COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings

The following guidance is intended to help organizers and permit-holders of events and gatherings reduce the spread of COVID-19. It describes the requirements under O. Reg. 364/20 of the Reopening Ontario Act and is applicable to:

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

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist individuals and businesses with information related to the Ontario Government’s reopening framework as well as Toronto Public Health requirements to reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is important to know that breaches of some of these directions will constitute offences under provincial regulations or other public health legal requirements. While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. 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.

Organizers, operators and permit-holders of events/gatherings, regardless of their purpose or 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, patrons). This includes managing lines and crowds within and around the perimeter of the event space.

What is permitted (O. Reg. 364/20)

Note: Physical distancing and wearing masks indoors is required in all settings, as per O. Reg. 364/20, even if fully vaccinated.

Organized public events and social gatherings

- Organized public events and social gatherings are limited to 25 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, with physical distancing.
  - Exceptions include an organized public event at a business or place to which a capacity limit is described in Schedule 1 or 2 of O. Reg. 364/20, if the event is held in accordance with that capacity limit.
Concert venues, theatres and cinemas

Concert venues, theatres and cinemas may open if they comply with the following conditions:

**Outdoor capacity limits:**

- The number of members of the public at an outdoor seated concert, event, performance or movie must not exceed **75 per cent** of the usual seating capacity for the concert venue, theatre or cinema, or **15,000 persons**, whichever is less.
- The number of members of the public in the outdoor area of the concert, event, performance or movie must not exceed **75 per cent** capacity of the concert venue, theatre or cinema, or **5,000 persons**, whichever is less.
  - This can be calculated by taking the total square metres of area accessible to the public, dividing that number by 1.33, and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number.

**Indoor capacity limits:**

- The number of members of the public at an indoor seated concert, event, performance or movie must not exceed **50 per cent** of the usual seating capacity for the concert venue, theatre or cinema, or **1,000 persons**, whichever is less.
- The number of members of the public permitted to be in a particular room in the indoor portion of the seated concert, event, performance or movie at any one time must not exceed **50 per cent** of the usual seating capacity of the room in the concert venue, theatre or cinema, and the total capacity for the particular room cannot be added to increase the total capacity of the concert venue, theatre, or cinema as provided above.

**Additional requirements:**

- Every member of the public who is outdoors at a concert, event, performance or movie must wear a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless they are entitled to an exception as noted in the regulation, or are seated with members of their own household only, and every member of the household is seated at least two metres from every person outside their household.
- No member of the public may attend a seated concert, event, performance or movie within the concert venue, theatre or cinema unless they have made a reservation to do so.
- The person responsible for the concert venue, theatre or cinema must post a sign in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the capacity limits under which the concert venue, theatre or cinema is permitted to operate and the capacity limits of any seated concert, event, performance or movie within the concert venue, theatre or cinema.

For more information, see [Live Performance Health & Safety during COVID-19](#).
Drive-in / drive-through events and performances

Outdoor drive-in or drive-through concert venues and theatres and drive-in cinemas may open with conditions. See COVID-19 Guidance for Drive-in / Drive-through Events for more information.

Meeting and event spaces, conference and convention centres

The person responsible for a business or place that is open may rent out indoor or outdoor meeting or event space if the business or place complies with the following conditions:

**Indoor capacity limits:**

- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in an indoor portion of the rentable meeting or event space at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person and may not exceed 50 per cent capacity, or 1,000 persons, whichever is less.
  - 50 per cent capacity can be determined by taking 50 per cent of the capacity of every room in the rentable meeting or event space, as calculated in accordance with Ontario Regulation 213/07 (Fire Code), made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and totalling the result.
- The number of members of the public permitted to be in a particular room in the indoor portion of the rentable meeting or event space at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the room and in any event may not exceed 50 per cent capacity of the room, as calculated above. The total capacity for the particular room cannot be added to increase the total capacity of the indoor portion of the rentable meeting or event space as above.
- **Rooms must be separated** by a partition with a hard, non-porous surface that can be easily and routinely cleaned and disinfected.*

**Outdoor capacity limits:**

- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in an outdoor portion of the rentable meeting or event space at any one time may not exceed 75 per cent capacity, or 5,000 persons, whichever is less.
  - 75 per cent capacity can be determined by taking the total square metres of area accessible to the public, dividing that number by 1.33, and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number.

**Additional requirements:**

- The person responsible for the establishment must post a sign in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the capacity limits under which the establishment is permitted to operate.*
The rented space must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by a distance of at least two metres, or plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.

The person responsible for the business or place must actively screen individuals in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health before they enter the indoor premises of the business or place.

The person responsible for the business or place shall,
- record the name and contact information of every member of the public who attends a meeting or event;
- maintain the records for a period of at least one month; and
- provide this information to Toronto Public Health upon request.

Exceptions:
- See O. Reg. 364/20 Schedule 2, section 4 for exceptions that apply if the business or place is rented out,
  - for a day camp or overnight camp for children operating in a manner consistent with the safety guidelines for COVID-19 for day camps produced by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health;
  - to a provider of child care within the meaning of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014;
  - for the purpose of the provision of social services;
  - for the purpose of delivering or supporting the delivery of court services;
  - for operations by or on behalf of a government; or
  - for the purpose of delivering or supporting the delivery of government services.
  - to participants in an international single sport event hosted by a national sport organization that is either funded by Sport Canada or recognized by the Canadian Olympic Committee or the Canadian Paralympic Committee.
  - to participants in a sport league or association identified in the regulation.

Religious ceremonies, rites and services
- Indoor and outdoor gatherings for the purpose of a wedding, funeral, religious service, rite or ceremony are permitted with restrictions.
- See COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship, Checklist for Planning a Funeral Reception / Celebration of Life and Checklist for Planning a Wedding for more information.
Measures for All Workplaces, Organizations & Businesses

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

- **Staff attendance and operations**
  - Collect contact information of all staff, essential visitors and other persons who provide work for or attend the facility.

- **Health screening for staff and patrons:**
  - **Active health screening** (available in multiple languages) is required for every person who works at the business or organization before they enter the premises of the business or organization.
  - Ask all patrons to self-screen for COVID-19 (available in multiple languages) prior to entering the facility.
    - Meeting and event spaces, including conference and convention centres, must actively screen all patrons entering the facility.

**Safety Plan**

All businesses and workplaces must prepare a safety plan. This safety plan must:

- Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
- Include measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) and preventing and controlling crowding.
  - Concert venues, theatres, cinemas and drive-in/through events/venues, shall also include information as to how the business, place or event will,
    - prevent gatherings and crowds in the business or place or at the event;
    - ensure that physical distancing and wearing of masks in lines as applicable is complied with in the business or place or at the event; and
    - mitigate the risk of any interactive activities, exhibits or games that may be included in the business or place or at the event.
- Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.
- Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.

Use the COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist to develop your safety plan.
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems

- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:
  - Maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or
  - Opening windows and doors, if it is safe to do so
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system, if provided.
- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.
- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.
- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, position fan with an upward movement to avoid blowing of air across people and surfaces.
- There is no evidence the use of portable air purifiers will prevent the spread of COVID-19. If used, follow the manufacturer’s directions to decide where best to place the device. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on maintenance.
- For more information, review the COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet.

Use of Masks and Face Coverings

- All individuals must wear a mask or face covering indoors, as per O. Reg. 364/20.
- Every person must wear a mask while attending an organized public event or gathering and within two metres of another individual who is not part of their household.
- Masks are required outdoors at a concert, event, performance or movie unless seated with household members only and every member of the household is seated at least two metres from every other person outside their household.
  - Masks or face coverings are strongly recommended in all outdoor spaces when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks must be worn in line-ups indoors, and are recommended in line-ups outdoors.
- Some exceptions apply, including children under the age of two, and people with medical conditions that make wearing a mask difficult.
- Masks may be temporarily removed if a person is performing or rehearsing in a concert, artistic event, theatrical performance or other performance.
- City of Toronto bylaw requires that businesses with indoor spaces that are open to the public must develop a policy on the wearing of masks. Use the Mask By-law Checklist and Sample Policy.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment that covers the eyes, nose and mouth must be worn if, while providing service in an indoor area, the person
is required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering; and
is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.

**Physical Distancing**

- All people must maintain at least a two metres [physical distance](#) from others they don’t live with.
- If live entertainment is performed for spectators, the performers must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from any spectators or be separated from any spectators by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Operators must ensure that patrons waiting in line maintain a distance of two metres from others.
  - Post [physical distancing](#) signs at all entrances, kiosks and/or service counters.
  - Place visual/textural markers spaced two metres apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing.

**Capacity & Gathering Limits**

- In addition to capacity limits described within O. Reg. 364/20 and above, the person responsible for a place of business or facility that is open to the public shall limit the number of persons in the place of business or facility so that the members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility.
- Calculate the maximum number of patrons permitted according to current provincial regulations or physical distancing requirements, **whichever is less**. Limit the number of patrons 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.
- Any business, place, facility or establishment at which food or drink is sold or served while dance facilities are provided, including meeting and event spaces, conference and convention centres; concert venues, theatres and cinemas, must comply with regulations for food and drink establishments with dance facilities,
  - at any time when food or drink is served or sold at the business, place, facility or establishment while dance facilities are provided; and
  - in any part of the business, place, facility or establishment where the food or drink is served or sold and dance facilities are provided.
  
  See [Guidance for Food Premises](#) for more information.
Provincial Proof of Vaccination Policy

- Beginning September 22, 2021, patrons are required to show proof of being fully vaccinated to access indoor areas of some businesses and settings, including meeting and event spaces, concert venues, theatres and cinemas. Learn more at Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination.

Food and Drink

- Indoor and outdoor dining is now permitted with restrictions.
- Vendors engaged in onsite food/beverage preparation in temporary establishments (e.g. tents/booths) at special events must comply with O. Reg. 493/17: Food Premises; including, but not limited to: the provision of a handwashing station for food handlers which is adequately supplied with hot and cold running water, an enclosed waste collection tank, liquid soap in a dispenser and paper towels.
- See Guidance for Food Premises for more information.

Live Entertainment

- Performers must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from any spectators or be separated from any spectators by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.

Recommendations to Promote Public Health Measures

Modify Programming

- Offer in-person services/programming outdoors whenever possible.
  - If using a tent or canopy, at least two full sides must be open to the outdoors and not substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable barriers.
  - Limit capacity under the tent/canopy to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
  - Arrange tables and chairs to promote physical distancing.
  - Require masks or face coverings if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Limit or cancel activities where distances or other appropriate controls cannot be implemented.
- 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 patrons.
- Patrons should remain seated as much as possible.
- Close or restrict access to non-essential common areas (e.g. communal lounges).
Discourage activities that increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 (e.g. singing, cheering, dancing, playing wind instruments, hugging). Encourage alternative practices, such as humming, clapping, noisemakers, waving.

Modify and Arrange Site/Floor Plan
- Design traffic 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.
- Arrange, mark and/or assign seating to ensure at least two metre distance between individuals who are not members of the same household.
- Ensure that patrons can access their event/meeting area without wandering (i.e. entering other event/meeting rooms/areas). If possible, use a dedicated entrance/exit.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies or bathrooms. Use volunteers, staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- Ensure enough space for people in high-traffic areas, between chairs, tables, and places where people may gather.

Manage Lines and Gatherings Within and Outside the Venue
- Monitor and manage patron lines within and outside the venue.
- Use barriers/structures to enclose the event space/venue.
- Designate entry and exit points. Manage these areas to control the number of patrons. If the maximum number of patrons is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals, departures and breaks to reduce congestion at entrances and exits and in common areas.
- Discourage people from gathering and loitering outside the venue.

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).
- 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.
Encourage Vaccination

- Encourage guests and staff born in 2009 or earlier to get vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine. Read and share information about the vaccine and where to get vaccinated.
- Post signs and share COVID-19 vaccine resources, available in multiple languages.
- It is strongly recommended that organizations determine a method for attendees of gatherings of 1,000 individuals or more to demonstrate proof of their vaccination status.

Communication

- Provide information to staff, performers and patrons about event/venue operations (e.g. public health measures, available amenities).
- Encourage staff and patrons 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 information and display posters in high-visibility areas in your setting to promote messages about how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - COVID-19: Spread the Word
  - COVID-19 Fact Sheet

Other Resources

- Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace
- Guidance for Employers on Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace
- Planning a Funeral Reception / Celebration of Life during COVID-19 Checklist
- COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding
- Guidance for Drive-in & Drive-through Events
- Live Performance & Safety during COVID-19
- 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.

This document does not replace the need for applicable City of Toronto 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.