

October 20, 2020

To all ski and snow resort facilities in the County of Simcoe and District Municipality of Muskoka:

**Re: COVID-19 public health guidance and requirements for ski and snow resort facilities**

This letter provides public health guidance and regulatory requirements for ski and snow resort facilities in the County of Simcoe and the District Municipality of Muskoka in preparation for the upcoming ski season and to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Due to the developing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial regulatory response, the guidance contained within this letter is focused on Stage 3 requirements for operation under [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#).

Ski and snow resort facilities are regulated under the *Reopening Ontario Act* through [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) as “facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities”. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is currently identified as a Stage 3 health unit pursuant to [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#). The requirements and recommendations provided in this letter are pursuant to [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) and the Province of Ontario’s public health recommendations during Stage 3 contained in “[Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)”.

On September 11, 2020, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries provided the following direction to ski and snow resorts in Ontario:

Businesses in the ski and snow sport sector are permitted to open in Stage 3, subject to requirements set out in [Ontario Regulation 364/20 \(Rules for Areas in Stage 3\)](#) made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

Recreational activities such as ski and snow recreation are not subject to the gathering limits listed for sport and recreation facilities, however, due to the nature of your business, there may be other sections of the [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) that apply. Please review [Ontario Regulation 364/20 \(Rules for Areas in Stage 3\)](#) as it relates to all aspects of your business.

Your business may wish to be particularly mindful of some of the provisions in the following schedules listed within [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#):

1. *Schedule 1, Section 3: Capacity limits for businesses or facilities open to the public:*

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 every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility.

2. *Schedule 1, Section 6: Cleaning requirements*

The person responsible for a business or place that is open shall ensure that,

- (a) any washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition; and

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Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 4J5  
705-445-0804  
FAX: 705-445-6498

**Cookstown:**  
2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
L0L 1L0  
705-458-1103  
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**Gravenhurst:**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
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705-684-9090  
FAX: 705-684-9887

**Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
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P1H 1K1  
705-789-8813  
FAX: 705-789-7245

**Midland:**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
Midland, ON  
L4R 1X8  
705-526-9324  
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**Orillia:**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
Orillia, ON  
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705-325-9565  
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(b) any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.

Employers may refer to the information provided in the [third stage of the framework for reopening the province](#), as well as additional sector-specific guidance provided by the [province of Ontario](#) and the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development \(MLTSD\)](#) to better understand how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on community needs, some municipalities and local medical officers of health have exercised their authority to implement more restrictions or requirements. It is important that you are aware of public health practices in your area of operation.

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that the “the person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall operate the business or organization in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.” This letter is intended for ski and snow resort facilities and is to be relied upon by both owner/operators and SMDHU staff for compliance information with the relevant regulations, provincial recommendations and SMDHU requirements for Stage 3 operations.

## **A. OUTDOOR AND INDOOR PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR SKI AND SNOW RESORTS**

### **Outdoors**

#### Outdoor attendance

It is recommended that ski and snow resorts implement capacity control measures (i.e. parking lot monitoring, booking times, online reservations, gathering limits per day, etc.) to ensure that outdoor attendance does not overwhelm indoor facilities (see **Indoors** section below) which could result in indoor gathering limits exceeding the regulated gathering limits.

#### Gathering limits for organized public events and social gatherings

Ontario Regulation 364/20 requires that should an outdoor organized sporting event (i.e. tournament, race, etc.) proceed, the outdoor gathering limit is limited to 100 participants plus 100 spectators. For outdoor organized public events that are not related to a sporting event (i.e. media event, entertainment, etc.) the gathering limit is 100 people if monitored and 25 people if unmonitored. The province’s intention for ‘monitoring’ is to prevent organized public events and social gatherings from proceeding with more than 25 people outdoors unless there is a business or organization responsible for the venue to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions during the event. SMDHU recommends cancelling or postponing all non-essential public events (e.g. meetings, dinners, communal services), particularly if they include people who are more vulnerable to the virus, such as the elderly or those who are immune-compromised.

#### Outdoor sports and recreational activities and physical distancing

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that “every person who engages in sports or a recreational fitness activity at the facility, other than a team sport, must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person at all times during the activity.” This applies to outdoor ski and resort activities including skiing, tubing and other winter activities.

### Outdoor lineups

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that businesses and organizations ensure every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person who is not part of the same household. Accordingly, all outdoor lineup locations including for chairlifts, outdoor equipment rentals, outdoor washroom facilities and outdoor food and beverage services must adhere to the physical distancing requirements.

### Chairlifts

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that businesses and organizations ensure every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person who is not part of the same household. Accordingly, all chairlifts must be assessed for physical distancing requirements recognizing that some chairlifts may only accommodate one person at a time.

### Masks and face coverings

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that employees, volunteers and members of the public are required to wear masks and face coverings inside the following ski and snow resort settings when unable to maintain physical distancing; work vehicles with more than one person, chairlift stations when staff are unable to maintain physical distancing, work buildings when staff are unable to maintain physical distancing, enclosed warming stations and outdoor washrooms open to the public require the wearing of masks and face coverings at all times. Signs are available from SMDHU for each of these settings.

### Screening and record-keeping

Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities are required to actively (daily) screen all persons who attend their facility including guests and staff and keep related records for a period of 30 days. See screening section of [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#). This applies to members of the public, staff and volunteers who only attend outdoor settings at ski and snow resort facilities even if they do not go inside a resort building.

## **Indoors**

### Indoor attendance

Restaurant settings (see RESTAURANTS in section D. below) at a ski and snow resort facility are subject to [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) gathering limits, screening and record-keeping requirements contained in section 1. of schedule 2 of the regulation. See [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) for all requirements.

Meeting and event spaces are subject to indoor gathering limits set out in section 4. of schedule 1 as follows:

*The person responsible for a business or place that is open may only rent out meeting or event space if the total number of members of the public permitted to be in all of the rentable meeting or event space in the business or place at any one time is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or place, and in any event is not permitted to exceed 50 persons if the meeting or event is indoors.*

All other indoor areas of facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities, including equipment rental, common areas, change rooms and washrooms are subject to gathering limits as follows:

*Capacity limits for businesses or facilities open to the public*

*3. (1) 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 every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility, except where Schedule 2 allows persons to be closer together.*

*(2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) does not require persons who are in compliance with public health guidance on households and social circles to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from each other while in a place of business or facility.*

Therefore, it is recommended that each room and area within the facility be assessed for occupancy on the basis of four square metres per person and monitor for adherence to same.

Indoor traffic

Recommendation for routing people through the facility are outlined in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for health and safety* and specific instructions including:

- Using visual cues (e.g., signs, posters, floor markings, stanchions, etc.) to guide patrons from outside to throughout the facility (including hallways, common areas) to exit.
- Developing procedures that allow for uncongested entry and exit (e.g., dedicated one-way entry and exit pathway for each activity area).

Masks and face coverings

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires that everyone in an indoor public area is required to wear masks and face coverings. Further, employees must wear masks in work areas where they cannot maintain physical distancing. Signs are available from SMDHU and please see updated SMDHU [guidance](#) for the mask and face covering requirements along with exceptions based on [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#).

Screening and record-keeping

Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities are required to actively (daily) screen all persons who attend their facility including guests and staff and keep related records for a period of 30 days. See screening section of [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#).

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the key control measures to help prevent transmission of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19. Promotion of increased hand hygiene at ski and snow resort facilities through use of SMDHU posters and staff training is encouraged at all times.

**B. DISINFECTION**

Disinfection of rental equipment

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires disinfection for rental equipment as follows:

*Any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of users of the facility must be cleaned and disinfected between each use or, where used in a game or practice, at the end of play, such as at the completion of a game or practice.*

Further disinfection recommendations are outlined in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for health and safety*.

#### Disinfection of fixed structures

[Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) requires disinfection for fixed structures as follows:

Activities must not be practised or played within the facility if they require the use of fixed structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between each use or, where used in a game or practice, at the end of play.

Further disinfection recommendations are outlined in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for health and safety*.

#### Disinfection within the facility

Disinfection recommendations for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities are set out in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for health and safety* and specific instructions including:

- *Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and common or shared spaces, such as washrooms, lobbies, change rooms, areas for workouts and classes, and workout equipment. Refer to PHO's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings fact sheet](#) (PDF).*
- *The surfaces most likely to become contaminated include door handles, handrails, toilet and faucet handles, counters, pin pads, and touch screens.*
- *Fitness and sports equipment should be cleaned and disinfected frequently, such as between uses or at the end of play. This includes free weights, weight machines, treadmills, rowing machines, stationary bikes, classroom areas, balls, rackets, gloves, and other sports gear - including having a dedicated worker to ensure cleaning between use.*
- *Utilizing only cleaning and disinfectant products that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN), are not expired, and are appropriate for use on the item that is to be cleaned and disinfected. Low-level hospital grade disinfectants may be used. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.*
- *Considering additional enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols for the facility overnight.*
- *Decreasing touchpoints such as keys and lockers and consider contactless check-in and touch-free payment systems.*
- *The use of disposable paper towels is preferred over the use of hand dryers in washrooms or change rooms.*
- *All other rented materials should be disinfected between use.*
- *Limiting the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from them.*

### C. SYMPTOMATIC PATRONS AND STAFF

Recommendations for symptomatic patrons or workers are set out in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for symptomatic patrons or workers* and specific instructions including:

- 1. Patrons or workers who become unwell while at the facility should be instructed to immediately self-isolate and separate themselves from others. They should be told to go home immediately (if possible, with private transportation, avoiding taxis, ride shares, and public transit) and encouraged to get tested. [Information about assessment centres can be found here](#). If they have questions related to COVID-19, they should contact their primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) or visit Ontario's [COVID-19 website](#).*
- 2. Workers who become unwell while at work should notify their supervisor immediately.*

### D. RESTAURANT

#### Protocols and Procedures for Food Service

Owners or operators of all businesses in Simcoe and Muskoka must have policies in place to restrict people from entering **indoor** premises (e.g. indoor dining including washroom use), if they are not wearing a non-medical mask or face covering. The letter to businesses with this instruction as well as guidance to support implementation is posted on our website, along with public signage for printing and displaying.

It is required that operators keep a contact log for at least one member of every party of patrons including staff. If a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 was contagious while at the food premises, SMDHU will use the list to notify the exposed staff and customers. To assist SMDHU in tracing contacts of COVID-19 cases, it is recommended that you obtain a first name and telephone number (or e-mail address) from one person in each party (this may be provided when making a reservation), and keep this, together with a record of the table number and the date and time, for at least 30 days.

The capacity of the food premises is to be limited by the availability of physically distanced seating. Customers may not be admitted if there is not an available seat. 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 unless separated by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier (e.g. between back to back booths). Install barriers to protect staff (e.g. host/hostess desk). The barrier must be at least 15 cm higher than a customer's head.

Install floor markers for any area where a line-up may occur in order to maintain physical distancing. Provide direction to customers. Install directional arrows (i.e. at entrance/exit) if possible.

Post signage to promote wearing face coverings, self-screening and maintaining physical distancing. Sample signage can be found [here](#). Servers must wear [face coverings](#) indoors and outdoors.

Ensure staff are properly trained 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).

Recommend that hand sanitizer be readily available either on tables or at the entry of the food premises.

Buffet style service is not allowed.

Pool tables, dart boards etc. are permitted providing the following:

- One player at a time – maintain physical distancing - keep 2 metres from all persons.
- All equipment used is cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- Masks/face coverings are used while engaged in play.
- No food/drink while engaged in play.

Table/card games are not permitted within the food premises.

Use only menus that are single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or if regular menus are used they need to be cleaned between uses. Do not pre-set tables. Utensils should be rolled or packaged.

Replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitize between uses. Consider disposable napkins, etc.

For additional instruction and guidance on food service operation please refer to [SMDHU's COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Food Premises](#).

## **E. DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS**

With many buildings either closed or experiencing lower occupancy as a result of COVID-19, many properties have used less water and increased the amount of water stagnation in plumbing systems. It is important for business owners to flush both cold and hot water lines, and drain hot water tanks to remove stagnant water from their building's plumbing system. For additional instruction please refer to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks [Guide for maintaining building plumbing after an extended vacancy](#).

Private drinking water supplies must be sampled ahead of opening, with samples sent to a private [licensed laboratory](#) with operators continuing to sample throughout the operating season in accordance with drinking water regulations.

For Small Drinking Water System (SDWS) operators they must provide specific information to the SMDHU Medical Officer of Health in writing before reopening after a 60 day closure, or alter the construction, installation, alteration, or extension of the SDWS. To comply with these requirements, owners/operators must complete and submit the [SDWS notice and designation form](#).

Limit the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from them. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

## **F. GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SKI AND SNOW RESORT SECTOR**

To assist the ski and snowboarding sector with policy development and review, a resource package in addition to [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#) and the [Ski Well, Be Well](#) pamphlet is set out below to ensure your procedures incorporate necessary control measures to help prevent transmission of COVID-19. Here is a list of resources for the package:

- [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)
- Face covering [FAQ](#) and [Do's and Don'ts of Wearing a Face Covering](#)
- Hand hygiene factsheets ([hand washing](#) and [alcohol based hand rub](#))
- PHO [cleaning and disinfecting](#) factsheet

- [Guide for Developing your Workplace COVID Plan](#)
- Provincial [resources for workplaces](#)
- Training video for staff training [how to wear a mask](#)

Additional recommendations for consideration include:

- Encourage the use of the Ontario self-assessment [website](#) for COVID-19 before visiting the facility or through social media;
- Crowd control measures for spectators and parking lots should be considered for each facility and addressed within the policies, and;

Thank you for your efforts in implementing the regulatory requirements and public health recommendations as we work together to control transmission of COVID-19 in our community. If you have further questions regarding the regulatory requirements and/or recommendations, please contact Steve Rebellato, Vice President, at [steven.rebellato@smhdu.org](mailto:steven.rebellato@smhdu.org). Please continue to visit the SMDHU COVID-19 [webpage](#) for up-to-date information.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

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