

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR FOOD PREMISES – RED CONTROL

Last revised: December 16, 2020

This document provides additional guidance and clarity for areas in [stage 2, Ontario Regulation 263/20 Rules for Areas in Stage 2](#). This guidance applies to food premises' indoor and outdoor dining areas.

HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 DURING FOOD SERVICE OPERATION WHILE IN RED CONTROL

PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR DINING

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

- **NEW:** 10 person indoor dining capacity for the establishment, this includes:
 - Premises with multiple dining rooms, multiple floors etc.
 - Outdoor dining domes are considered indoor dining, therefore are included in the capacity limit (10 persons).
- **NEW:** Shopping mall food courts are closed.
- **NEW:** Performances, singing and dancing are prohibited.
- 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.
- Maintain log records for at least one month.
- Only disclose records to a medical officer of health or a public health inspector.
- Implement a [safety plan](#) that outlines all public health measures and is posted in a conspicuous place where it is most likely to come to the attention of individuals working in or attending the location.
- No more than 4 people can be seated at a table.
- 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 patrons table).
- Limit volume of music to no more than 'conversation level'.
- Strip Clubs are prohibited.
- Ensure premises are closed to the public between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. except for takeout, drive-through or delivery services.
- Buffet style service is not allowed.
- Develop policies for customers, for example: reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Customers who exhibit [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should be refused entry.
- Post signage to promote wearing face coverings, self-screening and maintaining physical distancing. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

FACE COVERINGS

- Every person indoors shall wear a mask or [face covering](#) unless exemptions apply as per O. Reg 263/20.
- Masks can only be removed:
 - to eat and drink, while seated
 - health and safety reasons

PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- The capacity of the food premise is to be limited by the availability of physically distanced seating, and in any event cannot exceed 10 patrons. 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 (6 feet) 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.

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- Remove waiting area seating or ensure a minimum of 2 metres (6 feet) between seats. Install floor markers for any area where a line-up may occur in order to maintain physical distancing.
- Patrons need to be seated at all times except when:
 - Entering and exiting the premises
 - Going and returning to the washroom
 - Paying for an order.
- Provide direction to customers. Install directional arrows (i.e. at entrance/exit) if possible.
- 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).
- Limit the time servers spend within 2 metres (6 feet) of customers.
- Refrain from providing food or drink service to standing customers (i.e. bar areas).
- If establishment has a bar area, the capacity must be limited to physical distance seating and customers must stay in their designated seat and may not move around the bar area unless they need to use the washroom or leave the premises.
- Washroom capacity may need to be adjusted to allow for physical distancing. You may consider limiting washrooms to one guest at a time.

IN-ESTABLISHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Performances, singing and dancing, as well as table/card games are prohibited within the food premises at this time.
- Pool tables, dart boards etc. are permitted providing the following:
 - One player at a time – maintain physical distancing - keep 2 metres (6 feet) 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.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- 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/disinfected between uses.
- Do not pre-set tables. Utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or disinfect between uses.
- Recommend hand sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol content be readily available at the entry of the food premise.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation.

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES FOR OUTDOOR DINING

- If area is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning – at least two full sides of the area require to be open to the outdoors
- If the area is not covered by a roof – at least three full sides of the area require to be open to the outdoors
- Servers are required to wear a face shield or approved eye protection in addition to a mask or [face covering](#).
- Customers on the patio are not required to wear a face covering when seated, while eating or drinking.
- Customers who have to enter the restaurant from the patio (i.e. to use the washroom, pay) must wear a face covering.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of all food contact surfaces, and surfaces frequently touched (i.e. hand contact areas, door handles, switches, table tops, 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.

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STAFF SCREENING

- It is critical that all staff actively self-screen for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before beginning their shift in a food premises. Staff are to stay home when they are sick.
- Have workers store their personal items in separate lockers or in sealed bins/bags. Do not share personal belongings

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 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.

SIGNAGE

Post signs promoting wearing face coverings, handwashing, physical distancing, and make them visible to staff and customers. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

LIQUOR SALES

Liquor is sold or served only between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. and no consumption of liquor is permitted in the business or place between the hours of 10p.m and 9 a.m.

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 is served including outdoor areas where seating tables are provided for customers 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](#).

For more information on the safe operation of your food premises, please call Health Connection and speak to a public health inspector at 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8811.