staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- Ensure a minimum distance of at least two metres/six feet between performers and audience seating by blocking off the front two rows of spectator seating, if necessary.
- A plexiglass shield or other impermeable barrier is required between singers and players of brass or wind instruments and any spectators.

Manage lines and gatherings that form within and outside the event

- Use barriers/structures to enclose the event space/venue and manage capacity and pedestrian traffic flow.
- Designate and manage entry and exit points to control the number of attendees. If the maximum number of attendees is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals, departures and breaks, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
- Monitor and manage customer lines within and outside the venue.
- Post [physical distancing](#) signs at all entrances, kiosks and/or service counters.
- Place visual/textural markers spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and guide attendees.
- Discourage people from gathering outside the venue.
- Assign staff to monitor lines and to make public announcements reminding attendees to keep two metres/six feet apart.

Ticket and concession kiosks/booths

- Encourage online or telephone ticket purchases to minimize line-ups at the ticket/service counter.
- Include staggered arrival times to the ticket process to limit on-site queueing.
- Install physical barriers at the point of sale (e.g. plexiglass shield).

Revised August 19, 2020

- Encourage electronic payment by debit or credit card, and to tap instead of using the PIN pad.
- Use a contactless transaction process to exchange concessions and/or scan tickets.
- Review the City of Toronto's COVID-19 Guidance for [Retail Settings](#), as applicable.

Bylaw on Use of Masks and Face Coverings

- All staff, patrons and performers must wear a mask or face covering indoors, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#). Some exceptions apply, including children under the age of two, and people with medical conditions that make wearing a mask difficult.
- Business operators **must develop a policy and protocol** on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).
- Masks or face coverings are strongly recommended outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Educate staff on the [proper use and disposal of masks](#).

Food and Drink

- Venues that serve food and drink must also comply with the regulations and [guidance](#) for restaurants, bars, etc.
- Where food and drink is served, guests must remain seated except to use the washroom, entering and exiting the area, or for the purposes of health and safety.
- Plated meals are preferred.
- Family-style meals are permitted if guests are seated only with members of their social circle.
- Communal and self-serve food services (e.g. buffets, passing of hors-d'oeuvres) are not permitted at this time.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Download and post [Wash your Hands](#), [Cover your Cough](#), [Protect Yourself](#) signs in high traffic areas.
- Provide hand sanitizer dispensers (70-90% alcohol concentration) by entrances and throughout the venue for everyone to use.
- Ensure an adequate supply of liquid soap, paper towel, hand sanitizer, tissues, and waste receptacles throughout the venue and in washrooms.

COVID-19 Screening for Patrons

- Consider pre-event/gathering communications to attendees to share information on protocols and expected behaviours. Reinforce the message that people must not attend if they are ill.
- Use [posters](#) to encourage passive screening before entering the venue. Direct anyone who answers YES to any of the screening questions to go home immediately, self-isolate, and contact Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 or go to an [assessment centre](#) to get tested.

COVID-19 Outbreaks and Contact Tracing

- Develop protocols in advance that specifically address how to safely care for attendees who develop COVID-19 related symptoms, or who need care (e.g. injury, illness, emotional upset) while at the event/gathering.
- Designate a space where attendees can be isolated from others if they develop symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19 until they can go home safely in a private vehicle and/or undergo medical assessment.
- Keep a list of names and contact information for all individuals who attend the event/gathering. Toronto Public Health will use this list to notify and provide instructions for close contacts to self-isolate or self-monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 for guidance if you have been notified that an employee, vendor, performer or attendee has tested positive, and/or you have concerns that others may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at the event/gathering.
- Any personal information that is collected for COVID-19 contract tracing can only be used for this purpose, unless an individual provides their consent. Records should only be kept for 30 days, and then shredded.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Avoid opportunities for the virus to spread through touch, either directly or indirectly, on surfaces and objects.
- Assign staff to complete environmental cleaning and disinfection duties.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects in staff, vendor, performer and patron areas (e.g. doorknobs, tabletops, railings) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.
 - Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
 - Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Ensure washrooms and hand sinks are cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day, or as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.
- Provide waste receptacles lined with a plastic bag, and empty as often as necessary.

Workplace Health and Safety

- Review the [COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses](#) to plan and implement protocols to keep staff safe.
- Assign a site safety manager to ensure updated working protocols reflect good hygiene and safe working conditions.
- [Actively screen staff](#) before each work shift and prior to participating in the event. Questions can be completed on paper, online, or by asking staff directly.

Revised August 19, 2020

- Implement attendance policies for staff, including maintaining a list of the names, contact information and attendance records for all staff, including performers and vendors.
- Train staff on all new policies and protocols related to COVID-19 practices, including physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and the City of Toronto mask by-law.
- Consider alternate approaches to rehearsals or performances that typically require close contact.
- Where work requires the shared handling of goods and/or close contact, ensure proper mask/face covering and hygiene protocols are implemented.
- Ensure dedicated use of high exposure items (e.g. microphones), and frequent disinfecting of high-touch equipment.

Communication

- Provide information to staff and attendees about event/venue operations (e.g. public health measures, available amenities) through different communication platforms (e.g. event webpage, email social media accounts).
- Encourage staff and attendees to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Download and display posters in high visibility areas in your setting to promote messages about how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [Face & Mask Coverings](#)
 - [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Information about COVID-19](#)
 - [Wash your Hands](#)
 - [Cover your Cough](#)
 - [Screening Posters for Entrances](#)

Other Resources

[COVID-19 Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#)

[Reopening Toronto Businesses & Workplaces during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Four Step Public Health Planning Guide](#)

[Guidance for Drive-in/Drive-thru Events](#)

[Planning a Funeral Reception / Celebration of Life during COVID-19 Checklist](#)

[COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding](#)

[Risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

More Information

For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.

Also see Province of Ontario, [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 3](#).

Events and Social Gatherings Quick Reference Guide

Outdoor Events		
<p>Event with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 100 people. • Guests can mingle, and must maintain six feet distancing. • Wear a mask when physical distancing is difficult (e.g. going to the washrooms). • No dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g. dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Event with food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 100 people. • No more than 10 people per table with six feet distancing if not from the same social circle. • Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave. • No mingling or dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g. dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Drive-in/thru event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No maximum. • Cars must be parked six feet from each other. • Can't leave the car except for using the washroom or to purchase food or drink.
Indoor Events		
<p>Event with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 50 people. • Guests can mingle, and must maintain six feet distancing. • A mask must be worn at all times. • No dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g. dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Event with food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 50 people. <i>*Movie theatres may allow 50 people per auditorium.</i> • No more than 10 people per table with six feet distancing if not from the same social circle. • Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave. • No mingling or dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g. dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Religious service, rite or ceremony in place of worship with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 30% of the room capacity, based on ability to physically distance. • No choir, singing, dancing or performers at this time.
All Events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing of two metres/six feet is required by all, unless from the same social circle. • Mask/face covering must be worn at all times indoors except when eating, and outdoors when physical distancing is challenging. • Staff and performers hired by the venue does not count towards gathering limits. 		