

# COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING A FOOD PREMISE FOR OUTDOOR DINING - Patios, Curbside, Parking Lots and Adjacent Premises

This document provides guidance for [Stage 2 of the provincial reopening](#) of your food premises' patio or other outdoor dining area, after being closed or limited to take-out and delivery only. Premises are still permitted to offer take-out and delivery services.

COVID-19 is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk.

It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. Emerging evidence suggests that this new virus can survive on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for up to seven days. Exposure to UV radiation (i.e. sunlight) outdoors may help to inactivate the virus more quickly.

## 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.
- 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 two metre/six feet distance is achievable at all times. **If not feasible, staff must wear non-medical masks.**
- Train staff on new procedures/requirements.

## BEFORE REOPENING OF OUTDOOR DINING SERVICE

- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to ensure there is a minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table as well as every chair.
- Remove waiting area seating.
- Install floor with markers for any areas where a line up may occur.

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- Provide direction to customers:
  - Install directional arrows (i.e. at entrance/exit) if possible.
  - Erect signage for physical distancing, passive screening, and any policies affecting them.
- Patio must be open to the air; no tents/structures/canopies with sides/enclosures permitted. Umbrellas are allowed for sun shade.
- 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). Refer to the next section for more details.

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

**Protocols and policies** (The owner/operator, or assigned staff, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols)

- Ensure access to indoor facilities is limited to patio/outdoor dining area access, food pickup, payment, washrooms or other health and safety purposes.
- Maintain physical distancing - keep two metres/six feet from all persons.
- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers. Consider having servers wear non-medical masks.
- The required distance between adjacent edges of tables and chairs is two metres.
  - Temporary table dividers may be installed to make physical distancing easier for restaurants with communal seating or larger tables.
  - Groups must be seated two metres/six feet from another group.
- Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry.
- All customers must be seated.
- Live music, dancing and other activities are prohibited. If you provide recorded music, turn down the volume. Loud music causes diners to lean towards each other and raise their voices or shout, thus increasing the risk of transmitting the virus. Only dining and drinking is permitted.
- 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 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 food premises.
- **It is recommended that operators keep logs of the name and contact information for customers and staff, with a check in time. If there is a case of COVID-19 who was contagious while at the restaurant, public health will use that 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.**

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## Cleaning & 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 & Customer Screening

- Screening of staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before beginning their shift in a food premises is critical. Staff are to stay home when they are sick

## Hand & 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.

## Signage

- Post signs on handwashing, physical distancing and make them visible to staff and customers.

## Liquor sales

- 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.

## 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 nine (9) metres of a patio where food and drink is served including outdoor areas where seating tables are provided for patrons 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.

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## OTHER GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from SMDHU about food safety, or the [Ontario Food Premises Regulations](#).

There is no requirement for restaurants to be inspected by SMDHU before reopening. However, if you have a new restaurant, you must contact SMDHU before opening to arrange for an inspection.

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