

COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR FOOD PREMISES

MEASURES ARE IN PLACE FOR INDOOR FOOD AND DRINK SERVICE IN RESTAURANTS, BARS AND OTHER FOOD AND DRINK ESTABLISHMENTS, INCLUDING NIGHTCLUBS AND FOOD COURT AREAS IN MALLS

The Ontario government has developed the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#), a gradual approach that includes introducing preventative measures earlier to help avoid broader closures. It categorizes public health unit regions into five colour-coded levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Grey-Lockdown being a measure of last and urgent resort. Each level outlines the types of public health and workplace safety measures for businesses and organizations. These include targeted measures for specific sectors, institutions and other settings.

Under the framework, starting November 16, 2020 at 12:01a.m., York Region will be at **Red-Control** level. Measures are in place for indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, including nightclubs and food court areas in malls.

This document is meant to be used as a guide to assist owners/operators of food premises and assist with COVID-19 prevention measures. Please take the time to review updates on amendments to requirements, restrictions and public health measures under the new [COVID-19 Response Framework](#).

Along with these guidelines, continue to ensure your business is in compliance with the [Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#) and ensure local bylaws are adhered to.

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

- Have a [COVID-19 safety plan](#) and ensure measures are implemented
- Mitigate long lines to avoid crowding
- Consider reservations to avoid line-ups
- Lines formed outside of the premises are permitted as long as a physical distance of at least 2-metres is maintained and are wearing a mask or face covering.
- Practice [physical distancing](#): keep staff and patrons a minimum of 2-metres apart
- Ensure masks or face coverings are worn in indoor public places. Additional information for businesses, including exemptions can be found at york.ca/mandatorymasks.
- Encourage staff and patrons to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory practices
 - Make soap and water and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for use
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like door knobs, tables, chairs and payment terminals
- Conduct screening of staff when they arrive by asking [screening questions](#)
- All staff and patrons to stay home if sick
 - If you or your employees experience a fever, new or worsening cough, or difficulty breathing while working, notify your supervisor and immediately return home. Additional symptoms can include sore throat or difficulty swallowing; new smell or taste disorders; nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain; and runny nose or nasal congestion unrelated to seasonal allergies

- Use available signage to communicate infection prevention recommendations to staff and patrons
- [Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and seek assessment and testing if necessary](#)

Hours of Operation and Sale/Service of Alcohol

- The indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, including nightclubs and food court areas in malls must be closed between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. except:
 - Allow patrons to place, pick up or pay for a take-out order
 - Provide drive-through or delivery service
 - Provide dine-in service only for staff who are performing work for the establishment, or
 - Provide access to the washrooms
- Liquor can only be sold or served between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. and cannot be consumed in the establishment between the hours of 10 p.m. and 9 a.m.

Seating

- The total number of patrons permitted indoors is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least 2-metres and cannot exceed 10 patrons
 - No more than four people may be seated together at a table
- Take out, drive through and delivery is still permitted
- Contact your local municipality before extending the physical size of an existing licensed patio or adding a new licensed patio
 - The [Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario](#) (AGCO) requires licensed establishments to have municipal approval and meet all other AGCO requirements
- Patrons may remove masks once food and/or drink are placed in front. Once the food and/or drink have been finished, masks are to be put back on
- Patrons must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except:

○ While entering the area and while moving to their table	○ While going to/returning from a washroom
○ While placing or picking up an order	○ While lining up to do anything described above
○ While paying for an order	○ Where necessary for the purposes of health and safety
○ While exiting the area	

Dancing, Singing and Live Performances

- Dancing, singing and live performances of brass or wind instruments are prohibited
- Music must not be played at a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible

Physical Distancing

Indoor Dining

- Indoor dining is permitted to a maximum of 10 patrons, while maintaining a physical distance of at least 2-metres and no more than four to a table
- Remove seating in all waiting areas

- Limit public access to any indoor portions, ensuring they only have access to food pickup, payment, washroom access, access required to get to the outdoor dining area or access that is otherwise required for the purpose of health and safety
- Where lines are formed, ensure there is demarcation/signage to ensure guests are 2-metres apart. This includes picking up take-out orders and waiting to use the washrooms

Outdoor Dining (Patios)

- The following criteria must be met to be considered outdoor dining (patio):
 - At least two sides of the patio must be open to the outdoors and not blocked by any walls or other impermeable barriers
 - If equipped with a retractable roof and the roof is retracted, at least one full side of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable barriers
 - **NOTE:** criteria not met above will be considered indoor dining and subject to indoor dining regulations
- Where lines are formed such as when people are waiting to be seated, ensure demarcations/signage and/or provide directional signage to indicate the flow of the outdoor seating
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure there is a minimum of 2-metres between patrons seated at different tables from the back of their chairs unless separated by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier (e.g., between back to back booths). The barrier must be at least 15 cm higher than a customer's head. Contact your local municipality for further direction on installing Plexiglas.
- Buffet-style service is not permitted
 - Alternative: have a designated staff member assist patrons with customized orders, while adhering to infection prevention and control measures (e.g., handwashing, physical distancing)
- Self-serving units that dispense drinks and food, such as beverages, frozen yogurt, ice cream, slushies are not recommended. However, if self-serving units are an option within your operation, the following criteria shall be met:
 - Physical distancing is maintained
 - Signage posted indicating that hands are to be sanitized prior to using unit
 - Patrons have access to hand sanitizer when handwashing is not feasible
 - Staff are to provide single service cutlery/cups for dispensing
 - Where refills are offered, new cutlery/cups are provided for each refill
 - Cleaning and disinfecting is increased and documented in a log
- Where possible, use of technology may minimize staff and customer contact: mobile ordering, menu tablets, text on arrival for seating or contactless payment option
- Consider single use menus, menu boards, sandwich boards. If regular menus are to be used, they should be cleaned and disinfected between patrons

For Staff/Owners

- The person responsible for the food premises must:
 - Record the name and contact information of **every patron** that enters an area of the establishment, other than patrons who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a take-out order
 - Maintain the records for a period of at least one month
 - Only disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* on request

- If physical distance cannot be maintained, and if and where necessary, install impermeable barriers to protect staff and patrons and/or wear appropriate face coverings/masks.
- Have staff wear masks if kitchen cannot be rearranged and/or processes in the kitchen cannot be altered to reduce interaction and crossover between cooking and clearing areas
- Demarcate floor in the kitchen so staff can maintain physical distance
- Stagger staff shifts and breaks to minimize capacity in any shared space (e.g., staff room) and reconfigure the space to ensure physical distance
- Mark direction of travel to designated entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g., use the bar as a serving area)
- Recommend assigning staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them
- For staff working on the patio, masks are required when physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained at all times
- Consult with [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#) for all other appropriate measures and ensure they are included in your COVID-19 safety plan

For Patrons

- Follow signage promoting [physical distancing](#) upon entry, [passive screening](#) and any policies that the premises have implemented for COVID-19
- Follow floor demarcations (e.g., tape) and/or directional signage of the restaurant
- The use of two-layer masks or face coverings is mandatory in indoor public spaces, including food premises. The face covering may be removed temporarily when consuming food or drink, while seated.

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

- Use approved sanitizers as per the [Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#)
- Use approved disinfectants as per the [Government of Canada](#). Note: all disinfectants approved for use in Canada have a drug identification number (DIN). The products listed on the Government of Canada website are supported by evidence to likely be effective and may be used against COVID-19.
- Clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces such as door handles, hand rails, turnstiles, desks, keyboards, phones, trays, menus, tables, chairs, high chairs/booster seats, sneeze guards, common room amenities, appliances, cash registers, etc.
- Clean and disinfect washroom facilities frequently
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations for patrons at the entrance and throughout the premises
- Frontline staff should be provided with alcohol-based hand sanitizer when they are unable to wash their hands frequently with soap and water
- Place cutlery and glasses once patrons have been seated. Cutlery should be rolled or packaged
- Avoid use of bottled condiments that are shared among tables. Single-use prepackaged items are recommended. If this cannot be done, ensure bottles are cleaned and disinfected after every use
- Ensure self-service units (e.g., mobile tablets, self-checkout touch screens, smart kiosks, pin pads) are cleaned and disinfected between use
- Provide additional garbage bins for patrons to dispose of their gloves and masks, including at all entrances, exits, throughout the premises and parking lots

Protocols and Training

- Where necessary, develop protocols for patrons and ensure the information is communicated to patrons (e.g., reservations are preferred, credit/debit preferred, no entry for those exhibiting symptoms, etc.)
- Ensure staff are trained on new protocols (e.g., absence policies, cleaning and disinfecting, physical distance between patrons and staff, when and how to properly wear face coverings/masks, how to take off face coverings/masks, updated shifts and lunch schedules, how to serve meals to patrons etc.)
- Train staff on cleaning and sanitizing for food contact surfaces and cleaning and disinfecting of non-food contact surfaces and highly touched surfaces. Implement logs for both actions
- Train staff on how best to serve food, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary handling (e.g., serve to front of table and let patrons distribute, avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers)
- Ensure staff has been properly trained on gloves and [mask](#) etiquette. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed with soap and water between uses
- Encourage frequent handwashing, using the correct technique and to avoid touching face
- Train staff on dealing with patrons who are exempted from wearing a face covering/mask; proof of exemption is not required and staff should show kindness and understanding

Communication and Signage

- Have an ill staff policy:
 - Conduct [active screening](#)
 - Notify York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 of staff that have tested positive for COVID-19
- Staff must report any symptoms developed while working to their supervisor
- Communicate changes in operation and policies to staff
- Post [signage](#) for patrons: stay home as much as possible, [practice physical distancing](#), wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Post [signage](#) that patrons are to hand sanitize before entering the premises
- Patrons who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display posters telling patrons if they have symptoms they cannot enter
- Post [signage](#) at all entrances, exits and throughout the premises on disposal of gloves and masks

Additional Resources

- [COVID Alert App](#)
- [COVID-19: Help for businesses in Ontario](#)
- Ontario's Stop the Spread Business Information Line 1-888-444-3659
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Retail Sector during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Sales and Customer Service Representatives during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
- [York Region: Resources, Fact Sheets and Videos](#)

More information

Visit york.ca/COVID19, email Health.Inspectors@york.ca, or call 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-512-6228.