

## Environmental Health Re-Opening Q&A

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### 1. **General**

This document outlines some questions and answers to assist with the implementation of the emergency orders to re-open businesses and recreational water amenities across Ontario. In the event of any conflict between this document and any applicable emergency order or directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), the order or directive prevails.

The government, in partnership with health and safety associations, has released more than 100 health and safety guidance documents at [Ontario.ca/COVIDsafety](https://ontario.ca/COVIDsafety) to help employers in multiple sectors – including retail, restaurant and food services and child care – keep spaces safe for workers and customers. Industry may be referred to these resources to answer any questions.

**All amenities, businesses, and services listed in Stage 2 should only open if it safe to do so.**

Questions about what is currently able to open during Stage 1 or 2 should be referred to the Stop the Spread Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659.

### 2. **Food Premises**

**Will farmers' markets be allowed to open in Stage 2?**

Farmers markets are permitted to open, provided there are no other orders issued under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) or local municipal by-laws that direct otherwise.

**Can we go to drive-in movies? / What drive-in/drive-through venues are open? / Will concession stands and washrooms be available?**

All existing and new drive-in and drive-through venues can open for a variety of purposes, such as theatres, concerts, animal attractions and cultural appreciation, such as art installations.

Food services are restricted to delivery to vehicles and drive-thru only.

Operators must have in place procedures or attendees to ensure people remain in their cars except where necessary to purchase admission to the drive-in or drive-through venue, to use the washroom or as may otherwise be required for the purposes of health and safety.

In addition to other workplace and public health measures, drive-ins and drive-through venues should:

- Limit the number of vehicles and how they are parked to ensure physical distancing.
- Ensure any washrooms that are open for use at the drive-in cinema be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.
- Discourage impaired driving and work with local authorities to encourage safe driving.

### **What are the minimum requirements to operate a restaurant, bar, food truck or other food or drink establishment?**

Restaurants, bars, food trucks and other food or drink establishments may open if they comply with the requirements outlined in the emergency order

1. (1) Restaurants, bars, food trucks and other food or drink establishments may open if they comply with the following conditions:

1. Patrons must be served,

i. through take-out, drive-through or delivery service, or

ii. at an outdoor dining area that is,

A. in or adjacent to the place of business, and

B. configured to ensure physical distancing of at least two metres between patrons seated at different tables.

2. Public access to any indoor portions of the business must be limited to food pickup, payment, washroom access, access required to get to the outdoor dining area or access that is otherwise required for the purposes of health and safety.

3. No dancing or singing may be permitted in the outdoor dining areas.

(2) For greater certainty, a restaurant, bar, food truck or other food or drink establishment that is in compliance with the conditions set out in subsection (1) may open in any business or place that is otherwise permitted to open under this Order.

### **Will restaurants and bars be able to extend their patios?**

Licensed restaurants and bars would be able to extend their premises to any area adjacent to the premises, provided the municipality has approved the extended area by passing a resolution or providing a non-objection letter.

Further questions should be directed to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario or your local municipality.

**Will restaurants and bars limit the number of patrons allowed in an outdoor space at one time? Are those limitations addressed in the workplace guidance?**

Yes, restaurants and bars that offer outdoor dining will limit the number of patrons. Workplace guidance provides recommendations on how to comply with requirements including using reservations, limiting the number of patrons at any time, and ensuring enough space to allow for sufficient physical distancing.

**Does the workplace guidance address cleaning and patron management of common areas such as washrooms?**

Yes, patron management in common areas such as washrooms is addressed in such guidance as [Health and Safety Guidance for Food Retail Sector](#)

**Are wineries open for group tastings?**

Tastings and tours for operators of on-site retail stores at manufacturing sites like wineries, breweries, and distilleries are permitted.

**Are restaurants inside breweries / distilleries / wineries open?**

No, restaurants inside breweries, distilleries or wineries are not permitted to open. Public access to any indoor portions of the business must be limited to food pickup, payment, washroom access, access required to get to the outdoor dining area or access that is otherwise required for the purposes of health and safety.

**Can a restaurant or other food or drink operation do business within things like a golf club, marina, hotel or drive-in movie theater?**

Food and drink operations that are part of other businesses that can be open in Stage 2 are permitted to be open, provided they follow the same rules as other food and drink operations as set out in the Stage 2 emergency order as well as any applicable guidance (i.e. in an outside space with other restrictions as noted).

**Will the food court at the mall be open?**

Dine-in at indoor food courts is prohibited. Food services and restaurants with mall-only entrances are open in Stage 2 for outdoor dining spaces, delivery and takeout.

### **Can a communal kitchen and dining area operate within a community centre?**

No, communal kitchens in the community centre and interior dining spaces must be closed.

### **3. Summer Day Camps**

#### **What day camps are permitted to open?**

Day camps for children may open if they operate in a manner consistent with the document entitled “COVID-19 Guidance: Summer Day Camps”, available on the [website of the Government of Ontario](#).

Camps that provide supervised overnight accommodation for children are closed.

#### **Will day camps with waterfront activities on the site of a recreational camp be required to comply with recreational camp waterfront safety requirements?**

Day camps with waterfront activities are still required to satisfy the waterfront safety requirements in Ontario Regulation 565 under the HPPA in addition to any applicable public health advice. At the discretion of the local public health unit, PHUs may request voluntary compliance before considering a section 13 order.

#### **Will day camps on the site of a recreational camp with a private well remain under the oversight of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*?**

Yes, drinking water systems on the site of a recreational camp that may open temporarily to provide only day camp programs (i.e., no overnight) remain subject to Ontario Regulation 170/03 under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. These systems are currently designed to serve children’s camps (e.g. infrastructure for overnight stays – beds, etc.) and until such time as an owner undertakes physical alteration to reflect that they are only offering day camp programs (e.g. removing beds or other facilities associated with overnight stays) AND notify the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) of the change in accordance with the regulation, the regulatory status-quo is maintained.

#### **What about day camps situated on a school site which has been closed?**

Schools will have been closed for 3 – 4 months and plumbing may not have been flushed (i.e., to reduce lead and flush stagnant water). It is recommended, that premise plumbing water be flushed as a best practice prior to use. Public health units may refer to the correspondence shared on June 23, 2020 related to water flushing.

## **What are the requirements for Recreational Camps that are planning to rent out their cabins to families/small groups this summer on a temporary basis?**

For Stage 2, the province is permitting that hotels, motels, lodges, cabins, cottage, resorts and other short-term rental businesses may be open provided that (i) fitness centres or gyms on the premises are closed, and (ii) any communal steam rooms, saunas, whirlpools or hot tubs on the premises are closed. Campgrounds may be open if:

(i) they keep all indoor recreational facilities in the campground closed other than pools, splash pads, spray pads and wading pools that are permitted to be open in accordance with section 19 of the Stage 2 emergency order;

(ii) locker rooms, change rooms and showers must be closed except to the extent they provide access to equipment storage, a washroom or a portion of the campground that is used to provide first aid or are otherwise required for the operation of a pool, splash pad, spray pad and wading pool;

(iii) any equipment that is rented or provided to campgrounds guests must be cleaned and disinfected between each use; and

(iv) The person responsible for the campground must ensure that every person using the campground is complying with any applicable restrictions on the size of social gatherings and organized public events.

These facilities must ensure that all of their operations are in compliance with all other applicable requirements.

**For additional questions pertaining to summer day camps please refer to the updated day camps [guideline](#).**

## **4. Beaches**

### **What is the opening status of local municipal beaches?**

Beaches are not listed in the Stage 1 or 2 emergency orders; however there may be local orders or by-laws that restrict certain beaches from opening. Gathering sizes are limited to 10 people. Public health advice continues to be that physical distancing should be practiced with anyone who is not in the same household or ten-person social circle.

### **What is the status on camping this summer, including amenities and beach access?**

As of June 1, backcountry camping at Ontario Parks and camping on Crown land became available. Advanced reservations or registrations are required or recommended at most of the provincial parks that offer backcountry camping.

As of June 12, in Stage 2, Ontario Parks campgrounds and private campgrounds can also open for recreational vehicle, car camping and all other types of camping.

In Stage 2, beach access and additional camping at Ontario Parks is allowed to resume in certain regions, although measures including limited capacity will be taken at some parks to enable physical distancing.

Campers must adhere to social gathering size restrictions and maintain two-metre physical distancing with people outside their household and when outside of their campsites. Occupancy limits may apply in some provincial parks during peak visitation times.

### **Will physical distancing rules be enforced at Ontario Parks beaches?**

In Stage 2, the limit for gatherings increases to 10 people.

Ministry officers will be present in provincial parks and conservation reserves to provide information, assist with emergencies and enforce provincial park rules and regulations. Additionally, these areas may be patrolled by local police or other enforcement agencies.

Ontario parks will also be implementing measures to address overcrowding and promote physical distancing in our park spaces and buildings during busy visitation times by limiting occupancy for day-use and camping in select provincial parks. This may include limiting the number of daily vehicle permits sold or the number of campsites available for reservations. You may notice that day use parking areas will not be as full, or some campsites will remain empty during your stay.

As public health measures are lifted and as activity resumes, the public will need to continue to take precautions by maintaining physical distancing, washing their hands regularly and other applicable public health measures.

### **What is the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when swimming at a public beach?**

The survival of COVID-19 in fresh water and associated infectivity via swimming is unknown. The risk of transmission at beaches is primarily by contact with droplets of an infected individual. Physical distancing is important to prevent transmission.

## **5. Recreational Water Facilities (Public Pools, Spray/Splash Pads and Wading Pools)**

### **What types of recreational water facilities are permitted to open?**

All indoor and outdoor swimming pools, splash pads, spray pads and wading pools in the regions identified for Phase 2 reopening as of June 12<sup>th</sup>, may open to the public with limited access to certain facilities and no access to high-contact aquatic features (e.g., slides, diving boards, climbing structures, etc.).

This includes public pools as well as pools situated in community centres, campgrounds, marinas, hotels, motels, condo parks, resorts, and other private facilities.

### **What types of recreational water facilities are NOT permitted to open yet?**

Waterparks, water slides, and spas (i.e., wave pools, hot tubs, steam rooms, saunas) are not be permitted to reopen in Stage 2.

### **Are operators required to provide notification to the local public health unit of their intent to operate 14 days prior to opening?**

If the pool is subject to the requirements of Ontario Regulation 565 (Public Pools) made under the HPPA, operators of pools are required to notify the local public health unit of their intent to reopen 14 days before reopening following a closure of more than 4 weeks.

### **Is the direction that Boards of Health inspect *all* pools prior to opening?**

As per the May 29, 2020 CMOH memo regarding public health inspections, facilities that require inspection prior to re-opening include public pools and public beaches. Public health units are required to inspect public pools in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards and Protocols, which includes any public pools prior to reopening after closure of more than 4 weeks.

Some public health units may have already received notification from some seasonal pool operators. Once a pool operator is ready, they can give notice to the public health unit and the public health unit can determine when the inspection will occur.

The business should open when it is safe to do so. Re-opening will be gradual to allow for any necessary precautions and processes, and subject to any local bylaws and other local requirements.

### **What are the conditions that must be followed to permit the operation of pools in Stage 2 in accordance with the emergency order?**

The minimum requirements to operate pools, splash pads, spray pads and wading pools can be found under section 19 within the emergency order: <https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-stage-2-closures-2020-06-11.pdf>.

### **Should disinfection levels be increased in pools?**

According to the US CDC, proper operation and maintenance of pools, hot tubs, spas, and water play areas will prevent waterborne transmission of the virus responsible for COVID-19: specifically disinfection with chlorine and bromine will inactivate the virus.

Pool operators who are subject to the requirements of Ontario Regulation 565 made under the HPPA are required to maintain proper operation and maintenance of the pool, including water quality requirements in accordance with the regulation.

Maintaining physical distancing is also recommended along with bather hygiene. The operations of facilities must be in compliance with all other applicable requirements.

### **What is the risk of COVID-19 transmission in a public pool?**

The transmission of COVID-19 in pool water and associated infectivity via swimming is unknown. Factors that may increase the risk of transmission include inadequate levels of disinfectant, malfunctioning equipment, overcrowding, person to person transmission (through contact with droplets), and large organic loading (e.g. feces or vomit).

### **Are patrons and staff required to wear masks and gloves?**

Operators should refer to the [Essential Workplaces Guidance, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development industry specific guidance](#), as well as any local bylaws or other requirements that may also apply.

### **What can recreational water operators do to ensure a facility operates in compliance with physical distancing requirements?**

The pool, splash pad, spray pad or wading pool must comply with the applicable physical distancing requirements by:

- operating with a reduced resting area, capacity or aquatic activity enrolment, or
- operating by appointment or timed entry.

The operator of a pool, splash pad, spray pad or wading pool, may consider a range of other supportive options that aids in meeting the physical distancing requirements depending on the operating status of their facility including:

- Develop an operational plan to comply with provincial and municipal regulations, orders, and guidelines;
- Designate a sign-up sheet and schedule for swimmers;
- Have an attendant (separate from an on-duty lifeguard) monitor the number of bathers permitted in the pool and physical distancing;
- Limit bather load to allow 2m of physical distance between all swimmers who are not in the same household or ten-person social circle;
- Consider and/or adjust activities permitted in the pool (i.e., lane swim, remove access to high-contact aquatic features, including slides, diving boards and climbing structures, with the exception of ladders.)
- Post signage related to physical distancing
- Ensure children are accompanied by a parent or guardian

### **Does Ontario have legislation that excludes lifeguards from physical distancing requirements?**

There is no legislation in Ontario that requires lifeguards to maintain physical distancing while performing their lifeguard duties or while training. Therefore, these types of exemptions are not applicable in Ontario. Lifeguards should ensure physical distancing precautions are followed to the best extent possible.

### **Will public pool change rooms and showers be available to the public?**

Any locker room, change room or shower that is used in conjunction with a pool, splash pad, spray pad or wading pool may be open for that purpose and must be sanitized and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.

### **Are aquatic fitness classes exempt from physical distancing requirements?**

Aquatic activities such as fitness classes and swim lessons must be in line with physical distancing measures.

### **Why can I go in a swimming pool but not a wave pool or a hot tub?**

Workplaces, community spaces and events that pose the highest risk, such as wave pools and hot tubs, amusement parks and waterparks will reopen in future stages. This is in keeping with Ontario's gradual, incremental approach to ensure the safe reopening of the province.

### **Are spray/splash pad operators required to install a fence to control access by identifying a separate entrance and exit?**

Spray/splash pad operators must operate in compliance with Ontario Regulation 565 made under the HPPA and applicable minimum requirements for splash/ spray pads in Ontario Regulation 263/20 made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*: <https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-stage-2-closures-2020-06-11.pdf>. <https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-stage-2-closures-2020-06-11.pdf>.