COVID-19: PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC GATHERINGS

This document provides guidance on the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at public gatherings.

The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly. This guidance is subject to change. Please visit york.ca/covid19 regularly for updates and additional guidance.

Planning advice

- Effective March 28, 2020, the Government of Ontario has prohibited organized public events and social gatherings of more than five people
  - This includes parades, weddings, and communal services within places of worship
  - This order does not apply to private households with five or more people
  - Funerals may proceed with up to 10 people at one time
- Given the current COVID-19 climate, York Region Public Health advises cancelling or rescheduling all non-essential events of any size

Advice for essential public gatherings (funerals up to 10 people, gatherings of five or less)

- In advance of the public gathering, develop and implement a COVID-19 plan that considers the following:
  - Measures to enhance physical distancing (maintaining two meters space between individuals)
  - Measures to minimize the likelihood of transmission during meals (e.g., offering individually packaged meals rather than a buffet)
  - Enhanced infection prevention and control measures, such as the availability of hand sanitizer and hand washing facilities
  - Enhanced environmental cleaning measures, such as regularly cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces
  - A mechanism to alert potential attendees who have symptoms or recent travel outside Ontario in the past 14 days to avoid the event
- Throughout the event, passive screening signage should be posted to remind those who have symptoms or who have recently travelled outside of Ontario in the past 14 days to go home
  - Screening posters available at york.ca/covid19 under the Resources heading
- In addition to standard cleaning protocols, clean and disinfect high touch surfaces throughout the day, and as needed

Infection prevention and control strategies

- Encourage attendees to practice good respiratory etiquette (e.g., sneezing/coughing into tissue or elbow) and hand hygiene (e.g., frequent hand washing with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer)
• Avoid preparing and distributing food and beverages. If food or beverages will be offered, implement measures to minimize the number of people who have contact with food, beverages, and serving utensils
• Avoid drinking from water fountains
• In addition to standard cleaning protocols, clean and disinfect high touch surfaces throughout the day, and as needed

Communication
• Encourage attendees to maintain a distance of at least two metres from each other
• Post simple signage to clearly communicate to attendees the safety precautions and physical distancing measures that are being taken

Management of individuals who develop symptoms of possible COVID-19
• Immediately separate individuals who show symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing) from others in a supervised area until the person can go home
• If someone is seriously ill and in need of immediate medical attention, call 911
• Anyone required to provide care to a symptomatic individual should maintain a distance of two meters from the individual, if possible. If this is not possible, contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 for further assessment and guidance
• Once the individual has left, clean and disinfect the space in which the person was separated
  o Cleaning and disinfection guidance available at York.ca/covid19 under the Resources heading

Maintain cleaning and disinfecting policies
• Facilities should follow their standard protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection, especially for high-touch surfaces such as door handles, hand rails, light switches, toilet handles, and faucet handles
• Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19
• Water fountain mouthpieces should be regularly cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer’s recommendations