

# COVID-19 & REOPENING YORK REGION: PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES

This document was created to provide some public health guidance around COVID-19 and compile useful documents as businesses in York Region prepare to reopen.

## GENERAL INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL:

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- engaging in face-to-face conversation with an infected person for more than 10 minutes
- being in the same room with an infected person for more than 15 minutes
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact. If your employees require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), connect with local manufacturers through the [Ontario.ca/PPE](https://ontario.ca/PPE) portal.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at your workplace, the following infection prevention and control measures should be implemented:

- Practice **physical distancing**: keep staff and customers two meters (six feet) apart
- **Wear masks**: The use of face coverings inside all public spaces has been mandated across the province. These include businesses, facilities and workplaces, with limited exemptions, including corrections and developmental services.
- Encourage staff and clients to practice good **hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette**
  - make soap and water and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for all to use
  - provide tissues and lined garbage bins for their disposal
- Frequently clean and disinfect of high-touch surfaces, like door knobs and handles, counter tops, payment terminals, etc.
- Encourage all staff to work from home when possible
- Stress that all staff and clients stay home if sick
  - Anyone with **symptoms** of COVID-19 should seek assessment at a local **COVID-19 Assessment Centre**, located at the three York Region hospitals:
    - **Markham-Stouffville Hospital**
    - **Mackenzie Health**
    - **Southlake Regional Health Centre**
- Use available **signage** to communicate infection prevention recommendations to staff and clients

## PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
[york.ca/covid19](https://york.ca/covid19)



## GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES FROM THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

The Province of Ontario has released a [Framework to Reopening the Province](#) which describes [three stages](#) of reopening and outlines the methods and principles that will be applied to businesses, services and public spaces to responsibly restart the Ontario economy while keeping the safety of employees, business owners and clients in mind.

- The [stages](#) take a gradual, thoughtful approach to loosening emergency conditions and reopening the economy. Each [stage](#) allows for different sectors to open. For example, in [Stage 3](#), nearly all businesses and public spaces are open, restaurants and bars allow dining-in, and outdoor playgrounds and play structures can be enjoyed.
- The Government of Ontario has developed numerous [sector-specific guidelines and posters](#) to help guide businesses through the reopening process safely.
- Visit [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#) and look up your sector. Please read your [sector-specific guidelines](#) thoroughly to ensure your businesses is complying with public health measures required for reopening

## SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

If your business is not operating at this time, both the Provincial Government and the Federal Government have set up relief programs to help support you while waiting reopening.

- The Government of Ontario [relief programs for businesses](#) include both financial and tax relief
- The Government of Canada [relief programs for businesses](#) include subsidies to avoid layoffs and rehiring costs, access to credit for loans and rent, among others
- The Government of Canada also has an [online tool](#) to help you find supports tailored to your specific business challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic

## WORKERS RIGHTS

Under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), employers have to take precautions to keep workers safe. Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. It is your responsibility to open your business with your employee's safety in mind. Employers and employees should work together to create a safe workplace environment. Employees with symptoms of COVID-19 must notify their employer and not remain in the workplace. Where there is the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, employers need to consider their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to occupational illnesses and notify the Ministry of Labour, the workplace joint health and safety committee, and a trade union, if applicable. Call the Ministry of Labour Health and Safety Contact Centre for further information at 1-877-202-0008. Follow your organization's policies and procedures related to workplace illness and immediately return home to self-isolate.

## YORK REGION BUSINESS SUPPORTS & RESOURCES

For more information on region-specific support for local businesses visit [York.ca/covid19](http://York.ca/covid19) or:

- [Yorklink.ca](http://Yorklink.ca)
- [York Small Business Enterprise Centre](#)
- Or call [York Region's Health Connection](#) at 1-800-361-5653 (prompt 4) to speak with a Public Health Inspector
- [Fact Sheet: Keeping Essential Workers Safe During COVID-19](#)