

COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings

The following guidance is intended to help organizers and permit-holders of events and gatherings reduce the spread of COVID-19. It describes the requirements under [O. Reg. 82/20](#) of the [Reopening Ontario Act](#) and is applicable to:

- Concerts and live shows, including performing arts events
- Meeting or event spaces
- Movie theatres/cinemas
- All other organized or spontaneous indoor and outdoor events and social gatherings (e.g. parties, fundraisers, fairs, wedding receptions, funeral receptions).

Organizers, operators and permit-holders of events/gatherings, regardless of their purpose or size, **have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with their event/gathering, and their ability to mitigate these risks.** They are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who participate in their activities (e.g. staff, performers, volunteers, patrons). This includes managing lines and crowds within and around the perimeter of the event space. Events that contravene these public health orders are subject to [fines](#).

What is permitted ([O. Reg. 82/20](#))

- **Indoor organized events and social gatherings** are not permitted, except with members of the same household.
- **Outdoor gatherings** are permitted with 10 people or less with physical distancing.
- **Religious ceremonies, rites and services** can have up to 15 per cent capacity of the room indoors or up to 50 people outdoors.
- **Indoor and outdoor dining** at food establishments is prohibited.
- **Meeting and event spaces** may be rented for select purposes. See below for details.
- **Concert venues, theatres and cinemas** may open for the purpose of rehearsing or performing a recorded or broadcasted concert, artistic event, theatrical performance or other performance, with restrictions. See below for details.
- **Drive-in/drive-through cinemas, concerts, artistic events and performances** are permitted. See [Guidance for Drive-in & Drive-Through Events](#) for more information.

Measures for All Workplaces, Organizations & Businesses

Review the [Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) to plan and implement protocols to keep staff and patrons safe. Operators must also consider the following:

- **Staff attendance and operations**
 - Collect contact information of all staff, performers, essential visitors and other persons who provide work for the venue who enter an indoor area of the facility.
 - Meeting and event spaces must also collect contact information for all members of the public who attend a meeting or event.
- **Health screening for staff and patrons:**
 - [Health screening](#) is required for everyone entering the facility.
- **Cleaning and disinfection:**
 - Minimise the use of linens so as to minimize exposure to contamination.

Safety Plan

All businesses and workplaces must prepare and make available a safety plan. This safety plan must:

- Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
- Include measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects and wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.
- Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.

Use the [COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist](#) to develop your safety plan.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems

- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:
 - Maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or
 - Opening windows and doors, if it is safe to do so
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system, if provided.
- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.
- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.
- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, position fan with an upward movement to avoid blowing of air across people and surfaces.

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- There is no evidence the use of portable air purifiers will prevent the spread of COVID-19. If used, follow the manufacturer's directions to decide where best to place the device. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on maintenance.
- For more information, review the [COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation](#) fact sheet.

Use of Masks and Face Coverings

- All staff, performers and patrons must wear a mask or face covering indoors, as per [O. Reg. 82/20](#).
 - Every person must wear a mask while attending an organized public event or gathering and within two metres/six feet of another individual who is not part of their household.
 - Some exceptions apply, including children under the age of two, and people with medical conditions that make wearing a mask difficult.
 - Masks may be temporarily removed if a person is performing or rehearsing in a concert, artistic event, theatrical performance or other performance.
- City of Toronto [bylaw](#) requires that businesses with indoor spaces that are open to the public must develop a policy on the wearing of masks. Use the [Mask By-law Checklist and Sample Policy](#).
- Masks or face coverings are strongly recommended outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment that covers the eyes, nose and mouth must be worn if, while providing service in an indoor area, the person
 - is required to come within two metres/six feet of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering; and
 - is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier from a person described above.

Physical Distancing

- All people must maintain at least a two metre/six feet [physical distance](#) from others.
- A maximum of four people are allowed per table.
- Plan and modify the layout of your setting to ensure enough space is provided for patrons, vendors, performers and staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Access to the event/venue should only be permitted to staff, volunteers, vendors, hired performers and patrons who are registered or have a ticket.
 - Unregistered public access to the event/meeting space, room or thoroughfare should not be permitted.
 - The need to access a room through other rooms that are not part of the same event/meeting should be limited or minimized. This should be monitored by staff.

Meeting & Event Spaces

Meeting and event spaces may be rented only for the following purposes:

- A day camp for children that is operated in a manner consistent with the [safety guidelines for COVID-19 for day camps](#) produced by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- A child care centre or authorized recreational and skill building program within the meaning of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.
- The provision of social services.
- Delivering or supporting court services.
- Collective bargaining meetings, as long as they involve no more than 10 people, are permitted to occupy the rented space.
- Operations by or on behalf of the government.
- Delivering or supporting delivery of government services.
- Delivering or supporting mental health and substance use support services (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous) as long as no more than 10 people are permitted to occupy the rented space.
- Conducting in-person examinations for the registration, licensing or accreditation of persons in any of the fields or occupations described in subsection 2 (1.1) of Schedule 3 of [O. Reg 82/20](#), as long as no more than 50 students are permitted to occupy the rented space.

Concert Venues, Theatres and Cinemas

- Concert venues, theatres and cinemas may open for the purpose of rehearsing or performing a recorded or broadcasted concert, artistic event, theatrical performance or other performance, if they comply with the following conditions:
 - No spectators may be permitted in the concert venue, theatre or cinema.
 - Every performer and other person who provides work for the concert venue, theatre or cinema must maintain at least two metres physical distance from every other person, except:
 - if it is necessary for the performers or other persons to be closer to each other for the purposes of the performance or rehearsal, or
 - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
 - Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any other performers by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Cinemas, concerts, artistic events, theatrical performances and other performances may be provided in a drive-in or drive-through format, with conditions. See [Guidance for Drive-in & Drive-Through Events](#) for more information.
- For more information, see [Live Performance Health & Safety during COVID-19](#).

Capacity & Gathering Limits

- The person responsible for a place of business or facility that is open to the public shall limit the number of persons in the place of business or facility so that:
 - the members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility; and
 - the total number of members of the public in the business or facility at any one time does not exceed 50 per cent capacity.
- Calculate the maximum number of patrons permitted according to current provincial regulations or physical distancing requirements, **whichever is less**. Limit the number of patrons accordingly.
 - The maximum number of patrons that should be permitted at any one time based on physical distancing requirements can be calculated as one person per two metres squared (four square metres or 43 square feet) of publicly accessible floor space.
 - The maximum number of patrons permitted based on 50 per cent capacity can be calculated by taking the total square metres of floor space accessible to the public, dividing that number by 8 and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number.
- **Indoor organized events and social gatherings** are not permitted, except with members of the same household.
- **Outdoor gatherings** are permitted with 10 people or less with physical distancing.
- **Religious ceremonies, rites and services** can have up to 15 per cent capacity of the room indoors or up to 50 people outdoors, with physical distancing.
 - Social events and gatherings associated with religious ceremonies, rites and services are limited to 10 people or less outdoors with physical distancing.

Food and Drink

- Onsite food or beverage preparation by vendors is not permitted at this time (e.g. special event tents/booths).
- Indoor and outdoor dining at food service establishments is currently not permitted.
- Food may be sold or served as take-out, drive-through or delivery only.
- See [Guidance for Food Premises](#) for more information.

Modify Programming

- Consider virtual options (e.g. live streaming, pre-recorded shows, solo performances from home, virtual reality and other digital experiences).
- Limit or cancel activities where distances or other appropriate controls cannot be implemented.

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- Allow sufficient time between events/gatherings to allow safe and distanced exit and entry, and sufficient environmental cleaning in between.
- Keep the duration of the event/gathering to a minimum to limit contact among patrons.
- Patrons should remain seated as much as possible.
- Close or restrict access to non-essential common areas (e.g. communal lounges).
- Discourage activities that increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 (e.g. singing, cheering, dancing, playing wind instruments, hugging). Encourage alternative practices, such as humming, clapping, noisemakers, waving.

Modify and Arrange Site/Floor Plan

- Design traffic flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- Increase floor marking and aisle signage to allow people to find their seats more easily.
- Arrange, mark and/or assign seating to ensure at least two metre/six feet distance between individuals who are not members of the same household.
- Ensure that patrons can access their event/meeting area without wandering (i.e. entering other event/meeting rooms/areas). If possible, use a dedicated entrance/exit.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies or bathrooms. Use volunteers, staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- Ensure enough space for people in high-traffic areas, between chairs, tables, and places where people may gather.

Manage Lines and Gatherings Within and Outside the Venue

- Use barriers/structures to enclose the event space/venue.
- Designate entry and exit points. Manage these areas to control the number of patrons. If the maximum number of patrons is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals, departures and breaks to reduce congestion at entrances and exits and in common areas.
- Monitor and manage patron lines within and outside the venue.
- Post [physical distancing](#) signs at all entrances, kiosks and/or service counters.
- Place visual/textural markers spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing.
- Operators must ensure that patrons waiting in line maintain a distance of two metres/six feet from others and wear a mask/face covering.
- Discourage people from gathering and loitering outside the venue.

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- Assign staff to monitor lines and ensure patrons stay two metres/six feet apart.

Communication

- Provide information to staff, performers and patrons about event/venue operations (e.g. public health measures, available amenities).
- Encourage staff and patrons to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Download information and display posters in high-visibility areas in your setting to promote messages about how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - [COVID-19: Spread the Word](#)
 - [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)

Other Resources

[Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

[Guidance for Employers on Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

[Guidance for Drive-in/Drive-through Events](#)

[Planning a Funeral Reception / Celebration of Life during COVID-19 Checklist](#)

[COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding](#)

[Live Performance & Safety during COVID-19](#)

[Risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

More information

For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.

This document does not replace the need for applicable [City of Toronto permits](#). COVID-19 mitigation and safety measures are a new consideration as part of event permitting, however, they do not replace any pre-existing permit requirements, health and safety practices, or conditions.