

Preparing your business for reopening



The following recommendations have been compiled from various provincial and federal websites including public health, workplace safety and prevention services, Health Canada, the Provincial government, and more. They are not a substitute for your own research and due diligence, and you must comply with all provincial orders and work with the local Health Unit and Ministry of Labour to ensure you are meeting all of the applicable recommendations in order to reopen. *This document contains hyperlinks and is therefore best suited for digital use rather than print.*

The Province of Ontario has developed [over 60 sector-specific guidelines](#) in collaboration with the various workplace safety and injury prevention boards and organizations. This document is not a substitute for those guidelines and we recommend that you read over any sector guidelines that may pertain to your place of work, however we do attempt to synthesize the information that is most applicable to all businesses that are looking to adapt their business practices to safely open when allowed.

Physical distancing, health screenings, physical barriers, frequent handwashing and surface cleaning, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will become the new normal until a vaccine is made available, which the government has indicated will take 12-18 months or more.

This information is designed to help you prepare to reopen once your business type has been given permission to do so by the Province of Ontario and does not in itself imply permission to reopen.

This is not a legal document and employers are advised to seek legal advice.

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Guidelines for All Workplaces:

Return-to-business checklists and templates:

- [Click here to download the Workplace Safety & Prevention Services \(WSPC\) Pandemic Recovery Return-to-business checklist](#)
- [Guidelines from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](#)
- [Retail Council of Canada: Retail Recovery Checklist and Templates](#) (applicable to more than retail businesses) & [the Recovery Playbook](#)

Best Practices:

Physical Distancing

- Practice physical distancing (staying 2 metres away from others) and allow anyone who can to work from home.
- Limit the number of people working in one space so that they can distance themselves from each other, and stagger start times and break times.
- Reposition workstations to increase physical distances.
- Install barriers and partitions.
- Reschedule unnecessary visits to the workplace.
- Schedule appointments and pick up times to limit the number of people in one place at the same time. Schedule a time buffer between appointments to limit potential contact.
- Reduce the number of people in your premises and monitor the number of people on site.

Hand hygiene

- Practice and encourage proper hand hygiene (regular hand washing and sanitizing)
- Have all employees and visitors wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, or an approved alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, before entering the workplace, after contact with others, or with surfaces others have touched. Be sure to keep an adequate supply of soap, paper towels, etc. on hand and ensure regular handwashing is occurring, especially before breaks and at shift changes. Provide staff with hand sanitizer for their use when receiving deliveries, interacting with the public, etc.
- Train staff and the public on proper hand hygiene techniques and display posters near hand washing stations and hand sanitizer dispensers: How to Wash your hands & How to use hand sanitizer - ([posters](#))
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Keep surfaces and objects clean.
- Have proper training for all employees on handling cleaners and disinfectants safely and have Material Safety Data Sheets available and bottles/containers properly labelled. Follow all manufacturer's instructions when mixing cleaners or disinfectants.
- Train everyone on how to keep their work surfaces, devices, screens and equipment clean.
- Sanitize the workplace thoroughly and often. Increase frequency of cleaning surfaces and common areas, such as door handles, entryways, light switches, elevators, buttons, PIN pads, washrooms, and kitchens. Commonly touched areas should be cleaned at least once every 2 hours.
- Remove loose items such as condiments, stir sticks, pens, straws, pamphlets, brochures, and other items that may be touched by multiple people.

Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings:
[Public Health Ontario Fact Sheet on Cleaning & Disinfecting](#)

Health Canada: List of disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against COVID-19:
[Click here for the list of disinfectants](#) & [click here for the list of authorized hand sanitizers](#)
(updated daily, Monday to Friday)

Screening & Communication

- Prevent contact with potentially infected people.
- [Learn the symptoms of COVID-19 infection](#).
- Screen workers regularly for health issues and ensure that you or your coworkers stay home if you or they have symptoms or are in close contact with someone who has symptoms.
- Formalize your screening process and have all staff complete a [screening checklist](#) before entering the worksite. Advise staff to stay home when sick and to visit a local assessment. Stay home until the test results are known, and if the test for COVID-19 is positive, to follow public health advise and self-isolate for 14 days and symptoms have been resolved.
- Post signs for the public on the door advising them to stay home if they are sick or have any of the COVID-19 symptoms. Where possible, offer delivery or another modified service to those who are sick to encourage them to remain home.



Preparing the workplace

- Employers should consult with Joint Health and Safety Committees/Health and Safety Representatives in the workplace on measures to protect workers in the workplace.
- Look at ways that you might minimize risks of contact with customers, employees, and surfaces
- Increase the air flow and supply of fresh air in your workplace.
- Train everyone on possible COVID-19 transmission points in the workplace, what steps are being taken to protect them, and how they can protect themselves, including frequent hand washing or sanitizing, and not touching their face.
- Reposition workstations to increase physical distances.
- Install barriers and partitions.
- Look at traffic flow in your workspace for staff and the public. Utilize arrows to direct traffic in one direction. Where possible, designate a separate entrance and exit to limit congestion.
- Reschedule unnecessary visits to the workplace.
- Keep up to date on best practices. Consider regular times to check in with public health updates and retrain/revise practices as needed.
- Ensure adequate supply of soap, paper towels, cleaning supplies, and hand sanitizers are available.

Health and Safety Controls for Employers and Management

[Download the complete WSPS factsheet](#)

- Can you minimize or eliminate tasks that put you and others in danger? Can you adjust your workspace and tasks to limit the number of people that need to be in the same area at the same time?
- Can meetings with customers take place remotely over the computer or phone?
- Can payment transactions be made by e-transfer, online, or phone? Cashless or tap payment are recommended if advance payment is not possible.
- Restrict the number of people in your building and limit the number of building entry and exit points if possible. If one entrance/exit area will cause congestion, consider having one door designated as entrance only, and one as exit only to help with traffic flow and physical distancing.
- Limit the number of people in a given area at any one time (for retail the province is restricting the number of customers per square meter to one customer per 4 square metres (43 square feet) to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres can be achieved at all times). Change the work layout, set floor markings to ensure physical distancing is being practiced. Use appointments and scheduled pickups to limit the number of people in one place.
- Put barriers in place between yourself and those you must interact with if possible.



- Improve fresh air intake/circulation.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces (screens, keyboards, PIN pads, cash drawers, door handles, countertops, light switches etc.). Be sure to follow safe practices and use [appropriate cleaning agents](#).
- Use good hand washing techniques and avoid touching your face. When that is not possible, a good hand sanitizer should be used frequently and between personal interactions if possible.
- Maintain curbside and delivery services as part of your normal business.

What should I do as an employer to ensure my employees are protected?

[Click here to read the key questions](#) you should be asking yourself as an employer to identify the steps that you need to take to make sure your employees feel comfortable returning to work. Your employees have the right to a safe work environment and can refuse to work in unsafe work conditions. It is your responsibility to put the measures in place that will limit possible transmission of the virus and make your workplace as safe as possible.



Sector Guidelines

Below we have compiled some of the guidelines surrounding retail and office establishments and the considerations that should be made as you prepare to return to work. This document does not go into detail on all the sectors that are covered in the provincial guidelines but looks at key considerations for the business types that will be required to make the greatest number of changes to how they regularly operate, and that will require some time to get their workplaces prepared to open with new health and safety measures. For all 60+ sector-specific guidelines and other resources from the Province of Ontario, please visit [Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).

Additionally, the federal government has published the following sector-specific tip sheets: [Agriculture](#), [Daycares](#), [Transportation](#), [Construction](#), [Food Processing](#), & [Restaurants and Food Service](#).

Retail Establishments:

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – Retail Guidelines](#)

[WSPS Guidance on Health and Safety for Curbside Pickup and Delivery Services during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario: Detailed List of Stage 1 Openings](#)

According to the Province of Ontario's [Detailed List of Stage 1 Openings](#), **as of May 19, 2020**, in addition to retail operating online, or with curbside pickup and delivery, all retail can open under the following restrictions and guidelines:

- No indoor malls.
- Must have a street-front entrance (i.e., stores with dedicated street access/storefront).
- Open in-store by appointment and/or by limiting the number of people in the store at any one time. Retailers would need to restrict the number of customers per square metre — for example, one customer per 4 square metres (43 square feet) — to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres at all times.
- Only fitting rooms with doors would be used, not curtains, to facilitate disinfecting. Retailers would restrict use to every second fitting room at any one time to allow for cleaning after use and ensure physical distancing.
- For further guidance on this sector, please refer [to resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#).



Curbside Pick up:

- Utilize touchless payment options or pay in advance online or by e-transfer
- Establish a process that minimizes the time required to complete a curbside transaction and offers as few opportunities as possible to put your employee in contact with the customer or their vehicle (i.e. Have the customer open their truck upon arrival and remain in the vehicle, have them call the store to let staff know they have arrived, staff bring the product out to the vehicle and returns to the store, the customer gets out and shuts their trunk and drives away)
- Establish clear visuals to show where the designated pickup area is located and the boundaries of the pickup area. Customers should be prohibited from exiting their vehicle while they are in the designated pickup area. Post the phone number so it is clearly visible to the customer from their vehicle to inform you that they have arrived and are ready to pick up their order.
- Where possible, maintain control of loading product into the vehicle. Ask the customer to remaining the vehicle and remotely open the door to limit contact with surfaces. This will aid in maintaining physical distancing and avoid unnecessary person to person interactions
- After completing the curbside transaction, ensure employees sanitize their hands and surfaces.
- Do not permit customers to use their own containers, reusable bags, or boxes.
- Provide delivery, curbside, and other customer-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only when receiving deliveries, interacting with the public etc.
- [Screen workers](#) regularly for health issues. If anyone develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#), implement procedures for reporting the illness and for keeping the worker away from others.

Delivery:

- Establish a procedure for delivery to customer homes that eliminates in-person interactions (ex. Drop off their package at their door and notify the customer via phone call or text message)
- Ensure physical distancing guidelines are met for delivery workers. If two workers are required to complete a delivery and they cannot maintain physical distancing while travelling in the same vehicle, consider the use of a second vehicle or consider installing a transparent physical barrier
- Increase cleaning frequency on commonly touched surfaces.
- Have all employees wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, or an [alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) if soap and water are not available, before entering the workplace, after contact with others, or with surfaces other may have touched.
- Provide delivery, curbside, and other customer-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only when receiving deliveries, interacting with the public etc.
- After completing the curbside transaction, ensure employees sanitize their hands and surfaces.
- [Screen workers](#) regularly for health issues. If anyone develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#), implement procedures for reporting the illness and for keeping the worker away from others.



Cashier Controls:

[Click here for the full WSPS Cashier Guidance document](#)

- Can tasks be minimized or eliminated? Can payments be cashless or contactless (tap or online)?
- Put barriers in place between yourself and those you must interact with if possible (sneeze guard or open/close window).
- Improve air flow and fresh air if possible.
- Control the number of people in the workspace to allow for greater physical distancing, and limit the number of people you need to interact with, if possible. Utilize floor markings and signage to show distance markers and control the flow of people. If possible, limit the number of people admitted to only a few at a time.
- Put distance between workers where possible. Stagger work or spread out cashier stations
- Increase cleaning frequency and disinfect surfaces, especially on commonly touched surfaces. Be sure to follow safe practices on cleaning times and [cleaning agents](#).
- Keep up with good hand washing and avoid touching your face. Extra handwashing and washing your hands when you arrive to work and before breaks should be practiced. When extra handwashing is not possible, a good hand sanitizer should be used frequently. Consider disinfecting after each customer interaction.
- If possible, have the customer bag items themselves. Do not allow the customer to place their own bags or boxes on your countertop or surfaces.

Additional recommendations for Store Operations

(from other provinces in Canada):

- Enhance the store's sanitation plan and schedule.
- Provide clean carry-out bags for purchased goods. Customers should be encouraged not to use their own containers, reusable bags or boxes.
- Post signs indicating that no customer packaging is to be used or placed on checkout counters
- Customers should be encouraged to minimize touching merchandise. Post signs requesting them to only touch items they intend to buy.
- Discourage the use of change rooms. If they are being used, ensure that surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use. Only allow 50% occupancy to space out customers.
- Discourage the exchange or return of goods. If goods have to be returned, ensure returns are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Where possible, wipe down merchandise with disinfectant. Returned goods should be isolated in a separate bin (labelled with return date) for at least 72 hours before being returned to store shelves. Employees must wash their hands after handling.
- Where items are kept behind counters and provided to customers to try on and handle, such as jewelry and electronics, customers should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-



based [hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada](#) (DIN or NPN number) prior to handling the items. They should also avoid placing the items on or near their faces.

- Place an [alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada](#) (DIN or NPN number) in dispensers or soap and water hand washing stations near doors, pay stations, change rooms and other high-touch locations for customers and staff. Make wipes and trash bins available for wiping down shopping carts and disposing of the wipes.
- Promote physical distancing of customers:
 - Use physical line controls at entrances and checkout lines. Place markers (e.g. tape or cones) every two metres as visible cues to support physical distancing.
 - Make announcements at regular intervals reminding customers to stay 2 metres apart.
 - Post clear signs in multiple locations that indicate the maximum number of customers and staff allowed in the store at one time.
 - Consider monitoring the number of customers and staff entering and exiting the store. Once the maximum number of persons is reached, allow one person to enter for every one person who leaves.
- Offer and encourage online or telephone orders with delivery or pick-up services as alternatives to in-person shopping.
- Ask customers who arrive with [covid-19-like symptoms](#) to return home and use a delivery service instead.
- All workers should self-monitor for symptoms and use the [self-assessment tool](#) if they develop symptoms.

Office Setting Controls:

Click here for the [WSPS Guidance Document](#)

Click here for the [Public Services Health & Safety Association Guidance Document](#)

- Wash your hands regularly following best practices and avoid touching your face. When handwashing is not possible, a good hand sanitizer should be used frequently and kept nearby.
- Integrate physical distancing in all activities.
- Are there tasks you can minimize or eliminate? Can the work you do be done alone or done from home?
- Stagger breaks and lunches.
- Consider job task rotation if it will assist in ensuring physical distancing guidelines are met and reduce the number of people needed in one area.
- Put measures in place to control how many people you interact with to ensure distance between clients and workers. Consider controlling entry points to designated work areas an,



limiting the number of people in an area, and using floor markers to keep people spaced 2m apart.

- If possible, put barriers in place between yourself and people you have to interact with (ex. Sneeze guard or open/close window).
- Improve airflow and fresh air intake where possible.
- Increase cleaning frequency, especially on shared office items and frequently touched surfaces. Be sure to follow safe practices and use an [appropriate cleaning agent](#).



Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If the above recommendations are still not enough for your workplace, consider Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE is only effective if worn correctly. [Read the Considerations for PPE](#). Ensure PPE training include the fit, use, care, [putting on and taking off](#), maintenance, cleaning, storing and limitations of the PPE.

Provide a safe place for employees to remove and dispose of disposable PPE in designated waste receptacles. Have a hand washing station or hand sanitizer available at that site. If you require customers to wear PPE in your store, ensure waste receptacles are present in the parking lot or outside of your storefront for safe disposal.

Some example of PPE that may be suited include:

- **Gloves** – The use of disposable gloves can help limit contact with surfaces, product etc. Be sure you have practices set up for suitable disposal and when gloves should be changed such as torn and or dirty. It's also important, again, to ensure you consider other hazards that may be present in the workplace before introducing gloves – in some cases, gloves can be an 'entanglement' hazard and should not be worn. [Steps to take off gloves](#)
- **Goggles or face shields** – can help with barriers and separation too. They should be assigned to people and not shared and can be used regularly if kept clean. Ensure the goggle or face shield use does not result in workers touching their faces more often because of heat or discomfort.
- **Masks:** non-medical masks and face coverings may be appropriate for your workplace if physical distancing can not be achieved or maintained., or as an added precaution for customers entering your place of work to protect those around them. Learn the advantages and limitations of masks to help you determine if masks should be worn at your business by either employees or customers:
 - [Mask use for non-healthcare workers](#)
 - [When and How to Wear a Mask](#)
 - [Use of masks and respirators during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
 - [Use of non-medical masks and face coverings](#)
 - [How to put on, remove, and clean non-medical masks and face coverings](#)



Resources:

Employee Screening Questions

Please complete the COVID-19 screening tool prior to entering this building to start your shift. Screening only needs to be completed once per shift. If symptoms develop during a shift, tell your supervisor right away and return home. As of March 25th, all returning travelers to Canada are under mandatory quarantine for 14 days.

1. Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms?
 - severe difficulty breathing (for example, struggling for each breath, speaking in single words)
 - severe chest pain
 - having a very hard time waking up
 - feeling confused
 - lost consciousness

2. Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms (or a combination of these symptoms)?
 - fever
 - new or worsening cough
 - difficulty breathing (for example, struggling for each breath, cannot hold breath for more than 10 seconds)
 - muscle aches
 - unexpected fatigue
 - headache
 - sore throat
 - runny nose or nasal congestion (in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.)
 - difficulty swallowing
 - nausea/vomiting
 - diarrhea
 - abdominal pain
 - new smell or taste disorder

3. Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?

4. Have you been in close contact with someone (household) who has tested positive for COVID-19, or is currently awaiting testing or their test results for COVID-19, in the past 14 days?

5. Have you been in close contact with someone (household) who is sick with new respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), or who is sick with any of the symptoms?

If the answer to all questions is “No”, the staff member may enter the building. By proceeding into the building, you are acknowledging that you have completed and passed screening. If the answer to any question is “Yes” the staff member should return home and follow public health advice, or visit a COVID-19 Assessment Centre.

[Click here to download a printable screening checklist](#)



Posters

Posters for staff areas:

- [Proper hand washing & proper use of hand sanitizer](#)
- [When to use soap and water/ hand sanitizer](#)
- [Know the Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Proper use of PPE:
 - [Recommended Steps for Putting On and Take Off PPE](#)
 - [When & How to Wear a Mask](#)
 - [Steps to Take Off Gloves](#)
- [Cleaning public areas & checklist](#)

Poster for public areas:

- [Hand sanitizing](#)
- [Physical distancing/spacing & protect yourself and those around you](#)
- [Attention Visitors](#)

PPE

[Access the Province's list of PPE Suppliers](#)

[Rapid Response Platform to access critical products](#)



Additional Links & Resources

[Resources to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace \(Province\) & Sector-Based Guidance](#)

[Detailed List of Stage 1 Openings & A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 1](#)

[Workplace Safety and Prevention Board \(WSPS\)](#)

[Public Services Health & Safety Association \(PSHSA\)](#)

[Infrastructure Health & Safety Association \(IHSA\)](#)

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) – Pandemic (COVID-19) Tip Sheets

[Province of Ontario](#) – COVID-19

[Public Health Ontario](#) – Coronavirus Disease

[Government of Canada](#) – COVID-19

[J.D. Irving COVID-19 Workplan](#) (sample)

