

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

Last revised: July 16, 2021

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](#) (O. Reg 364/20) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Approach to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#).

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.
- The safety plan shall describe the implementation of public health measures in the location, including, but not limited to screening, physical distancing, masks/face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, wearing 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 AND RECORD KEEPING

- All staff must be [actively screened](#) before attending work. Please see the letter of [instruction](#) from the SMDHU's medical officer of health for direction on screening workers and volunteers. 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](#).
- 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.

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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.

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 face shield or approved eye protection in addition to a mask or face covering when within 2 metres (6 feet) of someone without a mask (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 \(Fire Code\)](#).

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- 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 exceptions, or are seated with only members of their own household, and every household member is seated at least two 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.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of all food contact surfaces and frequently touched surfaces (i.e., hand contact areas, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers, credit card machines).
- Dining tables are to be cleaned and disinfected at least daily and between sittings.
- Maintain logs of cleaning and disinfecting.
- 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, and 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.

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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](#).

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 Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4: 30 p.m.

While the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit aims to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. This guidance is not intended to, nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional. No one should act, or refrain from acting, based solely upon the materials provided in this guidance, any hypertext links or other general information without first seeking appropriate legal or other professional advice. Please visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website regularly for updates and additional guidance.