

Algoma Public Health

COVID-19: Quick Reference Guide for Public Beaches

June 10, 2020

Background

Current research suggests the risk of transmission from recreational waters is very low. However, COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when in close contact with others. It is common to see people swimming and playing in the water in close proximity of one another. Therefore, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is greater if physical distancing is not maintained

Please continue to adhere to provincial emergency orders and public health recommendations on gathering requirements to help in limiting the spread of COVID-19 in Algoma.

Follow these measures to ensure safe operation of your public beaches:

Educate Visitors

Whether using your website or social media, educate potential beach-goers on the new public health measures in place at your local beach. Consider sharing this information with various group or organizations that can help spread the word. Also, create and post signage on the way to, and at the beach that encourages self-screening for symptoms along with guidelines specific for your beach, some of which include:

- Reminder of physical distancing (2 metres)
- Gathering size (less than 10)
- Stay home if you are sick
- Site-specific rules (i.e. allowable activities)
- Operation hours
- Close off/remove equipment including playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment, picnic tables, gazebos that are difficult to keep clean and disinfected or are challenging to monitor for physical distancing

Reinforce Physical Distancing

Municipalities should take measures to ensure that beach visitors who are not from the same household maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more from other people at all times. While at the beach, ensure that physical distancing is maintained while in the water, and while having fun on the shore.

- Use ground markings and barriers to manage traffic flow
- Consider marking out safe physical distancing zones (e.g. use tape, rope, cones, etc.)
- Consider limiting beach occupancy (if possible)
- Consider reducing the number of parking spaces to prevent crowding
- If lifeguards on site, they should not be responsible for monitoring physical distancing – they need to focus on water safety
- Limit the amount of available picnic tables
- Dedicate an entrance and exit

Promote Hand Hygiene

- Encourage all visitors to wash or sanitize their hands as they arrive and as they leave
- Make hand washing stations readily available
- Encourage visitors to bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol-based), especially if hand washing facilities are not available
- Post handwashing and hand sanitizing posters in high traffic areas and at washroom sinks
- Ensure that soap and paper towels are always available and are refilled frequently

Sources

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2020). Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirusinfection/guidance-documents/risk-mitigation-tool-outdoor-recreation-spaces-activities-operating-covid-19.html>