COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants, Bars and other Food Service Premises

The following guidance should be used by owners and operators of restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments, to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Owners and operators are responsible for ensuring that their food premises is in compliance with all applicable legislative requirements under provincial and municipal law, including all emergency orders made under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. As every food premises will be different, it is the responsibility of owners/operators to review their own policies, procedures, and site-specific operations, while ensuring that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and maintained. As well, food premises must comply at all times with O. Reg. 493/17: Food Premises made under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist businesses and organizations with information related to legal requirements pursuant to the Ontario Government’s reopening framework as well as Toronto Public Health’s (TPHs) guidance and recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19. While efforts are made to ensure these documents provide accurate and timely guidance, for the most up-to-date requirements, owners and operators are encouraged to consult the applicable provincial regulations made under the Reopening Ontario Act. This guidance is not intended to nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional. The owner of a business or organization is required to be aware of and comply with all applicable legal requirements. Zoning by-laws and other City by-laws may also provide other applicable restrictions that must also be complied with.

Section 1: General Rules (Step 1 of Reopening)

O. Reg. 82/20, Schedule 6 sets out General Rules for businesses and organizations that are permitted to open. As these requirements apply to all businesses or organizations that are permitted to open, they have been summarized below as they apply to restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments:

| Compliance with Applicable Laws | The person responsible for the business or organization must comply with all applicable laws, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and regulations made under them. |
### Public Health Officials
- The person responsible for the business or organization must follow the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.

### Health Screening
- Post signs at all entrances to the premises in a conspicuous location visible to the public to inform individuals on how to self-screen themselves for COVID-19 prior to entering the premises.
- Actively screen every person who works at the business or organization before they enter the premises of the business or organization.

#### Sample TPH Resources:
- Patron Screening Poster
- Staff Screening Questionnaire

### Masks and Face Coverings
- The person responsible for a business or organization must ensure that all persons wear a mask or face covering that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in an indoor area of the premises, or in a vehicle that is operating as part of the business or organization.
  - Some exceptions apply, including children under the age of two, and people with medical conditions that make wearing a mask difficult.
  - Proof of an exemption is not required.

#### Other Requirements:
- Toronto Bylaw 541-2020 also requires operators to:
  - Create a mask policy for their establishment.
  - Communicate this policy to employees and patrons.
  - Post signs at all entrances to the premises in high visibility areas containing the following text:

  **ALL PERSONS ENTERING OR REMAINING IN THESE PREMISES SHALL WEAR A MASK OR FACE COVERING WHICH COVERS THE NOSE, MOUTH AND CHIN AS REQUIRED UNDER CITY OF TORONTO BY-LAW 541-2020.**

  - Train employees on the policy, including exemptions.
  - Train employees on how to communicate with, and accommodate people who may be exempt.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sample TPH Resources:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mask Bylaw Checklist and Sample Policy – available in: [PDF] and [Fillable PDF]</td>
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<td>• Mask and Face Covering Bylaw Sign</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• A person shall wear appropriate PPE that provides protection of their eyes, nose and mouth if, in the course of providing services, the person:</td>
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<td>o is required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering during any period when that person is in an indoor area; and</td>
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<td>o is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier from a person described above.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Capacity Limits</strong> (Note: refer to Section 2 for outdoor patios)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Limit the number of people in the place of business or facility so that:</td>
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<td>• members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person; and</td>
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<td>• the total number of persons occupying any room that is open to the public does not exceed 50 per cent capacity of the particular room.</td>
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<td>o This can be determined by taking the total square metres of floor space accessible to the public, not including shelving and store fixtures, dividing that number by 8 and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number.</td>
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<td>• Post a sign in a location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity the business or organization is permitted to operate under.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Sample TPH Resource:</strong></th>
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<td>• Maximum Occupancy Sign</td>
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<th><strong>Physical Distancing</strong></th>
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<td>• Every person in the premises of a business or organization must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person, with the following exceptions:</td>
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<td>o where it is necessary to complete a transaction or to receive a service, if the member of the public wears a mask or face covering unless an exemption applies; or</td>
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<tr>
<td>o when passing one another in a confined location, such as in a hallway or aisle, if the member of the public wears a mask or face covering (unless an exemption applies).</td>
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</table>
Entrances and Managing Lines

- Ensure that patrons are not permitted to line up or congregate:
  - outside the business or place unless they are maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons.
  - inside the business or place unless they are:
    - maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons; and
    - wearing a mask or face covering, unless entitled to an exemption.

Safety Plan

- Prepare a safety plan, which:
  - describes measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility or establishment to reduce the spread of COVID-19;
  - includes measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning, disinfecting and PPE;
  - is in writing and made available to any person for review, upon request; and
  - is posted in a conspicuous place where it is likely to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.

Sample TPH Resources:

- [COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist](https://example.com) available in: [PDF] and [Fillable PDF], and [Instructions for Completing the COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist](https://example.com)

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Ensure the following are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition:
  - washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public; and
  - equipment that is rented to, provided to, or provided for the use of members of the public.
    - Applies to computers, electronics and other machines or devices that members of the public are permitted to operate.

Section 2: Additional Rules (Step 1 of Reopening)

O. Reg. 82/20, Schedule 7 sets out additional sector specific conditions that businesses and organizations must follow to be permitted to open. These conditions have been summarized below as
they apply to all restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments:

| Indoor Dining | • **No indoor dining** or **buffet-style service** may be provided.  
• Any interior dining spaces inside **shopping malls**, including any tables and seating in food courts, must be closed.  
• Indoor dining is allowed **only** at food establishments in the following settings if the conditions set out in [O. Reg. 82/20](https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-regulation-8220) and [O. Reg. 263/20](https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-regulation-26320) are met:  
  o hospitals;  
  o airports; or  
  o within a business or place where the only patrons permitted at the establishment are persons who perform work for the business or place in which the establishment is located.  
• Refer to [O. Reg. 82/20](https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-regulation-8220) and [O. Reg. 263/20](https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-regulation-26320) for specific requirements. |
| Outdoor Seating | • No buffet-style service may be provided.  
• The outdoor dining area must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:  
  o a distance of at least two metres; or  
  o plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.  
• **No more than four people may be seated together** at an outdoor table at the establishment unless everyone seated at the table is:  
  o a member of the same household,  
  o a member of up to one other household who lives alone, or  
  o a caregiver for any member of either household.  
• Physical distancing is not required while patrons are seated together at a table.  
• Patrons must be seated at all times in any **outdoor dining area** of the establishment except:  
  o while entering the area and while moving to their table;  
  o while placing or picking up an order;  
  o while paying for an order;  
  o while exiting the area;  
  o while going to or returning from a washroom;  
  o while lining up to do anything described above; or  
  o where necessary for the purposes of health and safety. |
### Outdoor Dining Capacities
- The total number of patrons permitted to be seated outdoors in the establishment must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person at the establishment.
- A sign must be posted in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity permitted to operate under.

**Note:** the 50% capacity limit noted in Section 1 does not apply to outdoor patios

### Active Screening of Patrons
- The establishment must **actively screen any dine-in patrons** in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health before they enter the premises of the establishment.

### Province of Ontario Resources:
- Customer Screening Questions – available [online](#) and in [PDF](#)

### Customer Records
- Record the name and contact information of every patron that enters an area of the establishment, unless the patron temporarily enters the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order.
- Maintain the records for a period of at least one month.
- Only disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, or as otherwise required by law.

**Sample TPH Resource:**
- [Customer Log](#)

### Line-ups and/or Congregating
- No patron may be permitted to line up or congregate:
  - **outside** the establishment unless they are maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons inside or outside the establishment.
  - **inside** the establishment unless they are:
    - maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons inside or outside the establishment; and
    - wearing a mask or face covering, unless entitled to an exemption.
Outdoor Roofs, Canopies, Tents, Awnings, etc.

- If an outdoor dining area at the establishment is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning or other element, at least two full sides of the entire outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors, and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers.
- If an outdoor dining area at the establishment is equipped with a retractable roof and the roof is retracted, 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.

Music and Entertainment

- Music must not be played at a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible. City of Toronto by-laws
- No person shall dance, sing or perform music at the establishment.

Note: other applicable City of Toronto by-laws place additional restrictions on music and entertainment for outdoor dining areas.

Section 3: Recommendations for Meeting and/or Enhancing Compliance

The following recommendations are offered to assist restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments in meeting and/or enhancing compliance with some of the requirements summarized in Sections 1 and 2 of this document.

Measures for all Workplaces, Businesses and Organizations

Review the Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace to plan and implement protocols to keep staff and customers safe. Operators should also consider the following:

- **Health screening for staff and customers**
  - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, who has been in contact with a person with COVID-19, or has traveled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, should not enter the establishment.

- **Cleaning and disinfecting**
  - Develop enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection policies and procedures.
  - Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least twice a day, and more frequently as needed.
  - Clean and disinfect customer tables and seating surfaces after each use.
  - Menus in the form of menu-boards, chalkboards, online from customers' mobile devices, or single-use paper menus are preferred. Reusable menus must be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
  - For cleaning and sanitizing food contract surfaces, equipment and utensils, follow standards prescribed in O. Reg. 493/17: Food Premises. The Province has also provided additional COVID-19 guidance for food premises.
Managing COVID-19 in the workplace
- Employers must immediately notify Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 as soon as they become aware of two or more people who test positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day interval in connection with their workplace premises, as per Toronto Public Health Instructions for Workplaces and Class Order for Workplaces Experiencing a COVID-19 Outbreak.
- In the event that a case of COVID-19 is reported in a staff member or customer, it is not necessary for the establishment to discard any food that they may have been in contact with.

Staff Training
- Educate staff on the proper use of masks/face coverings. They should change masks when moist or dirty. See more information on use of non-medical masks or face coverings.
- Discourage staff from congregating in the lunchroom or common areas.
- Educate staff on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
  - Wash hands frequently with liquid soap and warm water for at least 15-30 seconds, or use hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) if water and soap is not available.
  - Cover coughs or sneezes with the elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash hands.
- Educate staff on the proper use of gloves. If staff use gloves, it is important to change them every hour, or more often, as necessary.
  - Hands should be washed and/or sanitized between changes.
  - Remove gloves when changing tasks.
  - When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.
- Encourage staff 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.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- In addition to the PPE requirements set-out in Section 1, staff should wear PPE consisting of a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (goggles or face shield) if physical distancing or separation via a physical barrier cannot be maintained.
- Non-medical masks or face coverings are not suitable for use as PPE.
- See more information about PPE.
**Entrances and Managing Lines**
- In addition to the requirements set out in Sections 1 and 2 of this document, encourage customers to wear a mask or face covering while waiting in line outdoors.
- Post signs which outline physical distancing requirements in lines and discourages individuals from gathering on the property or nearby right of way.
- Use visual markers, stickers or pylons to encourage physical distancing while waiting outside.
- Post an employee at the entrance to monitor the number of customers entering and leaving, and control/stagger customer entry to prevent crowding.
- Once the capacity limit is reached, allow one customer in for every customer that leaves.
- Consider requiring reservations during peak dining times to minimize lines and control flow.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) available for use by the entrance.

**Physical Distancing**
- Remind customers and staff to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres.
- Post physical distancing signs at all entrances, service counters, and cashiers.
- Place markers or circles on the ground so customers know where to stand when waiting or interacting with staff.
- Design a walking flow for the establishment (e.g. creating one-directional aisles with prominent signage and/or floor markings), where appropriate.
- Install plexiglass/barriers, if possible, where there will be close contact between staff and customers, at service counters and cashiers.
- Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that at least two metres distance between staff can be achieved.
- After placing a take-out order, encourage customers to wait at a distance until their food is ready.
  - Consider implementing an order numbering system to identify orders for pick-up.
  - Leave orders on the counter or set-up a side table for customers to pick it up their order without the need for staff contact.

**Protection of Food, Packaging and Utensils**
- There is currently no evidence of COVID-19 being transmitted through food. However, food should be protected from contamination at all times, as outlined in O. Reg. 493/17: Food Premises.
- Provide individually wrapped or pre-packaged disposable utensils (i.e. forks, knifes, spoons).
• Do not provide squeeze bottles or open communal containers for customer use.
  o Use individual packets or pre-portioned containers for condiments (e.g. ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise). Alternatively, employees can apply condiments as per the customer’s choice.

Self-Service of Food or Beverage
• Buffet-style or self-service of ready-to-eat food is not permitted.
• Self-serve beverages (e.g. soda, coffee) is also not permitted.
• Staff may serve customers cafeteria style, provided all public health measures outlined in this document are adhered to (e.g. physical distancing, one-way flow, and plexiglass barriers).

Customer Records
• In addition to the requirements set-out in Section 2, customer records should be kept in a legible manner, and include the following:
  o name, email address and telephone number of at least one person from each party; and
  o the date the person attended, the party’s check in and check out times, and the party’s table number, or if there is no table number, the location where the party was served or consumed food or drink.
• See the sample Customer Log template, which can be used.

Food Trucks and Other Mobile Food Premises
• Avoid parking in the same lot or in close proximity to other mobile food premises.
• Assign an employee to actively monitor customer line-ups to prevent crowding.
• If crowds develop or physical distancing cannot be maintained, the operator should close down and move their premises to another location.

Deliveries
• Implement contactless delivery practices where possible. Contactless deliveries allow staff to leave a delivery at a doorstep, and move back to a distance of at least two metres while verifying receipt of the delivery with the person receiving the delivery.
• Encourage customers to complete their transactions electronically (e.g. pre-payment in an app or over the phone). This eliminates the need for close contact between staff and the person receiving the delivery.
• Delivery staff should keep interactions brief, maintain physical distancing as much as possible, wear a mask or face covering, and sanitize their hands after each delivery.
• Avoid customer handling of mobile payment terminals and pens, where possible. Clean and disinfect these items if shared with a delivery recipient after each use.

Communication
• Provide information to customers about business operations (e.g. public health measures, advance order options, curbside pickup).
• Encourage staff and customers to get a COVID-19 vaccination if they haven’t already.
• Designate a contact person (e.g. supervisor) to respond to COVID-19 concerns from staff and customers.
• Print and post signs in highly visible areas, including at entrances, service counters, cashiers, and washrooms as a reminder for everyone to practice public health measures:
  o COVID-19: Posters & Graphics
  o COVID-19 Vaccine Resources
  o COVID-19 Fact Sheet

Other Resources
COVID-19 Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace
COVID-19 Guidance for Employers on Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace
COVID-19 Guidance for Food Stores
COVID-19 Guidance for Farmers’, Fresh Food & Holiday Markets
COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events
COVID-19 Guidance for Shopping Malls
Tip Sheet - Restaurant and Food Service: Guidance for Health and Safety (also available in: Arabic; Farsi; Gujarati; Korean; Punjabi; Simplified Chinese; Tagalog; Tamil; Traditional Chinese; & Urdu)
Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety during COVID-19
Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19

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

References