

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES – STEP 3

Last revised: February 17, 2022

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is currently at Step 3 of the province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#). This document provides guidance for outdoor recreational amenities and their indoor clubhouses 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](#) to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

NEW: Effective **February 17, 2022**, the province has lifted capacity limits for outdoor recreational amenities, however physical distancing requirements remain in place for indoor clubhouses operated in conjunction with an outdoor recreational amenity. More information can be found in the province's [news release](#) and [O. Reg. 364/20](#).

Outdoor recreational amenities are generally not required to verify proof of vaccination from all patrons 12 years and 12 weeks of age or older; however indoor clubhouses operated in conjunction with an outdoor recreational amenity can **elect** to opt-in to the proof of vaccination requirement on a per day basis. See indoor clubhouses section below.

All owners, operators, and persons responsible for any indoor areas of facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities in the County of Simcoe, District of Muskoka and Cities of Barrie and Orillia must also adhere to the SMDHU medical officer of health's [Letter of Instruction](#) (amended November 23, 2021) which sets out specific additional measures to control the spread of COVID-19 including vaccination requirements at the point of entry for each individual (12 years and 12 weeks of age and older on the date of entry) who attends the **indoor** area of the facility for the purpose of **coaching, teaching, instructing, officiating at organized sports or volunteering in any capacity for any purpose**.

More information on proof of vaccination can be found in [O. Reg. 364/20](#), in the province's [proof of vaccination guidance](#) and [question and answer resource](#), on SMDHU's [website](#), and in the safety plan and indoor clubhouse sections below.

Outdoor recreational amenities are publicly accessible outdoor locations and are regulated differently from facilities for indoor or outdoor sports and recreational fitness activities which are staffed and monitored (e.g., gyms, curling clubs, sports domes, etc.). For more information on facilities for indoor or outdoor sports and recreational fitness activities please refer to [SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities](#). For indoor and outdoor organized public events and gatherings (e.g., sporting competitions) held at outdoor recreational amenities, please reference [SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for organized public events and gatherings](#).

Outdoor recreational amenities have been identified by the province to include, but are not limited to:

- Archery ranges
- Baseball diamonds
- Basketball courts
- Batting cages
- BMX parks
- Boat and watercraft launch
- Cycling tracks
- Frisbee golf locations
- Golf courses and driving ranges
- Horse riding amenities
- Horseshoe pits
- Ice rinks
- Lawn game courts, including lawn bowling, bocce and croquet courts
- Parks and recreational areas
- Playgrounds
- Portions of parks or recreational areas containing outdoor fitness equipment
- Shooting ranges, including those operated by rod and gun clubs
- Skate parks
- Soccer, football, and sports fields
- Tennis, platform tennis, table tennis and pickleball courts
- Tobogganing hills
- Trails (e.g., snowmobile, cross country ski, dogsledding, snowshoe, walking)

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Outdoor recreational amenities may open if they comply with requirements under [O. Reg. 364/20](#) including the following conditions and recommendations.

SAFETY PLAN

- The [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 (e.g., posted on a notice board, at a clubhouse or public washrooms, available on the internet, etc.).
- The safety plan shall describe the implementation of public health measures in the location, including but not limited to screening (active and passive), physical distancing (where applicable), masks/face coverings, capacity limits (where applicable), cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, the wearing of personal protective equipment, and preventing and controlling crowding.
 - Indoor clubhouses must also reference capacity and proof of vaccination in their safety plan (where applicable).
- Before permitting any participants in an organized sports league or event to practise or play the sport at the outdoor recreational amenity, the amenity must ensure that the league or event has prepared a safety plan.
- Additional guidance on how to develop a safety plan can be found [here](#).

CAPACITY LIMITS AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Capacity limits have been lifted for outdoor recreational amenities. **Please see the section below for physical distancing capacity direction for an indoor clubhouse operating in conjunction with an outdoor recreational amenity.**
- Persons waiting in line or congregating outside (e.g., spectators) must maintain at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person.

SCREENING

- Every worker (e.g., staff, volunteers) must be [actively screened](#) before attending the amenity and follow the direction provided.
- Patrons attending outdoor settings exclusively are not required to be actively screened. Active screening is required for patrons when attending indoor uses including a restaurant, bar, meeting and event space, and other indoor settings requiring active screening (see SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for [workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination](#) for more information).
- Individuals who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms should be refused entry to the premises.
- Please see the province's [website](#) for direction on screening employees/workers and patrons.
- Advise patrons and staff to conduct a COVID-19 [self-assessment](#) before attending the amenity and follow the direction provided.
- Post self-screening [signs](#) at all entrances to the amenity in a location visible to the public that inform individuals on how to screen themselves for COVID-19 before entering.

HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Encourage all patrons to [wash](#) or [sanitize](#) their hands using alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content often, especially as they arrive at the amenity.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content available at entrances and exits and throughout the outdoor facility.
- Post handwashing and hand sanitizing posters in areas that can be clearly seen. Sample signage can be found [here](#).
- Encourage patrons to sneeze and cough into their elbow or use single-use tissues followed by hand hygiene. Post [Cover Your Cough](#) posters in locations where they can be clearly seen around the amenity.

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CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- In addition to routine daily 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, standalone washrooms, ski lift kiosks, ticket kiosks, benches, railings and credit card machines.
- Equipment (e.g., free weights, weight/fitness machines, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected between use and as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. Use only cleaning and disinfectant products that are intended for the object.
- Equipment (e.g., mats, weights, kettle bells, etc.) should not be shared during an activity/class.
- It is recommended to remove equipment that may be difficult to clean and disinfect (e.g., foam rollers, yoga blocks, mats that are absorbent, straps, ropes, etc.).
- Use only disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) given and [approved by Health Canada](#).
- More guidance on cleaning and disinfection including for COVID-19 is provided by [Health 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.

PERSONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINERS

Personal physical fitness trainers may operate outdoors at an outdoor recreational amenity. Please see the following requirements:

- The personal trainer or sports trainer must actively screen patrons prior to each training session.
- Prepare a COVID-19 [safety plan](#) in addition to the one prepared by the facility.
- If the personal physical fitness trainer is providing classes in an outdoor area that has a usual capacity of 20,000 or more persons then proof of vaccination is required for class participants. Please refer to SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for [workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination](#) for more information.

INDOOR CLUBHOUSES OPERATED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Indoor clubhouses operated in conjunction with an outdoor recreational amenity are permitted to open with the following requirements:

- The person responsible for the indoor clubhouse must ensure the following:
 - **NEW:** The total number of members of the public who are permitted inside the facility at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person in the indoor clubhouse. This capacity limit applies to the whole facility and not to individual rooms (e.g., changerooms or dressing rooms).
 - Physical distancing capacity is determined by calculating the square metres of indoor areas accessible to the public and dividing by 4.
 - **NEW:** The total number of members of the public who are permitted to be in an **indoor spectator area** of the facility at any one time shall not exceed 50 per cent of the area's usual seating capacity.
 - 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*.

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- **NEW:** The physical distancing capacity limits are lifted if an election has been made to require proof of vaccination (see the proof of vaccination section below and [O. Reg. 364/20](#) for more information). The indoor spectator area capacity does not change with an election for proof of vaccination.
- Post [maximum capacity posters](#) in locations where they can be clearly seen.
- Persons waiting in line or congregating **outside** must maintain at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person (regardless of whether proof of vaccination requirements are implemented).
- Persons waiting in line or congregating **inside** must maintain at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person and wear a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose, and chin unless exceptions apply as per [O. Reg. 364/20](#).
- Operators of an **indoor clubhouse being used as a meeting or event space or as a restaurant or bar**, are required to comply with all other conditions for a rented meeting and event space or for a restaurant or bar as per [O. Reg. 364/20](#), including proof of vaccination. Please refer to SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for [workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination](#) and [food premises](#), as well as the proof of vaccination section below for more information.

USE OF MASKS, FACE COVERINGS AND EYE PROTECTION

- Every person indoors for a permitted reason 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](#).
- Masks can only be removed temporarily indoors:
 - to engage in an athletic or fitness activity
 - to eat and drink, while seated
 - health and safety reasons
- It is recommended that individuals wear a [well-fitted](#) high quality 3-layered non-medical mask, medical mask or respirator (i.e., N95s, KN95).
- 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).
- Post [signage](#) that promotes wearing a mask or face covering at entrances.

PROOF OF VACCINATION

- There may be different requirements for proof of vaccination for different spaces associated with an outdoor recreational amenity including food service areas and recreation and fitness areas. Operators will be required to verify proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 at the point of entry of areas of the premises where it is required.
- Indoor clubhouses operated in conjunction with an outdoor recreational amenity can opt-in to require proof of vaccination for patrons 12 years and 12 weeks of age or older. An opt-in is in effect for the duration of the day the opt-in is made and must be renewed each day (i.e., the clubhouse cannot opt-in for a week or a month). Please refer to SMDHU's [workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination](#) guidance for more information.
- More information about proof of vaccination requirements can be found in [O. Reg. 364/20](#), in the province's [proof of vaccination guidance](#), on SMDHU's [website](#), in the SMDHU medical officer of health's [Letter of Instruction](#) to owners, operators, and persons responsible for any indoor areas of facilities used for organized sports and recreational fitness activities, and SMDHU's COVID-19 guidance for [workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination](#), [facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities](#), [food premises](#) and [organized public events and gatherings](#).

SIGNAGE

Post signs at entry visible to staff and patrons regarding screening, 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](#).

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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 from 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.