

PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR USE OF PUBLIC WASHROOMS

Last revised: November 16, 2020

Public washrooms are important facilities in our communities as public spaces that are permitted for use by the public. Depending on where they are located, they can be busy. Therefore, precautions are needed given the risks of COVID-19.

COVID-19 transmission can occur when people are within close proximity to one another through the spread of droplets or through shared contact with surfaces. The COVID-19 virus has also been found in feces. As a result, some changes in practice and equipment may be necessary. As one of the most important actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is handwashing, the benefits of accessing a washroom to facilitate this action far outweighs the potential risks. As a result, it is recommended that washrooms be opened where the following protective measures can be put in place:

SUPPORT PROPER HAND HYGIENE

- Post signage on [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) at sinks.
- Ensure that soap and paper towels are always available and are refilled frequently to ensure the public can practice proper hand hygiene.
- Paper towels are preferred in public washrooms during COVID-19.
- Hands-free sinks and paper towel dispensers are preferred to avoid the use of handles which reduces high touch surfaces in washrooms. If hands-free appliances cannot be installed, more frequent cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is required.
- Hand sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol content should be made available where possible at the entrance/exit of the washroom.

SUPPORT PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Post physical distancing signage outside and inside the washroom in case of lineups.
- Floor markers to designate 2 m (6 foot) spacing may be advisable in busier washrooms.
- Post maximum occupancy signs to further enhance [physical distancing](#).
- Some urinals and sink basins may need to be decommissioned (taped off) if 2 m (6 foot) spacing cannot be maintained in the current set up.

REQUIRE FACE COVERINGS

- Effective July 13, 2020, owners or operators of all businesses, organizations and public transit services in Simcoe and Muskoka must have policies in place to restrict people from entering these **indoor** premises (e.g. public washrooms and other public buildings) if they are not wearing a non-medical mask or face covering. As well, every person indoors shall wear a mask or [face covering](#) unless exemptions apply as per O. Reg 364/20 and recommended outdoors when physical distancing is a challenge.
- Post [signs](#) outside of public washrooms that remind people to wear a face covering. Best efforts shall be made to only allow entry to customers wearing a face covering.
- Please see the [letter](#) and [guidance](#) on face covering instructions for businesses and organizations and the [letter](#) to municipalities posted to SMDHU's website for more information.

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OTHER PRECAUTIONS

- Place signage in each stall instructing users to flush the toilet with the lid down, if applicable.
- Ventilation in the facility should be maximized.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING THE FACILITY

- Frequent [cleaning \(including garbage\) and disinfection](#) should take place, especially in commonly touched areas/surfaces. The frequency of the cleaning and disinfection is dependent on the use of the facility.
- Baby change tables may be used and will require frequent cleaning and disinfection.

PORTABLE TOILETS

- Post signage on [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) at sinks.
- Post physical distancing signage outside the portable toilet in case of lineups.
- Post [signs](#) outside portable toilets that remind people to wear a face covering.
- Increase service intervals.
- To ensure [physical distancing](#), the number of portable toilets may need to be increased.
- Operators should ensure hand sanitizer is available and frequently refilled.

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

RESOURCES

[COVID-19 and outdoor safety: Considerations for use of outdoor recreational spaces](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

[Coronavirus Disease \(Covid-19\) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces](#)