

GOOD NEIGHBOUR GUIDE FOR LATE-NIGHT BUSINESSES



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JANUARY 2024

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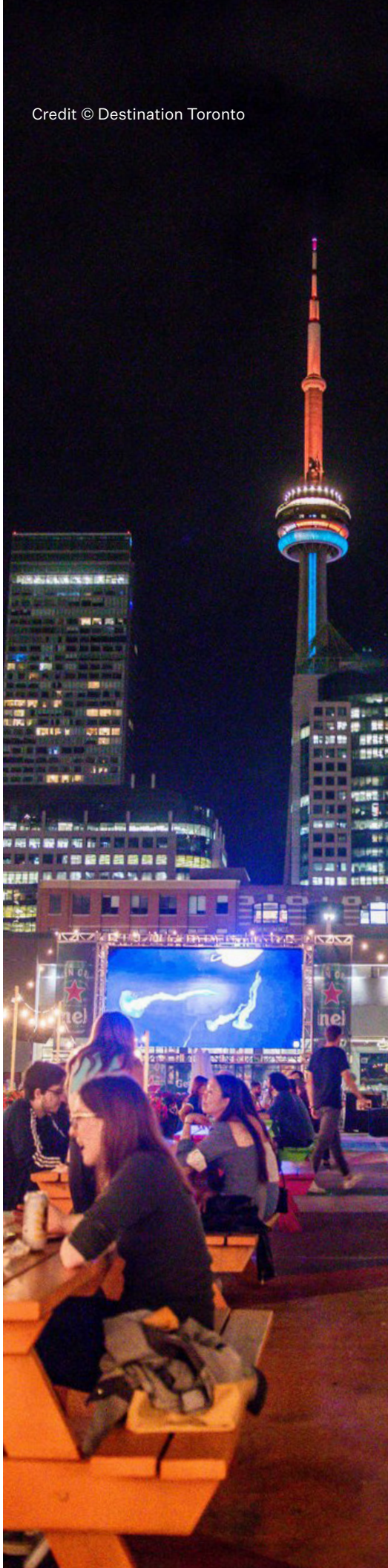
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ABOUT THE GUIDE

Background

This Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses is intended as a comprehensive resource for late-night businesses – live music venues, nightclubs, bars, restaurants, retailers, service providers, and others operating between the hours 6 p.m - 6 a.m. The guide presents relevant information and provides links to related resources, from the City of Toronto and external sources, intended to support operators in running a safe establishment that also benefits the surrounding community, including nearby residents and other businesses. By offering best practices from around the world, in addition to sharing what’s already being done right here in Toronto, the Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses will assist late-night establishments seeking to create safer spaces and working environments, encourage responsible consumption, and follow general good-neighbour principles.

The following pages in this guide will provide you with a repository of resources and links to help you run a safe and neighbourly late-night establishment. Sections include:

- Opening your Late-Night Establishment
 - Minimizing Sound and Noise
 - Resident and Neighbour Relations
 - Keeping your Venue Safe
 - Keeping your Venue Organized
 - Transportation and your Establishment
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
 - Other City of Toronto Resources

This guide was created by the City of Toronto’s [Music Office](#) and [Visitor Economy Office](#) (both units of Film and Entertainment Industries, Economic Development and Culture Division).¹ The content and priorities of the guide were also informed by suggestions and contributions from the Night Economy Internal Working Group (IWG), which includes employees from various Provincial and City Divisions and Agencies, including:

- City Planning
 - Economic Development and Culture (EDC)
 - Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS)
 - Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA)
 - Transportation Services
 - Toronto Building
 - Toronto Fire
 - Toronto Paramedic Services
 - Toronto Police Services
 - Toronto Public Health (TPH)
 - Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)
 - Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)

¹The creation of this guide was commissioned to respond to a 2019 City Council direction: “Strengthening Toronto’s Nighttime Economy”, [EC 6.8](#).



Further information on the City of Toronto's ongoing work to support the night economy, including all relevant documents, reviews and opportunities to get involved, can be accessed through the following link: [Night Economy Review](#) – City of Toronto. For questions related to this document, please contact nighteconomy@toronto.ca.

Note: This guide is an evolving document. Please note the “last updated” date on the cover page as well as dates connected to resource links you may be accessing. While best efforts have been made to offer up-to-date information and to present resources that are reliable and recent, it's possible that information from third-party links may be unavailable. The content of this document will be reviewed and updated regularly.

1. OPENING YOUR LATE-NIGHT ESTABLISHMENT

Opening a late-night establishment can be even more complex than starting a more conventional daytime business. One complicating factor is that many commercial processes – for example obtaining a liquor license and ensuring that your establishment is in an appropriately zoned area – are governed by different levels of government (i.e., municipal, provincial, federal). This section will provide late-night business owners and entrepreneurs with basic resources (from all levels of government) to help open a late-night business, and information about the City of Toronto's relevant municipal processes.

The City of Toronto's webpage, [How to Start a Business](#), provides entrepreneurs with resources for starting a business, with comprehensive information ranging from creating a marketing plan to determining tax requirements. As business requirements require knowledge/input from other levels of government, it is recommended that you also refer to the Government of Canada's [Starting a Business](#) online guide and the Government of Ontario's [Small Business Site](#), both of which provide advice, support, and information on government regulations.



Existing businesses may be looking for innovative ways to grow as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. For existing eating establishments (like restaurants or bars with seating), one way to generate increased revenue is to convert part of the establishment to provide entertainment at night. Zoning By-law amendments that will come into effect on January 1, 2025, will allow eating establishments (like seated restaurants and bars) to use 25% of their space for entertainment (an increase from the existing 6% limit). Business owners looking for growth opportunities may also want to review current support programs available through the City of Toronto such as [Business Grants, Incentives and Rebates](#), [Main Street Innovation Fund](#), and [Digital Main Street](#). Additionally, restaurants, bars, live music venues, and nightclubs that include live music as an important part of their business model should explore whether they're eligible for the City's [live music venue tax reduction](#).

Zoning

Municipalities, including the City of Toronto, have [zoning](#) restrictions on the location of certain types of businesses. Before leasing or purchasing a property, or applying for the applicable business licences, make sure that the zoning category of your desired location will allow all proposed future operations of your new business. Before opening a new business, it is recommended that you apply for a [Zoning Review for a Business Licence](#). Upon receiving a zoning clearance for your business, you can apply for a business licence.

Toronto Building, a City Division, provides general Zoning By-law information. For questions about [zoning](#) or uses on a specific property, you can contact Toronto Building's General Customer Experience line by calling **416-397-5330, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** You can also pose questions in-person by visiting the nearest [Toronto Building Customer Service](#) counter for information. Book an appointment using the following link: [Requesting an In-Person Appointment for Zoning By-law Information – City of Toronto](#) at one of the following four locations:

- Toronto and East York District – Toronto City Hall – 100 Queen St W, Toronto, ON.
- North York District – North York Civic Centre – 5100 Yonge St, Toronto, ON.
- Scarborough District – Scarborough Civic Centre – 150 Borough Dr, Toronto, ON.
- Etobicoke York District – 2 Civic Centre Crt, Toronto, ON.

In addition, new construction, additions, and alterations to buildings often require a building permit (see the following Buildings Permits subsection for more information).

If your business does not comply with the requirements of the Zoning By-law, you can either modify the proposal to meet the zoning requirements, or you can seek a minor variance approval by making an application to the [Committee of Adjustment](#). You may wish to describe how your business will adhere to the best practices laid out in this guide in your application to the Committee of Adjustment.

To approve any minor variance to the Zoning By-law, the Committee of Adjustment must be satisfied that:

- The general intent and purpose of the City's [Official Plan](#) is maintained.
- The general intent and purpose of the City's [Zoning By-law](#) is maintained.
- The proposal is appropriate for the development of the land and/or building.
- The variance requested is minor.

In some cases, an application may not be considered minor, and a [Zoning By-law Amendment Application](#) may be required. An example of an application that may not be considered minor is seeking permission for a use that is not listed as permitted in a zone, such as establishing a nightclub in a zone in the Employment Industrial Zone category.

Business Licences

The City’s Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division licenses businesses under the authority of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, where there is a municipal purpose to do so, such as consumer protection, community nuisance, or public health and safety. Business licences are required for many (but not all) types of businesses. Some relevant examples of the types of business licences MLS issues can be found below, and the complete list can be accessed through this link: [Permits and Licences – City of Toronto](#).

Licence	Licence
Restaurants, Cafes, Bars and Pubs	Restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, and other eating and drinking establishments with seating must have a licence.
Nightclub/Entertainment Establishments	A dance facility where seating is not provided for all patrons. Food or beverage may be offered.

Should you have any additional questions on business licencing at the City of Toronto, you can contact the MLS Division at: mlsbusinesslicence@toronto.ca.

Attention: Regulatory Changes coming in 2025

In 2023, City Council approved Bylaw amendments to modernize current zoning and business licensing regulations, notably:

- Permission for eating establishments to use up to 25% of their usable floor space for entertainment purposes in most commercial areas of the City. and along major streets in employment/industrial zones
- Allowances for nightclubs outside of the downtown area.
- Allowances for amusement arcades in more places throughout the City.
- New business licence types and requirements for eating and entertainment establishments (i.e., restaurants, bars, nightclubs, live music venues).

These changes will come into effect on January 1, 2025.

To find out more about these upcoming changes, please visit: [Night Economy Review](#) – City of Toronto. If you have any additional questions about these new amendments, or the Night Economy Review process, please email: nighteconomy@toronto.ca.

Permissions to sell alcohol are administered by the Province of Ontario and are separate and distinct from municipal business licensing.

To find out whether you need to apply for other non-City of Toronto licences or permits, you can use the inter-governmental [BizPlanner Program Tool](#).

Building Permits

The Building Code Act prohibits any person from constructing, demolishing, or changing the use of a building unless they have applied for and received a building permit. Toronto Building is the City Division responsible for enforcing the Building Code Act and Building Code in the City of Toronto. Below are some common examples of when you do and do not need to get a building permit that may be relevant to your late-night establishment. Please note that in cases where a permit is not required, compliance with applicable zoning by-law(s) is still required.

Common examples of when a Building Permit is required	Common examples of when a Building Permit is not required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making structural or material alterations, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ adding or removing walls (e.g. changing room sizes and/or uses)◦ adding new windows or doors where there were none before or relocating existing windows or doors.• Changing a building’s use (e.g., from an office to an entertainment establishment), even if no construction is proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacing windows or doors, if:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ there is no change in the location or size of the window and/or door.◦ the structural support for the opening (e.g. lintel) is not affected◦ a new exit is not created.• Soundproofing your building (e.g., installing drywall, replacing insulation, etc.).• Installing interior audio and/or video equipment.

Note: The installation of an indoor stage may require a building permit depending on its planned size and height.

As the complete list is quite expensive, we recommend that you refer to the City of Toronto’s site - [When Do I Need a Building Permit?](#) – City of Toronto – or contact Toronto Building’s General Customer Service by calling 416-397-5330 (Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) if you have more specific questions about how you can use your space.

Food and Drink

While the primary purpose of many late-night establishments is based around entertainment rather than food consumption (e.g., , live music venues, nightclubs, etc.), even the sale of snacks to be served alongside beverages will likely require you to follow the rules of a food premises. In addition, the sale of alcohol will require your establishment to apply for a licence from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO). The subsections below will summarize what you need to know and who you should notify if you plan to make, store, and/or sell food and beverages.

Food

If you plan to prepare and/or sell any type of food in your late-night establishment (whether full meals or packaged snacks), you'll likely fit under the Province and City's definition of a food premises: "A food premise is defined as a place where food is manufactured, processed, prepared, stored, handled, displayed, distributed, transported, sold or offered for sale. A home kitchen in which food is being prepared for commercial purposes would also be considered a food premise."² If you plan to open an establishment that will fit under the food premises definition, you must notify Toronto Public Health (TPH). You can do so using the [Toronto Public Health Food Premise Notification Form](#).

Once you send your notification, a TPH Inspector will contact you and give more information about the legislative requirements for starting a food business. A TPH Inspector can help you achieve compliance with the building requirements to safely run your food premises. For more information, visit the TPH site: [Starting a Food Business – City of Toronto](#).

Alcohol

To serve or sell alcohol in Toronto, you need a liquor licence from the AGCO. The AGCO is not a City of Toronto Division or Agency, but rather a provincial crown agency run by the Government of Ontario.

For general information on liquor licences, please visit: [Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario](#). If you are still unsure about the type of licence you require, you can contact the AGCO at 416-326-8700 or via email at customer.service@agco.ca.

The AGCO issues three different licence types, including:

- liquor sales licences
- retail store authorizations
- temporary licences, such as an extension of hours permit or a Special Occasion Permit (SOP)

To open your late-night establishment, you may be applying for a liquor sales licence. To start this process:

1. **Submit your application for a liquor licence to the AGCO.** The type of liquor licence you apply for will determine the type of documentation the AGCO requires from the City of Toronto for your application.
2. **Take note of your file number and application summary** (provided by the AGCO when you apply), as you will need these when submitting your request to the City of Toronto.
3. Complete and submit [a Municipal Information Form for Liquor Sales Licences](#), **approved by the relevant City Divisions**, along with other documents and fees. The textbox below (from the City's [Serving and Selling Alcohol in Toronto](#) site) breaks down the process:

²<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/food-safety/food-safety-for-businesses/starting-a-food-business/>

Obtaining Municipal Clearance for a Liquor Sales Licence

When submitting your documentation (i.e., **Municipal Information Form**) to the City Clerk's Office:

- You must include your business licence number from MLS (if applicable) and your AGCO file number.
- Your establishment must be ready for inspection within 30 days from the day your application is submitted.
- If your application includes an outdoor patio, you must ensure that a building permit has been issued that includes the patio or that you have obtained a preliminary zoning review for the patio. If you are unsure, call Toronto Building at 416-397-5330.

The City Clerk's Office will:

1. Complete your Municipal Information Form and submit it to the AGCO.
2. Circulate your application and documentation to Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Building and Toronto Public Health for letters of approval/clearance.
3. Give notice of your application to Toronto Police Services, Toronto Municipal Licensing and Standards and the Ward Councillor.

Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Building and Toronto Public Health will:

1. Contact you to arrange an inspection.
2. Conduct the inspection.
3. Provide the AGCO with the required approval or denial (compliance letter).

You will then be contacted by the AGCO.

How to Submit your Documentation

Submit the following forms by email to liquorlicence@toronto.ca:

1. Completed **Municipal Information Form** provided by the AGCO.
2. Floor plans including site plans that show location of building/patios/parking spaces.
3. City of Toronto **Municipal Liquor Licence Clearance Form** ([link](#)).
4. AGCO Application Summary.
5. Administration fee – see link [here](#) for current fee.

Responsible Alcohol Consumption:

Lastly, make sure that future employees selling or serving alcohol undergo Smart Serve training. This training is administered by the AGCO and can be done completely online. For more details and current fees, visit the Smart Serve site at: [Smart Serve Ontario – Smart Serve Certificate - Smart Serve](#).

It is also recommended that you develop a Venue Alcohol Policy for your business that outlines the steps you are taking to encourage and promote responsible alcohol consumption for your patrons. Elements such as drink monitoring, staffing and service, supervision, security, and safe transportation should be addressed in your policy. Below are two local examples of venue alcohol policies as well as the City of Toronto Municipal Alcohol Policy, mandatory for all special events with a Special Occasion Permit.

- [City of Toronto Municipal Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Roy Thomson and Massey Hall Venue Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Metro Toronto Convention Centre Alcohol Policy for Clients](#)



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2. OUTDOOR DINING AND MUSIC

[The CaféTO Program](#) provides restaurants and bars in Toronto with the opportunity to access public space and expand their outdoor dining space through sidewalk or curb lane cafés.

- **Sidewalk cafés** are outdoor eating areas located on public property (sometimes called the municipal “right-of-way”) like sidewalks, where food or drinks are served to the public by a licensed eating or drinking establishment.
- **Curb lane cafés** are outdoor dining areas located in the street or in a parking lane directly adjacent to a curb.
- **Private property cafés** (referred to as “outdoor patios” in the Zoning By-law) are outdoor dining areas located on private property, usually in the rear yards of businesses or on parts of a surface parking lot.

The CaféTO Program also permits amplified live music³ to be played on CaféTO-affiliated patios. As of 2023, amplified live music is permitted city-wide as a permanent part of CaféTO. From **May to October**, amplified live music is allowed on patios within the following times:

- Thursdays and Fridays, 5 to 10 p.m.
- Saturdays, noon to 10 p.m.
- Sundays, noon to 6 p.m.

For more information about the Amplified Live Music (AMP) element of CaféTO, please [visit the City’s web page](#).

[CaféTO Property Improvement Program](#)

Café operators are also eligible for the CaféTO Property Improvement Program, a matching grant covering 50 per cent of the cost of eligible property or site improvements related to curb.

This program includes parking lane café installations, sidewalk cafés or patios on private property. For more information – including application deadlines – please visit the link here: [CaféTO Property Improvement Program – City of Toronto](#).

If you have further questions about the CaféTO Property Improvement Program, you can also email: cafetogrants@toronto.ca.

If you have any general questions about cafés located on public property, you can email: cafeTO@toronto.ca

³The City defines an ‘amplified live performance’ as an individual musical artist or group of musical artists using physical or digital instruments for an audience, which excludes the playback of any recorded music without the active use of an instrument ([link](#))

Private Property Cafés, [as adopted by City Council](#), also permit entertainment in most commercial areas of the city and along major streets in employment/industrial zones. The entertainment area must not exceed the greater of 5 square metres (about 50 square feet) or ten percent of the outdoor patio area. Entertainment is only permitted on ground floor patios and is prohibited on rooftop patios. Not all zones permit entertainment on private property cafés; see the “Zoning” section for information on determining Zoning By-law compliance prior to planning for entertainment on your private property café.

In addition to the seasonal and time limits, here are some other things to keep in mind:

- Amplified music on patios must always comply with the City’s Noise By-Law (see [Section 3: Minimizing Sound and Noise for more information](#))
- **Only cafés on main streets are included in the CaféTO program – cafés on local roads are not permitted to host amplified live music performances through CaféTO.** More information available in the [CaféTO Staff Report](#).
- Musicians interested in performing as part of the Amplified Live Music on Patios program should contact Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) or restaurants directly (not the City of Toronto/CaféTO).



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3. MINIMIZING SOUND AND NOISE

In this section, you’ll find guidance on City by-laws, exemptions, and reviews that govern where and when noise is allowed in the city, in addition to how noise is measured and how the Noise By-law is.

The Noise By-Law

Some elements of urban noise are regulated at the municipal level, including restrictions for sound coming from sources like amplified sound (e.g., , music from bars, nightclubs, or concerts) and noise from loading or unloading goods and music equipment. [The City of Toronto Noise By-law](#) describes the time restrictions, decibel levels, and points of measurements for noise. Below are important sections from the Noise By-law to review for your late-night business. It’s a good idea to not only review the sections below, but also familiarize yourself with the complete [Noise By-law](#).

If a complaint about amplified sound is received by the City’s 311 line, and if a by-law officer is called to investigate while the sound continues , the noise level is measured from the point of reception (i.e., where the complaint originated) in an outdoor living area (balcony, open window, door, etc.). The noise level must be:

- Less than 50 dB(A) or 65dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- Less than 55dB(A) or 70dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Note: If there is no outdoor living area, amplified sound is measured at an indoor point of reception. Currently, levels must not exceed 50 dB(A) or 65 dB(C) between 7a.m. and 11p.m., or 42 dB(A) or 57 dB(C) as approved at ECDC Jan 11 from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Whether the sound originates from pre-recorded or live music (or even another form of entertainment), **your establishment should take all reasonable steps to ensure that sound (including music and associated nightlife activity in and near your venue) is not audible beyond a reasonable distance from your lot line, especially after 11 p.m.**

- Visit [Frequency-Weighting Sound Level Measurements](#) to learn more about the difference between dB(A) and dB(C) and how they are measured.



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Attention: Implementation Review of the Noise By-law

In 2019, the City amended the Noise By-law, which led to the introduction of sound level limits for amplified sound and motorcycles, alignment of time constraints between similar activities, enhancements to the noise exemption permit process, and the introduction of a dedicated noise enforcement team with late-night coverage.

A review of the implementation of the By-law amendments, including related successes and outstanding issues was undertaken during 2023, and discussed at the January 11, 2024, meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee. Further information on the review (and how it may affect relevant late-night businesses) can be accessed [here](#).

Here are a few specific suggestions to help minimize the chance of sound-related conflict with your neighbours:

- Make sure that all windows and doors are closed when music is being played inside your venue.
- If musicians are going to be loading out of your venue after 11:00 p.m., consider not using the venue's rear doors if they open onto an alley that's also shared by nearby residences. Use the front or side doors instead - whichever are farthest from residences. At a minimum, advise musicians and production crew to keep things as quiet as possible by posting signage around loading areas as a reminder.
- As much as possible, ensure patrons outside your venue are respectful of nearby residents late at night. Have your staff manage any queuing so it's orderly and doesn't obstruct the sidewalk or the entrances to nearby businesses. Remind patrons exiting your venue to do so quickly and quietly by providing direction to nearby public transportation and taxi and rideshare pickup/drop-off points. Reminding patrons as they exit of how to get home safely will help deter patrons from hanging around and talking loudly outside your venue.

Measuring Sound and Noise

If a noise complaint is made, sound may be measured by By-Law Enforcement Officers using decibel meters and then compared against the rules in the By-Law. Ambient (i.e., background) noise is also considered when conducting measurements. Outdoor cafés and patios are also subject to the Noise By-Law and should respect the time limits stated in [Section 2: Outdoor Dining and Music](#), in addition to the decibel limits stated in this section.

If you wish to measure the sound coming from your establishment on your own, there are various sound level meter apps that you can download for free on your smartphone. However, many of these apps provide only an approximation of decibel levels; to be more exact, you may also wish to purchase a professional-grade sound level meter.

Noise Exemptions

In some cases, [Noise Exemption Permits](#) can be requested for certain events and activities, including special events that feature outdoor amplified sound (e.g., concerts, festivals) that may

temporarily exceed the provisions of the By-law. With a noise exemption permit, noise levels are limited to 85 dB(A) when measured 20 metres from the source.

If you are planning to apply for a noise exemption permit, **please submit your application at least four weeks in advance of the event or activity.**

To apply for a Noise Exemption Permit, you must submit the following:

- A completed [Noise Exemption Permit application form](#), with the appropriate appendix completed
- Application fee (see link [here](#) for current fees)
- Additional information, if requested.

Completed Noise Exemption Permit applications can be submitted by email to NoiseTO@toronto.ca. Once the application has been submitted, applicants will receive an invoice number by email to pay the application fee. This can be paid online at the City's [Licensing Services Payments](#) webpage.

What happens after you apply?

A normal application takes three weeks to process, including up to two weeks with the City Councillor's Office. More complex applications such as those requiring noise mitigation plans could take longer. Please plan accordingly and submit your application at least four weeks in advance of the event or activity.

Approval Process

On receipt of a satisfactory application, MLS provides notice, in writing, to the local Ward Councillor(s) where the event or activity is to be held. The Councillor(s) has 14 days to review and respond to the notice. MLS approves the application if:

- the Councillor(s) does not respond within 14 days, or responds indicating that they have no objection to the application being approved
- the applicant has complied, to the satisfaction of MLS, with the last exemption permit issued to them (if applicable)
- the applicant has provided information as requested by MLS (such as the purpose of the exemption permit, the description of any sound equipment, contact information, etc.)
- the applicant has paid all required fees.

Upon review of an application, the City may require:

- **Reasons supporting an exemption permit.** As an applicant, you may be requested to provide supplementary reasons in greater detail in addition to the information required in the application.
- A [Noise Mitigation Plan](#). Applicants may be required to submit a noise mitigation plan outlining actions to be taken to reduce and mitigate the impact of the event.
- **Statement certified by a professional engineer or acoustical consultant.** Applicants may be required to submit a document provided by a third-party professional, which address any further possible sound impacts, especially from a large event.

Note: During review of an application, the City may determine that noise monitoring is required for permit approval. Noise monitoring is done by By-law Enforcement Officers. The applicant will be responsible for covering the hourly cost of the required enforcement officer(s). Applicants will be advised if this is a requirement.

Agent of Change

Do you have an existing live music venue and are you concerned about potential future conflict with new residential developments nearby?

Your situation may be covered by the City's "Agent of Change" guidelines (enacted in 2017), through which the responsibility to mitigate any sound-related conflict between pre-existing nearby venues and new residential developments falls on the incoming developer.

The Agent of Change principle is a set of urban planning guidelines followed by many cities worldwide. The principle holds an incoming developer (the "agent of change" in this instance) to certain expectations to help minimize potential future conflict between existing live music venues and new residential developments proposed nearby. Toronto adopted its own version in 2017, which consists of the following:

- Applications received by City Planning for residential developments that are located within 120 metres of existing live music venues are circulated to and reviewed by the City's Music Office.
- Applicants (developers) must complete a study noting existing sound levels in the area, including those emanating from the nearby music venue(s) and associated nightlife activity. Applicants are also required to include an advisory that notifies purchasers, lessees and tenants of possible noise that may arise from its proximity to live music.
- Applicants are also encouraged to consider building design and construction elements that will help reduce the impacts of nearby live music and associated nightlife activity on residents.

Agent of Change guidelines can also apply to a music venue newly established near pre-existing residences or other businesses. As the "agent of change," that music venue would be responsible for mitigating future conflict between itself and the surrounding community, through sound mitigation and other strategies.

4. KEEPING YOUR VENUE SAFE

In general, safety means freedom from harm, danger, risk, or injury. Ensuring safety involves taking measures and precautions to protect individuals, property, and the environment from potential threats or hazards – physical, psychological, or otherwise. Overall, safety is a shared responsibility that requires the collaboration of individuals, organizations, and governments to create environments that prioritize and ensure safety for all.

In addition to the role that your establishment has in minimizing noise and other impacts on the surrounding community, every venue should have a plan to keep staff, patrons, and community safe. Residents, patrons, and operators taking part in the Night Economy Review public consultations recognized safety as an essential element in their experience of the night economy. Concerns were repeatedly expressed about issues such as availability of late-night public transit, accessibility to spaces for communities experiencing marginalization, adequate street lighting, police presence, and the need for community-based safety strategies and harm reduction teams.

[SafeTO](#) is a provincially legislated, City Council-directed comprehensive community safety and well-being plan for Toronto that works to build individual and community resilience, improve services and systems of care, and positively impact the lives of all Torontonians. [SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) will advance 26 actions across seven strategic goals that provides a road map for how social systems that serve Torontonians including City Divisions and agencies, multi-sector partners, community-based agencies, residents, and other levels of government can work collaboratively to support community safety and well-being. It is recommended that you familiarize yourself with SafeTO goals and actions and what role your business can play in creating a safer, more welcoming community.

Harm Reduction

Many municipalities and nightlife organizations around the world (e.g., [Bristol Nights](#), [Music Victoria](#)) have incorporated a harm reduction lens in nightlife spaces to encourage safer operations. The City of Toronto's new strategy, [Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#) is a comprehensive approach that aligns with broader harm-reduction goals in aiming to reduce substance use-related harms and promote mental health and well-being. The strategy's available resources are described below:

Organization	Description
Toronto Public Health (TPH) – Harm Reduction Supplies and Locations	Toronto Public Health's "The Works Clinic" offers both in-person and online naloxone training through a program called Preventing Opioid Overdose in Toronto (POINT). POINT trains people who use opioids, as well as their friends and families, to respond to an opioid overdose using naloxone. For more information and to get in contact, access the TPH site here: Take Home Naloxone Program .
Government of Ontario's Naloxone in the Workplace Free Kit and Training	Certain businesses are eligible to receive free naloxone kits, especially if there is a risk of a customer or worker opioid overdose. The Government of Ontario's Workplace Health and Safety site provides details on eligibility for free naloxone kits as well as free training from the Canadian Red Cross and St John's Ambulance .
AIDS Committee of Toronto	The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) provides HIV and sexual health education, prevention, and outreach across Toronto. Among ACT's resources is Toronto Vibe, a website that provides safer drug use information for people involved in Toronto's gay, bi, and queer men's party scenes. This resource can be used by anyone.
TRIP! Project	<p>This website has information and guidance on safer partying, ranging from topics like hearing loss to overdose prevention. These resources can be accessed here: Safer Partying Resources.</p> <p>The TRIP! Project also offers other organizations workshops on safer drug use and safer partying. These workshops can be provided on request and can be adapted to the particular groups' needs and demographics.</p>

In addition to community safety and harm reduction, there are also safety and work regulations – many of which are federally or provincially enforced – that you must follow to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for your employees, patrons, and performers. This section provides a selection of relevant resources and information from external labour and safety organizations, with a focus on resources relevant to late-night establishments.

Note: This section deals with the technical aspects of venue safety. For elements of safety that intersect with inclusivity – such as creating an inclusive environment, preventing sexual harassment, and ensuring venue accessibility – see Section 8: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Disclaimer: This section is not intended as a definitive or comprehensive legal resource on worker and venue safety, nor does it constitute legal advice. You should consult your own legal advisors regarding your obligations.

Resources for Venue Bookers and Event Organizers

Below is a list of safety-related organizations, guidelines, and programs that may be relevant to you, whether you’re a venue booker or an event organizer.

For Venue Bookers and Event Organizers	
Organization and Guide	Description
City of Toronto Guidance for Planning Events in Toronto	The Event Support Unit of the City of Toronto has a web page with guidance and resources to assist you in planning your special event.
Government of Ontario Safety Guidelines for the Live Performance Industry in Ontario	Prepared by the Government of Ontario’s Ministry of Labour, these guidelines will help employers, supervisors and working professionals in the live performance industry to meet the requirements and regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
Canadian Association of Exposition Management Health and Safety Best Practice Guidelines for the Exposition Industry in Canada	These guidelines were was prepared by the Canadian Association of Exposition Management to keep shows “safe, enjoyable, and profitable to work in and visit”. Information covers the safety hazards and risk during the move-in and move-out phases of a show, and is aimed at show organizers, contractors, exhibitors, and facilities.
City of Toronto Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers	This is a simplified overview of the resources available to music event organizers in Toronto and a summary of what processes and permits might be required for various kinds of events in different types of spaces (public or private; indoor or outdoor).

Resources for Employers and Business Owners

Owners of late-night establishments have responsibilities as employers, including compliance with labour laws at the provincial and federal level. While what follows is not an exhaustive list – and it remains the responsibility of the business owner and/or employer to run a safe working environment – we’ve included some key government resources below:

For Employers and Business Owners	
Organization	Links to Resources
Provincially Regulated Resources and Legislations	Relevant Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Labour (MOL) - Occupational Health and Safety Branch• Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)• Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)• Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS)
	Relevant Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupational Health and Safety Act• Workplace Safety and Insurance Act• Building Code• Electrical Code• Fire Code
Federally Regulated Resources and Legislations	Relevant Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)• Canadian Government Departments Responsible for Occupational Health and Safety• Institute for Work and Health• Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC)• Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA)• Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) Relevant Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada Labour Code• IHSA’s Construction Health and Safety Manual• CCOHHS’ website (canOSH) and QandA (OHS Answers)



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Sound and Hearing Protection

You should also educate yourself and your employees on the importance of hearing protection. A list of resources for business owners, employees, and performers follows below.

Organization	Description
Canadian	
Canadian Hearing Services	Canadian Hearing Services (CHS) provides services, products and education that empower the Deaf and hard of hearing to overcome barriers to participation. The CHS offers expert advice and communication solutions, such as interpreting and captioning services and accessibility consulting, as well as communication devices designed to improve communication, safety, and independence.
The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety - Noise Control	The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) provides Canadians with relevant tools and resources to improve workplace health and safety programs. The CCOHS offers fact sheets dedicated to noise in the workplace, including topics like measurement of workplace noise, control measures, and hearing aids and protection.
The Musicians' Clinic of Canada	The Musicians' Clinic of Canada provides performing artists with assessments, treatments, and products. Run by hearing specialists, the Clinic has two physical offices – one in Toronto and the other in Hamilton. Their website also has information on hearing loss prevention and musician injury prevention, both in an online FAQ and in articles.
International	
<p>The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC)</p> <p>How to Play Your Part - A Guide for Musicians & Musicians Guide to Noise & Hearing - Toolkit for Managers</p>	These two guides by the BBC provide musicians and managers with information and how to protect hearing through different types of hearing protection, available training, and risk assessment.
<p>The Health and Safety Executive's</p> <p>Sound Advice</p>	The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. Their site provides a free downloadable booklet that offers guidance on the control of noise in concert halls, theatres, amplified live music venues, pubs/ clubs, and studios. They also have related online resources about controlling noise at work.

5. OUTSIDE YOUR VENUE

If you operate a late-night business (whether a nightclub, live music venue, restaurant, event space, or other) you should take all feasible steps to manage things outside your venue.

These processes may include how and where you might arrange for performers and suppliers to park and to load and unload, where any larger vehicles like tour buses might park near your premises, how you handle line-ups before a performance and crowd dispersal afterward, and what arrangements you've made for pickup and disposal of litter and other waste that may accumulate outside your venue during a busy night.

Parking & Loading

Ideally, vehicles delivering or picking up supplies, or artists loading in/out music equipment at your venue, can access safe, legal parking nearby during this process. However, particularly at venues located on busy streets in downtown Toronto, this is often not possible.

If your venue does not have dedicated parking nearby, or a conveniently located side street or back alley suitable for parking while loading in, please consider letting delivery drivers and performers know where the nearest Green P lots are, what the parking regulations are nearby, and any other information that may help them load in/out safely without either getting ticketed or placing themselves or others in danger. If there is a nearby business with parking used only during daytime hours, you might approach them to negotiate parking permission for your artists.

During an afternoon or early-evening delivery or load-in, consider asking a staff person to assist by holding open doors and ensuring a clear path inside the venue to wherever the delivery or equipment is headed – this will minimize the time a vehicle may have to sit outside with flashers on. And if your venue uses rear doors for artist load-in/out and deliveries, please ensure that every night, all parties are made aware of any nearby residences. A back alley isn't the place for idling engines and late-night conversations. Parking, load-in/out instructions, and all related information should be part of every venue's artist-advance package and any communications with suppliers.

Crowd & Line Management

Currently, nightclubs in the City of Toronto require a noise and crowd control plan, a metal detector at each entrance, and at least one security guard for every 100 patrons in attendance. Nightclub operators are required to monitor line-ups outside and ensure the orderly conduct of patrons in the line-up.

However, all venues, regardless of licence type, should make every effort to ensure patrons outside the venue (before, during, and after an event) are managed in an orderly, organized way that minimizes the chances of any negative impact on nearby businesses and residents.

Best practices may include any/all of the following:

- **Designate a specific area** for the lineup to form and run, ensuring that pedestrians have enough space to pass by on the sidewalk and that entrances to nearby businesses and residential buildings are not blocked.
- **Provide rope and stanchion** to help shape this lineup if needed. You can purchase or rent these items from various retail and rental suppliers.
- **Assign venue staff to monitor the lineup**, including walking periodically from the front to the back of the queue. Patrons appreciate being told they're in the right line, the approximate time until doors open, and what they'll need to have ready (tickets, bag-check, etc.).
- **Plan with your staff to make sure that closing time/the end of an event** is smooth for exiting customers, focusing on how to prevent noise outside your venue and dispersing the crowd.
- **Make efforts to ensure that garbage/recycling bins are visible** in the planned lineup area to make post-event cleanup easier for you and your staff.

Garbage, Waste, and Litter

Ensuring your establishment, especially exterior and public-facing areas, remains clean and free of garbage is not only a good business practice, but is also an essential part of maintaining good neighbour relations with adjacent businesses and residential areas. You can find some basic City resources on how to order extra garbage/recycling bins, requesting extra pickup and other waste-related service requests for your late-night business below:

- [Collection Program for Businesses - City of Toronto](#)
- [Application & Bins for Businesses - City of Toronto](#)
 - [New Customer Application - Guidelines](#)
 - [New Customer Application - Online Form](#)
 - [Bin Application - Guidelines](#)
 - [Bin Application Order - Online Form](#)
- [Garbage Bin Sizes & Fees - City of Toronto](#)

In addition, make sure to follow appropriate practices below to keep the exterior of your establishment clean:

- Use best efforts to **ensure that all areas immediately adjacent to your premises**, but particularly locations that abut residential areas, **are clean and free of litter**, especially after closing time.
- Try to **arrange garbage collection and recycling pick-up at times that are not disruptive** to nearby residents. Refer to Section 3 in this guide and/or the Noise By-law for a reminder of the cut-off times for outdoor noise.
- If you plan to have an outdoor event with street closures, make sure to **refer to the City's Solid Waste Management Services' Division** [Special Events Waste Diversion Handbook \(toronto.ca\)](#).



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Litter control requirements, including cigarette butt litter

Listed below are the existing provincial and City regulations related to smoking, cigarette butt litter, public realm maintenance, and sidewalk cleanliness:

- Ontario's [Smoke Free Ontario Act \(SFOA\)](#), prohibits smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces, prohibits smoking in many outdoor places (including patios), and sets age restrictions for purchasing tobacco.
- Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 709, Smoking](#), prohibits smoking within 9 metres of building entrances or exits.
- Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 545, Licensing](#), requires all business licensees to 1) keep public sidewalks around the establishment free of litter, including cigarette butts, and 2) install and maintain temporary cigarette butt receptacles on the pedestrian right-of-way during business operating hours.
- Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 743, Streets and Sidewalks](#), requires all property owners to maintain the adjoining boulevard free of litter and rubbish, and makes it an offence for any person to foul the street.
- Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 548, Littering and Dumping](#), makes it an offence for any person to throw waste on any street/highway within the City.

Night Economy – Regulatory Changes coming in 2025

- o In 2023, the City Council adopted MLS Division's proposed amendments to modernize current business licensing regulations, which includes amendments to litter control requirements under the Licensing By-law. The staff report can be reviewed [here](#).
- o These changes will come into effect on January 1, 2025.
- o If you would like to find out more about these upcoming changes, please visit: [Night Economy Review – City of Toronto](#). If you have any additional questions about these new amendments, or the Night Economy Review process, please email: nighteconomy@toronto.ca.

Outdoor Access to Public Washrooms

The City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R) Division owns and maintains more than 100 publicly accessible washrooms. To access the list and view a map of their locations across the city, click the link [here](#). You can also use the site's filters to identify which washrooms have accessibility features, such as automatic door openers, accessible stalls and changing tables.

Please note that these washrooms are not open 24 hours a day, and their opening/closing times vary by the season. Washrooms' hours of operation are specified below, and any schedule changes will be updated through PF&R's site link above.

Hours of Operation:

- From May to October, washrooms in parks are open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- From November to April, washrooms in parks are open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Staff teams open and close many washrooms in a geographic area every day, so individual washrooms may open earlier according to where they land on the route.

6. TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM YOUR ESTABLISHMENT

Regardless of your venue's proximity to the City's public transportation system – operated by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) – there are measures you can take to provide your patrons and staff with information about available public transportation to help them get home safely (and affordably) after a late night out.

Here are a few suggestions - including some you can post at your venue or on your social channels.

Access to Public Transit

The schedules of the TTC's subways, streetcars, and buses vary between different routes. Generally, the subway operates from approximately **6 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Saturday and approximately 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. on Sundays**. Depending on the time and day, **subway trains are supposed to run every 2 to 6 minutes**. More information on subway lines can be found here: [Routes & schedules \(ttc.ca\)](https://www.ttc.ca/routes-schedules).

Streetcar and bus schedules vary by route. To access accurate schedules, please visit the [Bus Routes](https://www.ttc.ca/buses) or [Streetcar Routes](https://www.ttc.ca/streetcars) site. As buses and streetcars run on most major routes from about **1:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m.**, consider posting relevant information at your venue and on your social channels.

Schedule changes can occur to accommodate holiday schedules and service changes on all three modes of public transportation. Make sure to access the most up-to-date information on the TTC's [Routes & Schedules](https://www.ttc.ca/routes-schedules) and [Service Advisories](https://www.ttc.ca/service-advisories) pages.

You can also view and access PDFs of TTC Transit maps below to print out or link to online:

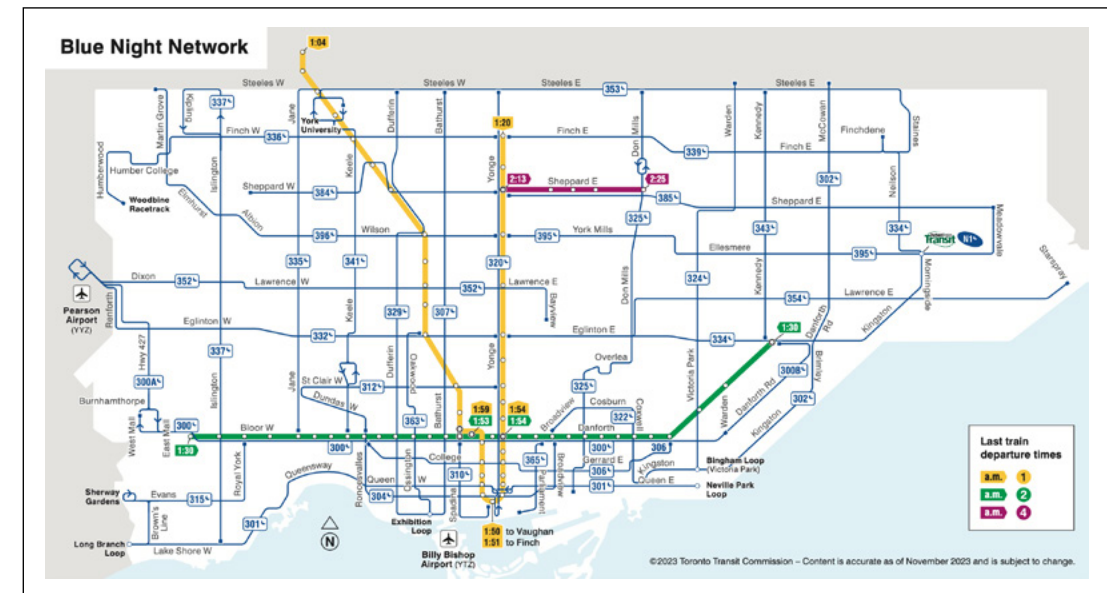
TTC Routes & Schedules

- **Full System Map** – A comprehensive map of all TTC routes, including subway, streetcar, and bus service. [View System Map](https://www.ttc.ca/full-system-map).
- **Subway and Streetcar Map** – A map of just the TTC's subway and streetcar networks. [View Subway and Streetcar Map](https://www.ttc.ca/subway-streetcar-map).
- **Downtown Map** – A map that only illustrates the TTC service available in Toronto's downtown core (includes subway, streetcars, and buses). [View Downtown Map](https://www.ttc.ca/downtown-map).
- **Express Network** – A map of TTC Express Network routes, indicated in green and through 900-series route numbers to distinguish them from other bus and streetcar routes. [View Express Network Map](https://www.ttc.ca/express-network-map).

Access to Late-Night Transit

The TTC operates a late-night bus service called the [Blue Night Network](https://www.ttc.ca/blue-night-network). Service on TTC's Blue Night Network runs from approximately **1:30 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.** (8:00 a.m. on Sundays) on major routes. Buses operate every **30 minutes or sooner**, with service on 320 Yonge and 300 Bloor-Danforth operating every **15 minutes or sooner**. Blue Night Network buses use 300-series numbers and transit stops along the routes are marked with a reflective blue band.

An overview of the Blue Night Network is shown below, and you can also refer to the [website](https://www.ttc.ca/blue-night-network) for more detailed, updated schedules and maps. Feel free to spread the information on the link with your patrons by sharing it on your social media sites, and/or printing out a map of the Blue Night Network and posting it at a visible area in your establishment.



Chartering TTC Vehicles for your Events

In addition to its regular schedules and routes, the TTC also offers business owners the option to rent – or charter – their streetcars and buses for events. Provided that sufficient booking time is given to the TTC, and all terms and conditions are followed (more information below), vehicles may even be booked outside of regular routes and operational schedules.

If you're interested in pursuing this option for specific events at your establishment, or if you would simply like more information, access to the [Charter Request Form](#), or further contact information, please refer to the site link here: [Chartering TTC Vehicles](#).

Access to Taxis and Rideshare:

Many of your patrons – and some performers – may use taxis or rideshare vehicles to get to and from your venue. If you're located in a busy area with no adjacent parking lot or side street where vehicles can easily drop off and pick up passengers, please consider making arrangements with a nearby business or parking lot owner for this purpose. Please also communicate with taxi and rideshare companies, and with your patrons, about where the safest and most convenient nearby spots might be for pickups and dropoffs.

Taxicabs are required to be licensed in Toronto. Whether hailing a taxicab from the street, or being picked up from a taxicab stand, the taxicab must charge the City-regulated rate. Taxicabs are required to provide service to the first person who requests it, no matter how small the fare or short the distance and provide service to any person with a disability, including anyone accompanied by a service animal.

Uber and Lyft are both available in Toronto. They are classified by the City as private transportation companies (PTCs) and are regulated for safety and consumer protection. Only taxicabs are permitted to pick up passengers from the street via “street hail” and use designated taxicab stands. All PTC rides must be booked through an app. Drivers cannot refuse any person with a disability.

7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

Making sure that your late-night establishment is a safe environment for your employees and patrons alike goes beyond ensuring technical safety; it also includes ensuring that all patrons have equal access to facilities, are free of harassment while on the premises, and can count on your establishment to ensure everyone's safety to the greatest degree possible. Below is a list of resources that may help ensure a safe and inclusive night for all.

Please note that this list is not meant to be a comprehensive directory, business owners/managers should assume the responsibility of conducting their own additional research and implementing appropriate programs.





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Sexual Harassment

A primary responsibility of any venue owner is to ensure the safety of their patrons and staff. We suggest that venues have policies for alcohol use and plans for noise reduction, and could more clearly do the same thing here. We could provide more detail such as suggesting training be given to all staff in identifying, preventing, and reporting sexual harassment and recognizing human trafficking. The venue should have policies and plans that respond to the different needs and accountabilities to staff and patrons, including readily available means to report and seek protection.

Organization	Description
Smart Serve	<p>Approved by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), the Smart Serve program is the only responsible alcohol sales and service training program in Ontario.</p> <p>Smart Serve’s alcohol certification now includes a Sexual Violence Training Module.</p>
Good Night Out Vancouver	<p>Good Night Out Vancouver is a non-profit society that advances the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in nightlife spaces (e.g. restaurants, bars, pubs, festivals). Inspired by the Good Night Out Campaign that originated in London UK, Good Night Out Vancouver uses education, outreach, and advocacy to help workers in the hospitality industry to mitigate the causes of sexual violence. While the organization is based in British Columbia, Good Night Out Vancouver also provides virtual workshops; details can be accessed here: How it Works — Good Night Out Vancouver.</p> <p>The original British campaign – Good Night Out – also has Free Online Resources such as bystander guides, safety standard checklists, and gender inclusive bathrooms.</p>
Red Tent Organization	<p>Red Tent is a Winnipeg-based organization that “provides education and creates awareness about anti-oppression, safer spaces, and consent culture.” through consultation and training to organizations, including music venues.</p> <p>Some of the Trainings & Workshops include Creating an Anti-oppressive Culture of Consent and Bystander Intervention Safer Spaces Training.</p>

Diversity, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression

When incorporating sexual harassment training into your business, you should also consider implementing anti-oppression and/or unconscious bias training in tandem for your staff (especially supervisors, security guards, bouncers, etc.). In addition to ensuring that your venue is a welcoming environment, consider booking talent that reflects the diversity of Toronto while also being consistent to your venue’s brand. The resources below (available training, talent agencies, and music industry organizations) may be useful:

Organization	Description
Toronto For All	<p>Toronto For All is a public education initiative to generate dialogue among Toronto residents. The campaign helps create a city that says “no” to all forms of discrimination and racism, including systemic racism.</p> <p>View the campaigns on the website to get the knowledge and skills you need to identify, question and challenge systemic barriers through a multi-staged conversational approach.</p>
The 519	<p>The 519 Education and Training team provides organizations with the insights, tools, and understanding to create environments that are 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive, respectful, and welcoming.</p>
Blue Crane Agency	<p>The Blue Crane Agency is a global independent booking agency seeking to prioritize women and artists of colour. The Blue Crane Agency boasts a wide network and community of musicians, DJs, speakers, dancers, drag performers, educators, and activists in North America, and they aim to increase the number of women, artists of color, and queer and trans artists booked, hired, profiled, and elevated.</p> <p>For more information on their work, and if you would like to ask about booking, please visit their site: Artists / Clients — Blue Crane</p>
ADVANCE Music Canada	<p>ADVANCE is Canada’s Black music business collective. The organization aims to create an environment within the Canadian music industry “that improves, promotes, and better retains Black employees and partners.”</p> <p>ADVANCE works through advocacy, research, and reporting; programming events and conferences for music industry professionals; and promoting job placements in the industry. You can access more information on ADVANCE here: ADVANCE Music Canada.</p>
Red Tent Organization	<p>In addition to sexual harassment prevention workshops, the Red Tent Organization also offers anti-oppression workshops as well as consultation services. These workshops include Creating Anti-oppressive Safer Spaces 101 and Anti-oppression & Creating Safer Spaces for Organizations.</p> <p>You can find out more information at (Trainings & Workshops — Red Tent) or via email at: redtentwpg@gmail.com.</p>

Accessibility

At the basic level, ensuring accessibility at your establishment requires compliance with regulations such as the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#). This Act outlines accessibility requirements for businesses, such as having barrier-free washrooms. However, ensuring accessibility for a range of able-bodied individuals – including those with both visible and invisible disabilities – may require additional building retrofits and accommodations.

A dedicated website providing guidance and information is included in the first column of accessibility resources below. Additional Toronto-based organizations that provide consultation services to businesses to improve their accessibility standards can also be found below.

Organization	Description
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act	The organization’s website has simple guide explaining AODA requirements to companies as well as access to a free one-hour online training course. You can also submit specific questions to this organization through their online mailbox: AODA Contact Information .
Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines	Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines is a reference document available to all sectors to conduct accessibility audits and to plan developments, as the city works towards making Toronto a “barrier free” community.
Crip Rave	Crip Rave is a Toronto-based collective and event platform working to centre disability in event planning so that all people can feel safe and comfortable in rave culture. The organization offers consultation services to enhance venue/event accessibility on a wide range of related topics, including – but not limited to – talent relations, event access supports and educational programming.
AccessTO	AccessTO is a non-profit organization that advocates for barrier-free spaces in Toronto. The organization’s website highlights barrier-free restaurants, bars, music venues and other attractions. AccessTO volunteers visit spaces to assess accessibility, and leave an online public review .

8. RESIDENT AND NEIGHBOUR RELATIONS

Building and maintaining good relationships with your establishment's neighbours, whether they're adjacent businesses or residences, is key for the longevity and success of your venue.

In this section, you will find helpful information on resident and commercial associations and general suggestions for maintaining good relationships with your neighbours. We recognize that longtime late-night business operators have very likely already taken these and other steps to ensure harmonious relations between themselves, their staff, their patrons, and the surrounding community – please treat the information and suggestions that follow simply as a best-practices checklist to review when starting out or if local circumstances change.

Residents' Associations (RAs) in your neighbourhood

Toronto is home to over 200 active residents' associations (RAs), with representation in every ward. It's good practice to familiarize yourself with the RAs near your establishment, and we suggest that you keep up to date with local RAs' key issues, meeting times, and active members. For a complete list of Resident Associations in the City of Toronto, please refer to this guide's [Section 9: Other Late-Night Business Resources of this document](#).

Positive local relationships

Here are some specific suggestions to help foster positive relationships with your neighbours:

1. Open Communication:

- Introduce (or periodically re-introduce) yourself and your business to your neighbours, BIA, and Resident Associations. Share your contact information, and that of key staff and management, and encourage ongoing communication.
- Hold or join regular meetings or informal gatherings to discuss upcoming events or changes to your business that might impact your neighbourhood.
- If your establishment operates in a building that also contains residential accommodation, provide building management with your key contact information.

2. Event Planning and Scheduling:

- Inform neighbours about upcoming events well in advance (especially if they're unusual in any way – size / scope, hours, etc). Provide details on the type of event, expected attendance, and measures you are taking to minimize disruption.
- Be mindful of the timing and frequency of events (e.g., a concentration of events requiring extended hours for alcohol service or generating unusually large crowds or impacts on parking). Avoid too many high-impact late-night events on weekdays and consider the local community's preferences.
- Try to involve local businesses or causes in your activities.



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3. Security Measures:

- Implement effective security measures to ensure the safety of your patrons and surrounding community.
- Inform and work with local law enforcement to address any security concerns and maintain a visible security presence.

4. Parking Solutions:

- Ensure access to neighbouring businesses is maintained, including laneways and access to doorways, garages, exit ramps, etc.
- Be mindful of surroundings when loading and unloading your event.
- Encourage the use of public transportation or rideshare services to minimize the impact on parking on your community.

5. Community Involvement:

- Actively participate in community events and initiatives to help integrate your venue into the neighborhood and demonstrate a commitment to being a responsible community member.
- Support local businesses and engage in collaborations with neighbouring establishments to foster positive relationships.
- Consider joining your local BIA (see below). BIAs generally maintain excellent relationships with all local businesses, local RAs, and the City.

6. Quick Response to Concerns:

- Respond promptly to any concerns raised by neighbors. Addressing issues in a timely manner shows that the venue takes the concerns of the community seriously.

7.Regular Reviews and Adjustments:

- Periodically review and adjust policies based on feedback from neighbours and the community. This ongoing evaluation process demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement.

Business Improvement Areas in your neighbourhood

A [Business Improvement Area \(BIA\)](#) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the City of Toronto to create thriving and safe business areas that attract patrons, tourists, and other new businesses. As a collective BIA, local businesses have the organizational and funding capacity to lead civic improvement, address issues, and enhance the quality of life in their neighbourhood.

Connecting with your local BIA could have many direct benefits for your late-night establishment. BIAs often have funds that they can allocate towards exterior capital improvements for businesses, including sidewalk maintenance and graffiti removal. In addition, BIAs have great organizational capacity. They often help in the organization of festivals and events by promoting them to the neighbourhood and connecting performers with businesses. Lastly, they can help late-night establishments maintain good neighbour relations by alerting residents of upcoming events and securing event approval from their local councillor.

There are over 80 BIAs across the city, which collectively comprise approximately 45,000 members. To see whether your business falls within one of these BIAs’ defined areas, refer to the map above and/or access the [City of Toronto BIA List Directory](#) for a complete list of BIAs’ contact information, website link, mapped area, and designated City councillor.

Additional BIA Support

Additional BIA-related information – from membership to property tax questions – is available through the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas’ (TABIA) website: [About Us - Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas \(TABIA\)](#).

The City of Toronto’s EDC Division also houses the BIA Office, which employs staff – including economic partnership advisors and capital project coordinators – to support all BIAs. The BIA Office staff directory is available here: [Business Improvement Area Staff – City of Toronto](#). For further inquiries on the work of the City’s BIA Office, please refer to the contact information below.

Toronto BIA Office		
	General Inquiries	Manager
Email	biaoffice@toronto.ca	Rebecca.Condon@toronto.ca
Telephone	416-392-1291	416-392-0626



9. OTHER LATE-NIGHT BUSINESS RESOURCES

City of Toronto Resources

Music Office Resources

The City of Toronto’s Music Office (a unit in the Economic Development and Culture Division) works to nurture Toronto’s music community through policy, recommendations, and advocacy. The Music Office has developed a number of resources for musicians, event organizers, and live music venues owners; a few are listed below:

- [Toronto Music Industry Strategy](#)
- [Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers](#)
- [Music Grants and Funding](#)

For general questions on the work of the Music Office, or to request further resources, please email music@toronto.ca.

Global Resources

In addition to the resources and directions provided throughout this guide, we have compiled a list of venue guides from cities such as London UK, Melbourne, New York City). While some information and advice presented in these guides may not apply to Toronto businesses, much of the general advice may be relevant to your business.

- [NYC Starter Guide to Opening your Bar/Nightclub](#) (New York City, USA)
- [Tips to Build a Solid Business Plan for Your Live Music Venue](#) (Austin, Texas, USA)
- [How to Run a Grassroots Venue](#) (London, UK)
- [Best Practice Guidelines for Live Music Venues](#) (Victoria, Australia)
- [Creating a safe space and no tolerance policy for your live music venue](#) (Australia)

Global Comprehensive Guides on Event and Venue Safety

These guides were published by reputable event and venue safety organizations and provide in-depth information on various technical topics (e.g., pyrotechnics, crowd management, rigging, etc.) . All three resources listed below focus more on production of large-scale events (rather than day-to-day operations of grassroots music venues).

	The Event Safety Guide: A Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Live Entertainment Events in the United States (link)	The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Outdoor Events [UK] (link)	Best Practices for Nightlife Establishments [NYC, USA] (link)
Sound, Noise and Vibrations	✓	✓	
Barriers and Crowd Management	✓	✓	
Electricity and Lighting	✓	✓	
Fire Safety and Pyrotechnics	✓	✓	
Rigging and Working at Height	✓	✓	
Food, Drink and Water	✓	✓	
Dealing with Crime	✓	✓	✓
Terrorism/ Bomb Threats	✓		✓
Medical Support and First Aid	✓	✓	



Technical Resources to support your production team:

For Electricians and Technicians	
Organization and Guide	Description
Entertainment Electrical Safety Association (ESSA) Government of Ontario	Aimed at electricians, ESSA provides guidelines and information on cable protectors, bonding, grounding, welding cables, , batteries and chargers, LED systems, and more.
Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) Government of Ontario	Mandated by the Government of Ontario, the ESA regulates and promotes electrical safety in Ontario. They are an official government source on electrical information and public safety, such as finding licensed electricians and developing electrical plans.
Technical Safety and Standards Association (TSSA)	The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is a non-profit organization that promotes and enforces public safety in Ontario. They run various safety programs on topics such as boilers & pressure vessels, amusement devices, elevating devices, and more.
Guideline/Program	Description
Television, Film, Live Performance and Live Event Electrical Guideline	This guideline provides information on the installation of electrical equipment in the entertainment industry. This includes temporary events (both outdoor and indoor), live performance and other similar arts events.
Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP)	The ETCP is a program of assessments for professional technicians. It focuses on disciplines that directly affect the health and safety of crews, performers, and audiences.
Technical Standards Program	The Entertainment Services and Technology Association's (ESTA) Technical Standards Program is an A American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited standards program directed to inform the needs of the entertainment technology industry workers. While you need to register to view the various documents the program offers, the registration is free.

Toronto Residents’ Associations Directory

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in Toronto-East York

Note: As RAs are volunteer-run organizations, it’s possible that contact information may have changes, and new associations may have formed - and others disbanded - since the publication of this guide.

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 4 - Parkdale-High Park	High Park Tenants’ Association (HPTA)	Site Link
	Junction Residents’ Association	Site Link
	Sunnyside Community Association	N/A
	Swansea Area Ratepayer's Association	Site Link
	West Bend Community Association	Site Link
	Parkdale Residents Association	Site Link
	Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents’ Association	Facebook Page
	Old Mill Residents' Association	N/A
Ward 9 - Davenport	Bloor West Village Residents’ Association	Site Link
	Friends of Dufferin Grove Park, Community Spaces Land Trust, Building a Better Bloor Dufferin	Site Link
	Beaconsfield Village Residents Association	Site Link
	Oakwood Village Community Association	N/A
	DIGIN (Bloor St West neighbourhood group)	Site Link
	South Corso Italia Neighbourhood Association (SoCoRes)	Facebook Page
	Northcliffe Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Bloordale Community Improvement Association	Twitter Page
	Davenport Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Dovercourt Park Community Association	N/A
	Regal Heights Residents' Association	Site Link
	Brockton Triangle Neighbours	Facebook Page
	Dufferin Grove Residents' Association	Site Link
	South Junction Triangle Grows	Site Link
	Junction Triangle Residents' Association	N/A
	North Corso Residents' Association	Site Link

Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York	Alexandra Park Residents Association	Facebook Page
	York Quay Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Draper Street Resident's Association	N/A
	Fort York Neighbourhood Association	Facebook Page
	Liberty Village Resident Association	Facebook Page
	Liberty Village Resident Association	Facebook Page
	CityPlace Residents Association	Site Link
	Grange Community Association	Site Link
	Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Garment District Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	East Waterfront Community Association	Site Link
	Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Ossington Community Association	Site Link
	St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Trinity Bellwoods Community Association	Site Link
	Toronto Island Community Association	Site Link
	Longboat Area Residents Association	Site Link
	West Don Lands Committee	Site Link

Residents' Associations (RAs) in Toronto-East York (cont'd)

Ward	Residents' Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 11 - University-Rosedale	Annex Residents' Association	Site Link
	Christie Pits Residents' Association	Site Link
	Governor's Bridge Ratepayers Association	Site Link
	Harbord Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Huron-Sussex Residents' Organization	Site Link
	Moore Park Residents' Association	Site Link
	North Rosedale Ratepayers' Association	Site Link
	Palmerston Area Residents Association	Site Link
	Seaton Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Summerhill Residents' Association	Site Link
	Bay Cloverhill Community Association	Site Link
	Deer Park Residents Group	Site Link
	Bloor-East Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Greater Yorkville Residents' Association	Site Link
	Avenue-Bay Cottingham (ABC) Ratepayers' Association	Site Link

Ward 12 - Toronto-St. Paul's	Castle Hill Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Forest Hill Homeowners Association	Site Link
	Oriole Park Residents' Association	Site Link
	Rathnelly Area Rate Payers Association	Site Link
	Republic Residents Association	Site Link
	South Forest Hill Resident Association	Facebook Page
	Wychwood Barns Community Association	Site Link
	South Eglinton Davisville Residents Association	Site Link
	Cedarvale and Upper Village Community Association	Site Link
	Wychwood Park Ratepayers Association	N/A
	Casa Loma Resident's Association	Site Link
Ward 13 - Toronto Centre	Deer Park Resident's Group	Site Link
	Bay Cloverhill Community Association	Site Link
	Upper Jarvis Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	St. Jamestown Community Corner	Site Link
	Winchester Park Residents' Association	Site Link
	Cabbagetown Residents' Association	Site Link
	Cabbagetown South Residents' Association	Site Link
	Regent Park Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Corktown Resients & Business Association	Site Link
	Friends of Moss Park	Facebook Page
	Garden District Residents' Association	Site Link
	Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
Ward 14 - Toronto-Danforth	McGill-Granby Village Residents' Association	Facebook Page
	Danforth East Community Association	Site Link
	Chester Hill Cambridge Thorncliffe Residents Association	Site Link
	Helliwell Place Residents Association	N/A
	Playter Area Residents Association (PARA)	Site Link
	The Pocket	Site Link

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in Toronto-East York (cont’d)

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 19 - Beaches-East York	Balmy Beach Neighbourhood Association	Facebook Page
	Beach Hill Neighbourhood Association	Twitter Page
	Beach Triangle Residents' Association	Site Link
	Greater Beach Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Parkview Hills Community Association	Facebook Page
	Topham Park Community Association	Site Link
	Woodbine Heights Association	Site Link
	Woodbine Gardens Community Association	Site Link

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in Etobicoke York

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 1 – Etobicoke North	Albion Neighbourhood Services	Site Link
	Humberlea Community Group	Facebook Page
	North Etobicoke Resident Council	Site Link
	Thistletown Historical Society	Site Link
Ward 2 – Etobicoke Centre	Buttonwood Hill Residents Association (BHRA)	Site Link
	Humber Valley Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Richmond Gardens Ratepayers and Residents Association	Site Link
	Thorncrest Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Markland Wood Homeowners Association	Site Link
Ward 3 – Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Humber Bay Shores Condominium Association	Site Link
	Islington Ratepayers and Residents Association	Site Link
	Kingsway Park Ratepayers' Inc.	Site Link
	Long Branch Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Mimico Lakeshore Network	Site Link
	Mimico Residents' Association	Site Link
	New Toronto Lakeshore Village Residents Association	Site Link
	Thompson Orchard Community Association	Site Link
	Humber Bay Shores Residents Association	Facebook Page
	Sunnylea-Stonegate Neighbourhood Association	Facebook Page
	South Eatonville Residents Association	Site Link
	Mystic Pointe and Area Residents Association	Facebook Page
	Six Points Residents Association	N/A

Ward 5 York South-Weston	Mount Dennis Community Association	Site Link
	Rockcliffe Smythe Community Association	Site Link
	Weston Village Residents' Association	Site Link
	Cornelius Parkway Ratepayers' Association	N/A
	RusticMaple Leaf Homeowners Group	Site Link
Ward 7 Humber River-Black Creek	Greenhills Community Association	Facebook Page
	Downsview Lands Community Association	Site Link
	Humberlea Community Group	Facebook Page
	Humber Summit Residents' Association	N/A

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in North York

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 6 - York Centre	Bathurst Finch Network	Site Link
	Downsview Lands Community Association	Site Link
	Downsview Residents Association	Site Link
	Ridgeway Ratepayers Association	Site Link
	Bathurst Manor Action Group	Facebook Page
	Armour Gardens Community Association	N/A
Ward 8 - Eglinton-Lawrence	Balmoral Homeowners Association	Site Link
	Avenue Road–Eglinton Community Association	Site Link
	Bedford Park Residents’ Organization	Site Link
	South Armour Heights Residents' Association	Site Link
	Wenderly Park Community Association	Site Link
	Cedarvale and Upper Village Community Association (CUVA)	Site Link
	Dufferin/Eglinton Community Group	N/A
	Eglinton Park Residents Association (EPRA)	Site Link
	Glen Long-Playfair Residents’ Association	N/A
	Glencairn Bathurst Community Coalition	Site Link
	Lytton Park Residents’ Organization Inc. (LPRO)	Site Link
	Upper Avenue Community Assoc (UACA)	Site Link
	York Mills Heights Residents Assoc (YMHRA)	Site Link

Ward 15 - Don Valley West	Bedford-Wanless Ratepayers' Association	Site Link
	Don Mills Residents Inc	Site Link
	Edward's Gardens Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Leaside Residents Association	Site Link
	Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association	Site Link
	South Eglinton Davisville Residents Association	Site Link
	St. Andrew's Ratepayers Association	Site Link
	Teddington Park Residents Association (TPRA)	Site Link
	Thorncliffe Park Tenants' Association	Site Link
	York Mills Neighbours Association	Site Link
	York Mills Valley Association	Site Link
	Yonge Ridge Homeowners' Association	Site Link
	Save Our Bennington	N/A
	West Keewatin Neighbours	N/A
Ward 16 - Don Valley East	Valleyanna Residents' Association	N/A
	Broadway Area Residents' Association	Site Link
Ward 17 - Don Valley North	Don Mills Residents Inc	Site Link
	Don Valley East Residents	N/A
Ward 17 - Don Valley North	Bayview Village Association	Site Link
	Henry Farm Community Interest Association	Site Link

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in North York (cont’d)

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 18 - Willowdale	Yonge Corridor Condominium Association (YCCA)	Site Link
	East Willowdale Organized Community (EWOC)	N/A
	Edithvale-Yonge Community Association (EYCA)	Site Link
	Lansing Community Association (LCA)	N/A
	West Lansing Homeowners Association	Site Link
	West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association (WWNA)	Site Link
	Willowdale Central Ratepayers Association (WCRA)	Site Link
	Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association (BCNA)	Site Link
	East Willowdale Community Association (EWCA)	Site Link
	Glendora Neighbourhood Association (GNA)	N/A
	Silverview Community Association (SCA)	Site Link
	Newtonbrook West Residents Association	N/A

Residents’ Associations (RAs) in Scarborough

Ward	Residents’ Association (RA)	Website or Facebook Page
Ward 20 - Scarborough Southwest	Cliffside Village Scarborough Southwest RA	N/A
Ward 21 - Scarborough Centre	Glen Andrew Community Association	Site Link
	Midland Park Community Association	Site Link
	Dorset Park Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
Ward 22 - Scarborough-Agincourt	Marvale Community Association	Site Link
	Heathwood Ratepayers' Association	Site Link
	Steeles–L’Amoreaux Neighbourhood Association	Site Link
	Agincourt Village Community Association	Site Link
Ward 23 - Scarborough North	Agincourt Community Services Association	Site Link
	Scarborough Rosewood Community Association	Site Link
	C.D. Farquharson Community Association	Site Link
	Brimley Forest Community Association	Site Link
Ward 24 - Scarborough-Guildwood	42 Voices (Malvern)	Facebook Page
	North Bendale Community Association	Site Link
	Seven Oaks	Facebook Page
	Woburn Local Planning Table	Facebook Page
	Guildwood Village Community Association (GVCA)	Site Link
	Curran Hall Community Association	Site Link
	Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association	Facebook Page
	Lawrence-Galloway Community Group	N/A
	Morningside Community Changers	Facebook Page
	Friends of Cedarbrook and Thomson Memorial Parks	Facebook Page
Ward 25 - Scarborough-Rouge Park	Friends of Guild Park and Gardens	Site Link
	Friends of Cornell Park	Instagram Page
	Friends of Woburn Park	Facebook Page
Ward 25 - Scarborough-Rouge Park	Centennial Community and Recreation Association	Site Link
	Highland Creek Community Association	Site Link
	West Rouge Community Association	Site Link

This Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses is intended as a comprehensive resource for operators navigating the dynamic landscape of late-night establishments. Impending regulatory changes in 2025 underscore the evolving nature of the late-night industries and the importance of staying informed. By noting and following relevant legal considerations, to fostering positive relationships with neighbours, and working to create safe, welcoming environments for all, operators can contribute to the overall well-being of the community. And by promoting responsible practices, embracing diversity and inclusion, and prioritizing safety, late-night businesses can not only thrive but also become integral and respected contributors to the vibrancy of Toronto's nightlife.



