

Nearly All Businesses and Public Spaces to Reopen in Stage 3

Public Gatherings Will Increase in Size as the Province Continues its Path to Economic Recovery

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TORONTO — The Ontario government announced nearly all businesses and public spaces will reopen in Stage 3 of the province's reopening framework with public health and workplace safety measures and restrictions in place. As Ontario continues down the path to economic recovery, decisions on which regions will enter Stage 3 and when will be made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts and based on trends of key public health indicators.

Details on the Stage 3 reopening framework were provided by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, and Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education.

"Our success in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and getting Ontario to a place where we are ready to reopen most of the province is a testament to the hard work of business owners, individuals and families right across the province," said Premier Ford. "So many have stepped up and played by the rules, demonstrating that we can restart our economy safely and responsibly. Small actions can make a big difference. Now more than ever, we must continue to follow the public health advice to preserve the progress we have made together."

As part of the Stage 3 reopening, Ontario will be increasing gathering limits for those regions entering the next stage to the following:

- Indoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 50 people;
- Outdoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 100 people;
- Gathering limits are subject to physical distancing requirements.

Public gathering limits apply to indoor and outdoor events, such as community events or gatherings, concerts, live shows, festivals, conferences, sports and recreational fitness activities, fundraisers, fairs, festivals or open houses. A two metre distance must still be maintained at such events.

Regions remaining in Stage 2 will maintain the existing gathering limit of 10. Social circles in all stages at this point will also be kept to a maximum of 10 people province-wide, regardless of stage.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health, public health experts and other officials have advised the following, high-risk places and activities are not yet safe to open, even if a region has entered Stage 3, due to the likelihood of large crowds congregating, difficulties with physical distancing, or challenges maintaining the proper cleaning and sanitation required to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Amusement parks and water parks;
- Buffet-style food services;
- Dancing at restaurants and bars, other than by performers hired by the establishment following specific requirements;
- Overnight stays at camps for children;
- Private karaoke rooms;
- Prolonged or deliberate contact while playing sports;
- Saunas, steam rooms, bath houses and oxygen bars;
- Table games at casinos and gaming establishments.

For more information on the restrictions that will remain in place during Stage 3, as well as the public health guidance necessary to keep the people of Ontario safe, visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://www.ontario.ca/reopen).

The province is committed to working closely and collaboratively with businesses and sectors not yet able to reopen or who are experiencing significant challenges for reopening due to Stage 3 restrictions. These businesses can visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://www.ontario.ca/reopen) to work with the government on a reopening proposal that will enable them to safely resume or increase operations. Government and public health officials will review proposals and contact businesses for feedback or clarifications.

"With almost all businesses and services able to resume operations, Stage 3 is a major step forward in our plan to reopen the province," said Minister Phillips. "We have to keep treating each other with respect and acting responsibly to keep up the progress in our fight against COVID-19. Our government will continue working with our partners across Ontario to rebuild our economy so that our province is a place of economic strength and prosperity for every person and family."

The following public health unit regions will be allowed to move into Stage 3 first, on Friday, July 17, 2020:

- Algoma Public Health
- Brant County Health Unit
- Chatham-Kent Public Health
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit
- Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Hastings Prince Edward Public Health
- Huron Perth Public Health
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health

- Leeds Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
- Northwestern Health Unit
- Ottawa Public Health
- Peterborough Public Health
- Porcupine Health Unit
- Public Health Sudbury & Districts
- Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit
- Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit
- Southwestern Public Health
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Timiskaming Health Unit
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

Businesses and municipalities will be permitted to enter Stage 3 based on their region and, as in the previous stages, may choose to take more time before reopening. For a list of regions that will remain in Stage 2, visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://www.ontario.ca/reopen).

At the beginning of each week, the province will continue to reassess local trends in public health indicators, including rates of transmission, hospital capacity, progress on testing and contact tracing, to determine if additional public health unit regions can progress to Stage 3. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other public health experts will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation to advise when public health restrictions can be further loosened or if they need to be tightened or reapplied.

"Having seen a decline in the number of new COVID-19 cases as the province safely re-started over 90 per cent of economic activity with Stage 2, we now have the confidence to move certain regions into Stage 3, including expanding the size of gatherings indoors and outdoors," said Minister Elliott. "As we do, it's never been more important for all Ontarians to continue to practise physical distancing and wear a face covering when doing so is a challenge, such as safely visiting a favourite local store. Together, we'll continue to move Ontario forward."

As the province safely and gradually enters Stage 3, child care centres and home child care providers across Ontario will be able to continue to operate with strict safety and operational requirements in place. Beginning on July 27, 2020, child care centres will be permitted to operate with cohorts of 15 children, which is an increase from the current cohort cap of 10. This change will allow parents to return to work, and bring the child care sector to approximately 90 per cent of its operating capacity before the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Providing child care for parents is critical so that, as more Ontarians return to work, they can do so with confidence in knowing that their children are being safely cared for," said Minister Lecce.

"Child care is an integral enabler to the continued restart of Ontario's economy, and we remain committed to working to ensure child care remains accessible, affordable and, most importantly, safe as we gradually increase capacity of Ontario's child care sector."

The government, in partnership with health and safety associations, has released over 170 guidance resources at [Ontario.ca/COVIDsafety](https://www.ontario.ca/COVIDsafety) to help employers in multiple sectors – including fitness, restaurant and food services, and the performing arts – keep spaces safe for workers and customers. Guidance will be available for all spaces permitted to open in Stage 3. As they prepare to reopen, employers are strongly advised to review and implement appropriate measures to help protect their communities.

"As we enter Stage 3 and continue on the path to economic recovery, it is more important than ever that we support business owners and workers," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "That is why we launched the [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) to provide businesses with information on personal protective equipment suppliers so they can keep their employees, customers and clients safe as they resume their operations. By continuing to work together, we will ensure Ontario is prepared and well-supplied for any future challenges."

Based on community needs, some municipalities and local medical officers of health have implemented more restrictions or requirements, such as mandatory face coverings in commercial establishments and all indoor public places. Check your [local public health unit's](#) or local municipality's website.

QUICK FACTS

- The government invites businesses not able to open or resume full activities due to Stage 3 restrictions to visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://www.ontario.ca/reopen) to submit a reopening proposal.
- For questions on restrictions that will remain in place during Stage 3, review the Stage 3 Emergency Order on the [emergency information portal](#) or call the Stop the Spread Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659.
- The Ontario government has launched a website to provide businesses with information on personal protective equipment (PPE) suppliers. The [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) has an up-to-date list of Ontario companies and business associations that are ready to supply PPE.
- The government has also launched the \$50 million Ontario Together Fund to support the development of proposals submitted by businesses and individuals through the [Ontario Together web portal](#) to help businesses retool their operations.
- Free online workplace health and safety training is available through Employment Ontario for up to 100,000 job seekers, with topics such as infection control, conducting health and safety incident investigations, ladder safety, slips, trips and falls prevention. Contact an Employment Ontario [service provider](#) in your area to enroll.
- Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board, is leading a new committee focused on strengthening the work of the Ontario government following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee will ensure public sector services are customer focused and digital- and data-driven, while increasing the speed of government operations and decisions.

- Find sector-specific guidelines and return-to-sport resources to help facilities, trainers and athletes safely return to play and recreation activities in Ontario at [Ontario.ca/returntoplay](https://ontario.ca/returntoplay).

LEARN MORE

- [Learn more about Stage 3 of reopening Ontario](#)
- [Submit your safe reopening proposal](#)
- [Get the facts from Public Health Ontario on how to protect yourself and others](#)
- [Find workplace safety guidance documents to prepare for reopening](#)
- [Learn more about *A Framework for Reopening our Province*](#)
- [Provide your input on the economic impacts of COVID-19](#)
- [See how your organization can help fight COVID-19](#)
- [Visit Ontario's website to learn more about how the province continues to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19](#)

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