

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR FOOD PREMISES

This document provides guidance for areas in [Stage 3 of the provincial reopening](#). This guidance applies to food premises' indoor and outdoor dining areas.

FOOD PREMISES PRE-OPENING CHECKLIST

The following are recommended actions to take prior to opening your establishment for business:

- Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- Ensure hand washing stations are adequate and functional. Post handwashing signage. Sample signage can be found [here](#).
- Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles and equipment knobs.
- Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- Clean, sanitize, and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.
- Where applicable, ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
- Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
- Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
- Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
- Ensure faucets are working properly and flush cold and hot water lines. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a 2 metre (6 feet) distance is achievable at all times. **If not feasible, kitchen staff must wear face coverings.**
- Train staff on new procedures/requirements.

HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 DURING FOOD SERVICE OPERATION

Protocols and Policies for Indoor Dining

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

- **NEW:** It is required that operators keep a contact log for at least **one member** of every party of patrons including staff. If a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 was contagious while at the food premises, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) will use the list to notify the exposed staff and customers. To assist SMDHU in tracing contacts of COVID-19 cases, it is recommended that you obtain a first name and telephone number (or **e-mail address**) from one person in each party (this may be provided when making a reservation), and keep this, together with a record of the table number and the date and time, for at least 30 days.
- **NEW:** Strip Clubs are prohibited at this time.
- **NEW:** Ensure premises is closed to the public between the hours of 12 a.m and 5 a.m except for takeout or delivery services.
- Owners or operators of all businesses in Simcoe and Muskoka must have policies in place to restrict people from entering **indoor** premises (e.g. indoor dining including washroom use), if they are not wearing a non-medical mask or [face covering](#). The [letter](#) to businesses with this instruction as well as guidance to support implementation is posted on our [website](#), along with [public signage](#) for printing and displaying.
- The capacity of the food premise is to be limited by the availability of physically distanced seating. 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.
- Provide direction to customers. Install directional arrows (i.e. at entrance/exit) if possible.
- Post signage to promote wearing face coverings, self-screening and maintaining physical distancing. Sample signage can be found [here](#).
- 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).
- Servers must wear [face coverings](#) indoors and outdoors.
- Buffet style service is not allowed.
- 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.
- Table/card games are not permitted within the food premises at this time.
- Limit the time servers spend within 2 metres (6 feet) of customers.
- Customers who exhibit [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should be refused entry.
- 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 restroom 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.
- Members of the public may sing or perform music at the establishment if:
 - they are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier that is sufficient to restrict access while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument;
 - they maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person while singing or performing music; and
 - any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music is cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Singing, music, or dance can be performed by a contracted performer provided the following occurs:
 - Barriers such as Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier that is sufficient to restrict access are provided between performers and customers. Physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet) between performers and customers.
 - Spectators at food premises are limited to 50 people for indoors and 100 people for outdoors, with physical distancing in place. These gathering limits occur due to the fact that when a person or group is under contract with the establishment its designation shifts from food premises to a Section 11 "Performing Arts" business.
- Develop policies for customers, for example: reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- 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 between uses.
- Do not pre-set tables. Utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitize between uses. Consider disposable napkins, etc.
- Recommend hand sanitizer be readily available either on tables or at the entry of the food premise.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation.

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Protocols and Policies for Outdoor Dining

- 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. The barrier must be at least 15 cm higher than a customer's head. Servers must wear [face coverings](#) indoors and outdoors.
- Remove waiting area seating or ensure a minimum of 2 metres (6 feet) between seats.
- Install floor markers for any areas where a line up may occur in order to maintain physical distancing.
- 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).
- Ensure servers are wearing face coverings at all times.
- Customers on the patio are not required to wear a face covering.
- Customers who have to enter the restaurant from the patio (i.e. to use the washroom, pay) must wear a face covering.
- Members of the public may sing or perform music at the establishment if:
 - they are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier that is sufficient to restrict access while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument;
 - they maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person while singing or performing music; and
 - any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music is cleaned and disinfected between each use.
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 - Barriers such as Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier that is sufficient to restrict access are provided between performers and customers. Physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet) between performers and customers.
 - Spectators at food premises are limited to 50 people for indoors and 100 people for outdoors, with physical distancing in place. These gathering limits occur due to the fact that when a person or group is under contract with the establishment its designation shifts from food premises to a Section 11 "Performing Arts" business.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Increase cleaning and disinfections 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 sanitized at least daily and between sittings.
 - Maintain logs of cleaning and sanitizing.

Staff Screening

- It is critical that all staff 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 belonging

Hand and Cough Hygiene

- Wash hands. Glove use does not replace handwashing. Ensure hands are washed before and after handling food, using bathroom, handling cash, etc. Gloves are to be replaced/changed at this time as well.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow.

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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

NEW: Liquor is sold or served only between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. and no consumption of liquor is permitted in the business or place between the hours of 12 a.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, 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.

Updated: October 1, 2020