



COVID-19 Guidance for Meeting or Event Spaces

July 16th, 2021 – Step 3

Owners, operators, organizers, and attendees at Meeting or Event Spaces are responsible for complying with the provisions set out in the applicable Regulation(s) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#).

Please note that all meetings or events in your space must also comply with the requirements set out by the Province in [O. Reg. 364/20](#) (the Rules for Step 3), and different events have different rules (i.e. sports and recreations, weddings, meetings, trade shows, etc.).

As well, the Ontario government has released the [Roadmap for Reopening](#) that has three steps of public health measures: **Step 1**, **Step 2**, and **Step 3**. This guidance document describes the Provincial requirements that all Meeting or Event Spaces must comply with, as well as local recommendations to reduce the risks of transmission in the area served by Peterborough Public Health (PPH).

This document does not constitute legal advice and does not replace the need for users of Meeting or Event Spaces to follow all applicable requirements from the Province of Ontario. There may be situations where provincial rules and local public health rules vary in level of restriction. When this is the case, Meeting or Event Spaces must ensure compliance with the measure that is most restrictive in terms of preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. As such, PPH's guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Please visit the [PPH COVID-19 website](#) for up-to-date information, including the current status of enhanced measures in Peterborough.

Before any Meeting or Event Space opens, a [safety plan](#) must be developed to ensure all relevant public health guidelines and requirements are in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The guidance in this document will help with the creation of your safety plan. The final plan may be requested by any indoor/outdoor facility users, and should be shared with all relevant employees, volunteers, and participants. Likewise, a safety plan will need to be prepared by the users of the Meeting or Event space.

Owners, operators, organizers, and attendees at Meeting or Event Spaces all have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with in-person activities, and to develop plans to mitigate these risks.

Quick facts

- Gathering limits are subject to attendees' ability to maintain two metres physical distance from those outside their household, and there are different rules for the type of event happening in your space:
 - Religious rite, ceremonies and services (for example) have different capacities than meetings, parties, and collective bargaining. Please ensure you are following the rules for you the event you are hosting.
- Staff, generally, do not count towards the gathering limits
- Indoor events cannot be combined with an outdoor event to increase gathering size
- **Outdoor wedding, funeral or religious services, rites and ceremonies** held in private backyards are not subject to a specific capacity limit for the service/ceremony, however, the number of

attendees must not exceed the capacity in which people can safely physically distance (i.e. at least 43sq feet required per person)

- **Social gatherings** associated with a wedding, funeral, or religious service, rite or ceremony at a private residence, before or after an event, must comply with gathering limits for private unstaffed/unsupervised events; UP TO 25 people indoors, and UP to 100 people outdoors
- **Drive-in and drive-through** venues are not subject to gathering limits, but must ensure there is at least 2m distance between vehicles
- Indoor dining is permitted
- No limitations regarding **table capacity** or household dining, though it is recommended that households be seated together
- The maximum capacity limit must be based on patrons being separated by at least 2 metres from patrons at other tables. This total capacity limit must be determined by the operator and clearly posted.
- The indoor and outdoor dining areas must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by,
 - a distance of at least 2 metres, or
 - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier

General rules for all businesses / organizations

- Operate in accordance with all applicable laws, including the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), and the regulations made under it.
- Follow all [advice, recommendations and instructions](#) from public health officials.
- Follow all public health requirements for [screening](#) of workers, patrons and essential visitors.
- Ensure that the capacity limit for the business is posted in a conspicuous place, visible to the public.
- Ensure that [members of the public comply with mask/face covering requirements](#) as outlined in [O. Reg. 364/20](#).
- Arrange the [workplace and lunch/break rooms](#) to accommodate physical distancing of at least 2 metres/6 feet.
- Ensure that any lineups for the business/organization are managed to ensure that physical distancing is in place and masks/face coverings are worn.
- [Ensure workers wear Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#), meaning eye protection and a medical mask, when providing services indoors to clients that are not wearing a mask *and* where no physical barrier exists.

COVID-19 safety plans

- Persons responsible for a business or organization that is open to the public shall prepare (in writing) and make available by posting in a conspicuous location, a COVID-19 safety plan, which describes the measures and procedures implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- The safety plan shall, as a minimum, describe how the requirements of the regulation and other Orders will be implemented at the business including screening, physical distancing, masks/face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, wearing of personal protective equipment and the prevention of crowding.
- [Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan | Ontario.ca](#)

Active screening of workers

Persons responsible for businesses and organizations must ensure that all workers (including employees, independent contractors, managers, directors, officers, owners, partners, shareholders, volunteers, students or any other person engaged in the employer's activity at the workplace) are actively screened for symptoms of COVID-19, in accordance with the provincial screening tool, and that active screening is recorded and documented on a daily basis.

- [COVID-19 worker and employee screening \(ontario.ca\)](#)
- Peterborough Public Health [resources for active screening](#)

Active screening of patrons

Patrons attending your facility must be [actively screened](#) for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to their entry. Documentation that the patron passed the screening must be kept on file for 30 days.

Face coverings or masks required in Meeting or Event spaces

As per the applicable Provincial regulations, masks or face coverings are required in all public indoor settings across Ontario, as well as all indoor areas including those not accessible to the public where physical distancing of at least 2-meters (6 feet) cannot be maintained.

According to the regulation, every person who enters or remains in an enclosed public space shall wear a well-fitting mask in a manner that covers their mouth, nose, and chin.

- Look for 3-layered masks (2 layers of tightly woven cloth inside and outside, and a filter-type fabric, such as non-woven polypropylene fabric in between)
- Well-fitting 2-layer cloth masks made of tightly woven materials may still be used, since they work almost as well, especially to block your own respiratory droplets from others
- As you replace or add to your cloth masks, choose 3 layered masks
- It is also strongly recommended that all individuals wear a mask in outdoor spaces where physical distancing may become a challenge or not possible.

Operators of an enclosed public space must ensure that:

- Anyone not wearing a mask is given a verbal reminder to do so
- At every public entrance/exit there should be [signage](#) that states all persons entering the premises must wear a mask

A summary of provincial masking requirements can be found [here](#).

Rules that apply to all businesses and organizations that are open:

- Any person (including staff) in an indoor area of a business or organization or a vehicle that is a part of the business or organization must wear a mask or face covering that covers their mouth, nose or chin, with limited exceptions
- Not required for workers who are in an area that is not accessible to the public and are able to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from others

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Workers [must wear PPE](#), meaning eye protection and a medical mask, when providing services indoors to clients that are *not* wearing a mask *and* where no physical barrier exists between them. (i.e. servers, caterers, etc.)
- In other situations, a face covering alone will typically suffice for workers
- Our workplace 'letter of instruction' (for June 10/2021) has been revoked to align with the provincial requirements set out for Step 3 in [O. Reg. 364/20](#)

For more information about masks, please visit www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-mandatory-face-coverings/

Capacity limits

NOTE: *If you are renting your meeting and event spaces for the permitted reasons below, request a safety plan from the business/organization running the event to ensure they are compliant with the full requirements of the regulation and to be granted the % capacity limit listed below. If the renter is not a business/organization and cannot produce a safety plan to your satisfaction, the lower capacity limit of max 25 indoors/100 outdoors would be granted.*

Meeting & event spaces can open, provided that they are compliant with the following:

For indoor events without dancing:

Capacity limit determined by physical distancing of 2 metres and may not exceed 50% capacity, as arrived at by taking 50% of the capacity of every room in the rentable meeting or event space and totaling the result, or 1,000 persons, whichever is less.

For indoor events with dancing:

Capacity limit determined by physical distancing of 2 metres and may not exceed 25% capacity or 250 persons, whichever is less.

For outdoor events with or without dancing:

The total number of members of the public permitted to be in an outdoor portion of the rentable meeting or event space at any one time may not exceed 75% capacity, or 5,000 persons, whichever is less.

NOTE: This means that an outdoor meeting and event space will need a designated area to be able to do the capacity calculation and access to the area is controlled to help with adherence to the posted capacity limit.

For a wedding, funeral or a religious service, rite or ceremony (not the social gathering): Capacity limit determined by physical distancing of 2 metres

- A capacity limit sign must be posted in a visible place.
- The indoor and outdoor dining areas must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:
 - a distance of at least 2 metres, or
 - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.

Maximum capacity limits must be posted and are based on the calculations below – for venues operating at either 75% capacity or 50% capacity:

- For the purposes of this Order, the maximum number of members of the public permitted in a business or facility that is operating in an **outdoor setting at 75 per cent capacity** is determined by taking the total square metres of area accessible to the public, dividing that number by 1.33, and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number.
- For the purposes of this Order, the maximum number of members of the public permitted in a business or facility, or part of a business or facility, that is operating in an **indoor setting at 50 per cent capacity** is determined by taking 50 per cent of the maximum occupant load of the business or facility, or part of a business or facility, as applicable, as calculated in accordance with Ontario Regulation 213/07 (Fire Code), made under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*.

Indoor vs. Outdoor

- Outdoor spaces (i.e. tents, pagodas, and gazebos, etc.) must have at least two full sides open to the outdoors and not be substantially blocked in any way to be granted 'outdoor' capacity limits
- Weddings taking place in barns and other rural outbuildings are considered INDOOR events
- Indoor and outdoor capacity limits cannot be combined to achieve higher limits/more guests

Other considerations

Singing and playing of brass and wind instruments

Singing in a choir and playing brass and wind instruments are higher risk activities for COVID-19 transmission. If singing

or playing brass and wind instruments is going to take place, PPH recommends the following precautions:

- Consider using audio or video recordings instead of live singing or wind or brass instrumental music.
- Group singing is strongly discouraged. However, if more than one person is singing, limit the number of people singing to the fewest possible.
- Anyone singing or playing wind or brass instruments must be at least 2 metres (6 feet) from anyone else
- Performers should be spaced a minimum of 2 metres (6 feet) apart, but ideally more, and face away from each other if possible.
- Microphones and amplification should be used if possible, rather than projecting the voice.
 - Microphones should be sanitized between users

For more information about the risks of singing and playing music, please also review these documents:

- [Singing and Playing Wind Instruments – Environmental Scan related to COVID-19 \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#),
- [Aerosolization and airborne transmission](#) of COVID-19.

In the event that live music is performed at the Meeting or Event Space, a distance of at least 2m is required between spectators and performers.

Managing COVID-19 at your Meeting or Event space

If two (2) or more people test positive for COVID-19 (e.g. two or more cases) are identified in connection with your workplace premise:

- Immediately notify Peterborough Public Health at (705) 743-1000 if there are two or more people that test positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day interval in connection with your workplace premises.
- Provide contact information for a designated contact person at the workplace premise and ensure that person is readily available to communicate with Peterborough Public Health and implement any additional measures immediately as required by Peterborough Public Health.
- Ensure that accurate and updated contact information for all workers is available to be produced to Peterborough Public Health within 24 hours of request from Peterborough Public Health in support of case management and contact tracing requirements for COVID-19.
- Notify the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development and/or other relevant government authorities. Further information about employer's responsibilities with respect to COVID-19 at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-coronavirus-and-workplace-health-and-safety>.
- Cooperate with infection prevention and control personnel from Peterborough Public Health including allowing entry into the workplace premise for inspection, to support enhanced infection prevention and control measures and recommendations.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- Equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers must be [cleaned and disinfected](#) as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition
- Surfaces most likely to become contaminated include, but are not limited to: doorknobs, railings, elevator buttons, water fountain/cooler knobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, ceremonial objects, electronic devices, and tabletops. Refer to [Public Health Ontario's Environmental Cleaning fact sheet](#)
 - Only use cleaning and disinfectant products that have a [Drug Identification Number \(DIN\)](#); it should be stated on product packaging.
 - Check expiry dates of cleaning and disinfectant products used and always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Ensure that the products used are compatible with the item to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Garbage bins should be lined with plastic bags

Entering and exiting the space

- Operators who choose to have in-person services should consider that capacity restrictions on their own do not address many important factors that may contribute to the spread of COVID-19. Other factors include: entry,

hallway, exit space and flow; the size and shape of the building where congregation is expected to occur; the layout of spaces where attendees will spend time; the activity occurring at each gathering; ventilation of the area, screening of participants; and cleaning procedures.

- Only allow one point of entry and a separate point of exit, especially if there will be overlap between people entering and exiting. However, for big buildings that may have a large number of attendees, the risk of crowding may need to be mitigated by exercising greater control of entrance and exit processes (e.g., dismiss one group or event at a time); and/or using more than one entrance and exit.
 - If using more than one point of entry, facilities need to coordinate between doors to ensure no more than the maximum occupancy is admitted into the building.
 - The distancing of a least 2 metres (6 feet) must be maintained in all phases of approaching, entering, and being in the building, including hallways.
- Weather permitting, prop entry and exit doors open to prevent patrons from touching handles/bars.
- Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content must be available at facility entrance and exit and available in every room (as applicable).
 - All visitors should be asked to clean their hands upon entry and exit.

Ventilation

The virus causing COVID-19 spreads from person to person through aerosols and respiratory droplets. These are produced when we breathe, speak, sing, laugh, sneeze, and cough. Due to gravity, larger and heavier droplets fall quickly. Smaller and lighter droplets, the aerosols, remain suspended in the air for longer. Environmental conditions, such as temperature, humidity, and airflow, can also impact the spread of the virus. The risk of spread due to aerosols may be possible when there are gatherings of people indoors for a longer period of time.

[Proper airflow and ventilation](#) can help reduce the risk. Good airflow and ventilation do not replace the need for personal public health measures including:

- Avoiding crowded spaces.
- Maintaining 2-metres of physical distance with people who aren't in your household.
- Wearing a snug-fitted, 3-layer mask.
- Practicing good hand hygiene.

This guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Plan to regularly check for new guidance as part of *your* COVID-19 plan. Likewise, staff at your meeting and event space, may find the following information helpful:

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-workplaces/>