

COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR FOOD PREMISES

As of July 24, 2020, York Region has entered Stage 3, permitting indoor dining. Please take the time to review [A Framework for Reopening our Province](#), updates on amendments to requirements and restrictions under the public under the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#) and the [O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#).

This document is meant to be used as a guide to assist owners/operators of food premises and assist with COVID-19 prevention measures. There is no requirement for restaurants to be inspected by York Region Public Health prior to reopening; however, if this is a new restaurant, you must contact York Region Public Health prior to opening to arrange for an inspection.

Note: Effective Friday, July 17, 2020 anyone visiting enclosed public spaces must wear a face mask or covering to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

York Regional Council has endorsed a recommendation from York Region's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Karim Kurji to issue an instruction requiring operators of enclosed public spaces to have a policy in place that prohibits persons from entering premises of the establishment if the person is not wearing a face mask or covering. Business owners and operators in York Region must have a policy in place to prohibit people from entering if they are not wearing a face mask or covering and must have approved [York Region signage](#) on the premises. This policy does not apply to the following premises, even if they would fall under the definition of an establishment: York Region transit, schools, post-secondary institutions, child care facilities, private transportation, hospitals, independent health facilities, offices of regulated health professionals, and an area that is not enclosed or indoors (e.g. restaurant patio). The [instruction](#) to businesses and organizations as well as guidance to support implementation is posted on our [website](#), along with public signage for printing and displaying. The [instruction](#) will remain in place until Monday, November 30, 2020.

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 should be implemented:

- Practice [physical distancing](#): keep staff and customers 2-metres apart
- Face coverings or face masks are mandatory in indoor public places. Exemptions include:
 - children under five years of age
 - individuals with medical conditions rendering them unable to safely wear a mask including breathing difficulties or cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
 - anyone who has trouble breathing
 - anyone who is unable to remove the mask without help
 - anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated
 - anyone wearing a face covering that would inhibit the ability to breathe in any way such as, but not limited to, during moderate to intense physical activity (such as running) or activity that would preclude its use (such as swimming)
 - anyone who requires accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code



- Encourage staff and clients to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory practices
 - Make soap and water and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for use
 - Provide tissues and lined garbage bins for their disposal
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like door knobs and handles, tables, chairs, payment terminals
- The person responsible for the establishment must:
 - Record the name, phone number, date and time of every patron who enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, other than patrons who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout 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 for a purpose specified in Section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law
- Owner/operator should conduct active screening of staff when they arrive by asking [screening questions](#)
- Strongly encourage all staff and customers to stay home if sick:
 - If you or your employees become symptomatic with a fever, new or worsening cough, or difficulty breathing while working, notify your supervisor and immediately return home
 - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should seek assessment at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre, located at the three York Region hospitals:
 - [Mackenzie Health](#)
 - [Markham-Stouffville Hospital](#)
 - [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#)
- Use available signage to communicate infection prevention recommendations to staff and clients
- Loud music is discouraged to avoid shouting between staff and customers

[It is important to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and seek assessment and testing if necessary.](#)

Seating

- 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
- The capacity of the food premises is to be limited by the availability of physically distanced seating. Customers may not be admitted if seats are not available.
- 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 placing or picking up an order
 - While paying for an order
 - While exiting the area
 - While going to or returning from a washroom
 - While lining up to do anything described above
 - Where necessary for the purposes of health and safety

Physical Distancing

- Remove seating in all waiting areas
- Demarcate floor (e.g. tape) and/or provide directional signage to indicate physical distance where lines are formed. This includes waiting to be seated indoors or outdoors, picking up take-out orders and waiting to use the washrooms.
- Demarcate floor (e.g. tape) and/or provide directional signage to indicate the flow of the restaurant
- Consider reservations to avoid line-ups
- Provide one or more means of entering/exiting the food premises that supports physical distancing
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure there is a minimum of 2- metres between customers 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.
- Groups must be seated 2-metres from another group
- Persons within the group of differing households and/or social circle must maintain a distance of 2-metres
- Allow space for the safe circulation of staff and customers between tables
- Buffet-style service is not permitted
 - Alternative: have a designated staff member assist customers 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 while in line
 - Signage posted indicating that hands are to be sanitized prior to using unit
 - Customers 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 customers
- Customers are not permitted to dance
- Customers may sing or perform music if:
 - they are not singing or performing music in a private karaoke room;
 - they are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument;
 - they maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while singing or performing music; and
 - any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music is cleaned and disinfected between each use
- Singing, music, or dance can be performed by a contracted performer provided the following occurs:
 - Barriers such as Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier that is sufficient to restrict access are provided between performers and customers. Physical distancing of 2 metres between performers and customers is required

- Spectators at food premises are limited to 50 people for indoors and 100 people for outdoors, with physical distancing in place. These gathering limits occur due to the fact that when a person or group is under contract with the establishment its designation shifts from food premises to a [Section 11](#) “Performing Arts” business.

For Staff

- If physical distance cannot be maintained, and if and where necessary, install barriers to protect staff and customers and/or wear appropriate face coverings/masks. Contact your local municipality for further direction on installing Plexiglas.
- 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
- Have separate entrances, if possible for suppliers and third party delivery drivers
- Limit time staff spend with customers, within 2-metres (6-feet) of them
- Mark direction of travel to designate 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)
- Assign 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

For Customers

- Post signage promoting [physical distancing](#) upon entry, [passive screening](#) and any policies that impact customers
- Demarcate floor (e.g., tape) and/or provide directional signage to indicate flow through 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 your meal, 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 customers 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 customers have been seated. Cutlery should be rolled or packaged
- Avoid use of bottled condiments that are shared among tables. Recommend single-use prepackaged items. If this cannot be done, ensure bottles are cleaned and disinfected after every use

- 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 customers 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 customers and ensure the information is communicated to customers (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 customers 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 customers 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 customers 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 customers who a face covering/mask is exempted; 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 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. (seven days a week) and 905-953-6478 (after hours) of staff that have tested positive for COVID-19
- Staff must report any symptoms developed while working to their supervisor
- Have changes in operation and policies communicated to staff
- Post [signage](#) for customers: stay home as much as possible, [practice physical distancing](#), wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Post [signage](#) that customers are to hand sanitize before entering the premises
- Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display posters telling customers 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

- [A Framework for Reopening our Province Stage 3](#)
- [COVID Alert App](#)
- [COVID-19 and Re-Opening York Region: Public Health Resources and Guidance for Businesses](#)
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- [Province of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)
- [Restaurants Canada COVID-19 Rapid Recovery Guide Reopening Resource for Foodservice Operators](#)
- [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.

Adapted with permission of Toronto Public Health and Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Current as of August 6, 2020