

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR EVENTS & GATHERINGS - STEP 3

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This guidance document provides recommendations to help stop the spread of COVID-19 when organizing and/or attending an indoor or outdoor event or gathering at Step 3 of the province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#) by following [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Step 3](#) (O. Reg 364/20) under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#).

An event or gathering is any occasion that involves a number of people in proximity to each other for an extended period of time. This includes weddings, receptions, concerts, festivals, conferences, and cultural and sporting events. Events or gatherings can contribute to the transmission of infections, including COVID-19. The province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#) has the following gathering limits for events and gatherings at Step 3:

Note: If the event or social gathering is held at a venue that is a place of business permitted to operate under the regulation, different capacity limits may apply as per Schedule 3 sections 4 and 5.

GATHERING LIMITS – AT STEP 3

	Gathering/Event	Religious Service, Wedding and Funerals
Indoor Capacity	Up to 25 people	<p>Ceremonies – limited to space sufficient to ensure physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) can be maintained.</p> <p>Ceremonies at private dwelling – up to 25 people.</p> <p>Dinner/reception – 25 people.</p>
Outdoor Capacity	Up to 100 people	<p>Ceremonies – limited to space sufficient to ensure physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) can be maintained.</p> <p>Dinner/reception – 100 persons.</p>
Motor Vehicle	Drive in/drive-by concerts, theatres, and cinemas are permitted subject to conditions as prescribed under O. Reg. 364/20 .	<p>Conditions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons must stay in their vehicles. • Each vehicle may only contain members of a single household plus a maximum of one additional person from outside that household who lives alone or is a caregiver for a member of the household. • Vehicles and non-motorized vehicles must be positioned at least 2 meters (6 feet) apart.

- People at their place of work, including performers and crews, **do not** count towards gathering limits, but vendors are included in these numbers.
- In all cases, individuals are required to continue to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from people outside their household.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZERS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- If an outdoor area 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.

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- 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.
- Offer virtual or live-streamed activities.
- Advise attendees to complete a COVID-19 [self-assessment](#) before coming to the event and follow the direction provided. Anyone with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) should stay home, seek testing, and [self-isolate](#).
- All employees must be [actively screened](#) before attending the workplace and follow the direction provided. Please see the letter of [instruction](#) from SMDHU's medical officer of health for direction on screening staff. Be aware of the potential for inclement weather and develop a plan to accommodate attendees if severe weather suddenly arises (e.g., plan for a temporary safe indoor space while ensuring physical distancing and provide masks/face coverings for all attendees or cancelling the gathering/event if inclement weather is predicted or if the attendees cannot be safely moved indoors temporarily).
- Promote personal protective practices (e.g., face coverings, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, staying home if ill) by posting [signs](#).

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 or 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](#).

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Plan to accommodate physical distancing by maintaining at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance between attendees from different households (e.g., taping off chairs, staggering tables). [Post signage](#) to remind attendees of this.
- Stagger arrivals and departures to avoid congregation of crowds on the initiation and conclusion of the event.
- Eliminate high-risk activities such as those that may result in physical contact between attendees outside of their household members.
- Persons waiting in line or congregating outside must also maintain at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person.

USE OF MASKS, FACE COVERINGS AND EYE PROTECTION

- Masks and [face coverings](#) are mandatory in all indoor public spaces and recommended outdoors when physical distancing is a challenge.
- Staff are required to wear a medical mask and approved eye protection when within 2 metres (6 feet) of someone who is not wearing a mask or face covering in a manner that covers that person's mouth, nose, and chin.
- More information on masks and face coverings can be found [here](#).

DANCING, SINGERS & MUSICAL PERFORMERS

- If live entertainment is performed for spectators, the performers 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.

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HAND AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

- Encourage all attendees to [wash their hands](#) with soap and water or [sanitize their hands](#) with alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content as they arrive and frequently during the event.
- 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. Glove use does not replace handwashing.
- [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 surfaces frequently touched (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. Therefore, it is important to continue to follow the 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, capacity limits, and physical distancing and make them visible to staff and patrons. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

PUBLIC EVENTS AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS THAT SERVE FOOD

All special events that serve food require approval from the SMDHU. For more information regarding special events and applicable application forms, please visit <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/FoodSafety/SpecialEvents>. If meal service is provided follow these [best practices for food safety](#) and these guidelines for food service.

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, 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.

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REFERENCES

- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. (2020). *Public Health Guidance for Use of Public Washrooms*. Retrieved from: http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-/public-washrooms-guidance-document_aoda-web.pdf?sfvrsn=0