

# COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR FOOD PREMISES – STEP 3

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The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is currently at Step 3 of the province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#). This document provides guidance and clarity for food premises that are at Step 3 by following [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step](#) (O. Reg. 364/20) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Approach to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#).

All businesses and organizations in the County of Simcoe and District of Muskoka must also adhere to the SMDHU's medical officer of health's [letter of instruction](#) (amended September 1, 2021).

**NEW:** The Ontario government now requires **patrons** 12 years of age or older to be [fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#) and provide proof of vaccination (i.e., proof of identity **and** vaccine receipt or effective October 22, 2021 digital vaccine certificate with QR code) to access certain businesses and organizations, with limited exemptions. More information can be found in [O. Reg., 364/20](#) and in the province's [guidance for businesses and organizations](#), and [question and answer](#) resource, on SMDHU's [website](#), and in the screening, record keeping and proof of vaccination section, below.

## HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 DURING FOOD SERVICE OPERATION WHILE IN STEP 3

The owner/operator, or assigned staff, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to the following protocols:

### SAFETY PLAN

- A [safety plan](#) must be written and available on request. A copy of the safety plan must be posted in a conspicuous location where it can be viewed by staff and patrons.
- **NEW:** The safety plan shall describe the implementation of public health measures in the location, including but not limited to, screening, proof of vaccination verification process, physical distancing, masks/face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, the wearing of personal protective equipment, and preventing and controlling crowding.
- Additional guidance on how to develop your safety plan can be found [here](#).

### CAPACITY LIMITS

- The total number of patrons permitted to be seated indoors or outdoors must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person at the establishment.
- The person responsible for the establishment must post a sign in a location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity they are permitted to operate under.
- Post [maximum capacity](#) posters in locations where they can be clearly seen.

### SCREENING, RECORD KEEPING, AND PROOF OF VACCINATION

- All staff must be [actively screened](#) before attending work. Staff are to conduct a COVID-19 [self-assessment](#) before attending work and follow the direction provided. If they have COVID-19 symptoms, they should stay home, seek testing, and [self-isolate](#).
- All patrons dining at the food premises must be actively screened before entering the establishment. Please see the [instructions](#) from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health for direction on screening patrons. Patrons who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry.
- The Province of Ontario has implemented a [website for all screening categories, including workers and patrons at food premises](#).

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- Post [self-screening signs](#) at all entrances.
- It is required that operators keep a contact log for ALL patrons dining at the premises, including a first and last name, as well as a telephone number (or e-mail address). Logging assigned server to patrons may also be helpful. This log shall be in the custody of the food premises and not accessible to the public.
  - Operators are not required to log patrons who temporarily enter the area, pick up, or pay for a takeout order.
- Maintain log records for at least one month.
- Only disclose records to a medical officer of health or a public health inspector.
- **NEW:** All **patrons** 12 years of age and older must provide proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at the point of entry of the indoor areas of food establishments for dine-in purposes.
  - **NEW:** Patrons of dine-in mall food courts or quick service restaurants can provide proof of vaccine information at the counter where food is ordered and paid for.
  - Providing proof of vaccination does not apply to cafeteria settings in schools, post-secondary, or places of businesses, or food premises for takeout and delivery purposes.
- **NEW:** Food establishments that offer dance facilities must require proof of vaccination for indoor **and** outdoor areas of the establishment. This requirement does not apply with respect to takeout and delivery service along with other limited exemptions, as per [O. Reg. 364/20](#).
- **NEW:** Patrons 12 years of age and older who are unable to provide proof of vaccination or valid proof of a [medical exemption](#) where required must be refused entry, except when:
  - using the washroom,
  - accessing an outdoor area that can only be accessed through an indoor route,
  - making a retail purchase,
  - placing, picking up or paying for an order,
  - purchasing admission, or
  - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables (or mark as unavailable) to ensure there is at least 2 metres (6 feet) between patrons 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 patron's head.
- Remove waiting area seating or ensure at least 2 metres (6 feet) between seats. Install floor markers for any area where a line-up may occur to maintain physical distancing.
- Patrons must be seated at all times except when:
  - entering the area and while moving to their table,
  - going and returning to the washroom,
  - placing, picking up or paying for an order,
  - while singing or performing music,
  - while exiting the area, or
  - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- Provide direction to patrons. Install directional arrows (e.g., at entrance/exit) if possible.
- Ensure staff are properly trained on how best to serve food while maintaining safe physical distance and avoiding unnecessary handling (e.g., serving to front of table and letting patrons distribute, avoiding handling coffee cups when refilling, and letting patrons fill/pack leftovers in containers).
- Limit the time servers spend within 2 metres (6 feet) of patrons.
- Washroom capacity may need to be adjusted to allow for physical distancing. You may be required to limit washroom capacity to ensure that physical distancing is adhered to.
- Persons waiting in line or congregating inside or outside must also maintain at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person.

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## USE OF MASKS, FACE COVERINGS AND EYE PROTECTION

- Every person indoors shall wear a mask or [face covering](#) in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless exemptions apply as per [O. Reg. 364/20](#), Step 3.
- Masks can only be removed:
  - to eat and drink while seated, or
  - for health and safety reasons.
- Staff are required to wear a medical mask and approved eye protection when within 2 metres (6 feet) of someone without a mask in a manner that covers that person's mouth, nose, and chin (e.g., servers serving food to a patrons table).

## IN-ESTABLISHMENT ACTIVITIES

- If live entertainment is performed, the performer(s) must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from any spectators or be separated from any spectators by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- No patron shall dance at the establishment unless dance facilities are provided, during a time when patrons are permitted to make use of the dance facilities (see requirements for permitted facilities that allow dancing below)

## ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS WITH DANCING FACILITIES

- This section applies to nightclubs, restoclubs and other similar establishments.
- The total number of patrons permitted indoors at such establishments is limited to 25% capacity or 250 patrons, whichever is less.
  - 25% capacity is determined by taking the total square metres of the indoor space used and dividing by 4.4. The results shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number, as calculated in accordance with [O. Reg. 213/07 \(Fire Code\)](#).
- The total number of patrons permitted outdoors at such establishments is limited to 75% capacity or 5000 patrons, whichever is less.
  - 75% capacity is determined by taking the total square meters of the outdoor space used and dividing by 1.33. The result shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number, as calculated in accordance with [O. Reg. 213/07 \(Fire Code\)](#).
- Every patron in an outdoor establishment must wear a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose, and chin, unless they are entitled to any of the exemptions, or are seated with only members of their own household, and every household member is seated at least 2 metres from every person outside their household.

## OUTDOOR DINING

- If an outdoor area of the business or place is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning, or other element – at least two full sides of the entire outdoor area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers: and
- If an outdoor area at the business or place is equipped with a retractable roof and the roof is retracted, at least one full side of the outdoor area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked by any walls or other impermeable physical barriers.

## HAND AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

- [Wash hands](#). Glove use does not replace handwashing. Ensure hands are washed before and after handling food, after handling dirty utensils, using the bathroom, handling cash, etc. Gloves are to be replaced/changed at this time as well.
- [Cough and sneeze](#) into your elbow or use single-use tissues followed by hand hygiene.

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## CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- In addition to routine cleaning and disinfection, surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition, as well as when visibly dirty.
  - Examples of frequently touched surfaces include, but are not limited to hand contact areas, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers, credit card machines, baby change tables, and surfaces frequently touched in business vehicles.
- Use only disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) given and [approved by Health Canada](#). Ensure products are not expired and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Dining tables are to be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition and between sittings.
- It is recommended to maintain logs of cleaning and disinfection.
- Limit the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from them. Ensure they are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- More guidance on cleaning and disinfection is provided by [Government of Canada](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#).
- While the risk of COVID-19 transmission through touching surfaces is low, it does occur. It is important to continue to follow infection control measures to reduce the various ways in which COVID-19 is spread. This includes appropriate cleaning and disinfection as well as proper hand hygiene, masking, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and immunization.

## SIGNAGE

Post signs promoting wearing masks/face coverings, handwashing, physical distancing, proof of vaccination, capacity limits and make them visible to staff and patrons. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

## LIQUOR SALES

Licensees who wish to temporarily extend the physical size of their existing licensed patio or temporarily add a new licensed patio within the approved period should consult with the local municipality and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

## SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO ACT (SFOA), 2017 COMPLIANCE AND PATIOS

### Patios/Outdoor Food Service Areas

Smoking of tobacco and cannabis and vaping of any substance is prohibited on patios and within 9 metres of a patio where food and drink are served, including outdoor areas where seating tables are provided for patrons to consume their meal or beverage.

### Signs

Operators are required to post SFOA dual no-smoking/no-vaping signs as required by law throughout the venue at entrances and exits to all buildings and their washroom facilities, including outdoor washrooms and smoke-free outdoor patios serving food and/or beverages. Signs are available from the health unit.

## OTHER GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Government of Ontario](#). The Government of Ontario guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from SMDHU about food safety or the [Ontario Food Premises Regulations](#).

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## SUPPORTING EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

We understand that this is a challenging time, but public health measures like this are needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. We thank you for the service that you provide to the community.

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Health Connection line if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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