

Algoma Public Health

COVID-19: Guidelines for Reopening your Food Premises

Updated: August 5th, 2020

Background

This guide provides you with the information you need to continue to operate your restaurant, or other food premise during COVID-19.

- **Part 1** - provides advice on prepping your restaurant for daily food service
- **Part 2** - helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Please note that this guidance document contains basic information as outlined in [the instructions provided by the Algoma Medical Officer of Health](#), **effective July 17th**. In the event of any conflict between this guidance document and the legislation, the legislation prevails.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please call Algoma Public Health at: 705-942-4646 ext. 3160, email ehclerical@algomapublichealth.com or visit www.algomapublichealth.com/healthyworkplaces

Part 1: Food Premises Daily Opening Checklist

The following are your daily recommended actions to be taken 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.
- 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 pipes for at least five minutes.
- Remind staff on new procedures/requirements.

Part 2: Guidance for Food Premises

This guide describes the requirements of Algoma Public Health for the continued operation of retail food premises within the Algoma district

COVID-19 Transmission

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 is 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. This new virus can survive on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for [up to 72 hours](#).

Main measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in food premises

- Physical distancing (keep two metres/six feet distance) from both staff and customers.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of all potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Wearing a non-medical mask in an enclosed public space, and where physical distancing is hard to maintain; serving staff must comply with masking policy in the indoor dining space, and should wear masks for outdoor dining if they cannot maintain physical distance.

Additional protective measures to keep everyone safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash hands often. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Maintain logs for customer and staff contact information

- As per [O. Reg. 364/20, Schedule 2, Sect. 1\(5\)](#), the person responsible for the establishment must,
 - i. record the name and contact information of every patron who enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, other than patrons who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order,
 - ii. maintain the records for a period of at least one month, and
 - iii. only disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the Health Protection and Promotion Act on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law. If there is a case of COVID-19 who was contagious while at the restaurant, public health will use that list to notify the staff and customers.

The owners/operators of food premises must ensure that the above requirements are met.

The guidance below describes how these requirements might be implemented, but *operators are ultimately responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19*. Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from APH about food safety, or the Ontario Food Premises Regulations.

It is recommended you contact your area Public Health inspector to discuss any questions you may have or subsequent advice that you may require.

Prepare the physical space

- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to configure so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by,
 - i. a distance of at least two metres, or
 - ii. plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier
- Consider reservations only, encourage smaller party sizes
- Be aware of your seating capacity to adequately maintain physical distancing measures
- No more than ten customers should be seated at each table unless from the same household. Make into separate tables if able.
- Remove waiting area seating, and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
- Map out floor with markers for any areas where a line up may occur.
- Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
- Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff should wear masks.
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
- If necessary, install barriers (e.g. Plexiglass) to protect staff (e.g. host desk) or customers (e.g. between back-to-back booths).
- Remove buffets and self-serve locations (including self-serve soda machines and condiment areas).
- Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Provide direction to customers:
 - Install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
 - [Post signage](#), about the changes you have made to protect patrons against COVID-19
- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings [in all indoor public spaces](#) is required according to the Medical Officer of Health's [instructions for face coverings](#). Advise customers to wear them, except when eating.
- Consider supplying dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to customers at each table and at the door.

Develop Protocols

- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per Algoma Public Health's [instructions](#) issued under [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020, S.O.2020, c.17](#) and associated regulations. Operators are required to develop a [policy and protocols](#) on the wearing of masks for staff and patrons.
- Policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned between uses.
- Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitise between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc.
- Staffing: for example, stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences.
 - Note that [active screening](#) and not allowing staff to work if showing symptoms of COVID-19 are required policies. Staff must report any symptoms developed during shift to their supervisor.
 - Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage: post signs on [handwashing](#), [physical distancing](#), [reporting symptoms](#), and make them visible to staff and customers.
- [Follow proper cleaning and disinfection practice](#)
 - Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
 - Shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
 - Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps etc.
 - Specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning materials.
- Thoroughly clean the premises before opening.
- More details on cleaning and disinfection are available at Public Health Ontario's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).
- Minimize unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves. Minimize the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers).
- Record the name and contact information for each reservation, with the time and date, which can be used by public health in the event contact tracing is required (see below).

Train Staff

- Train staff 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).
- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Practice physical distancing during breaks.



- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to masks and gloves as needed.
 - Train staff in [proper use of masks](#). Gloves are not essential or encouraged for routine tasks. People are less likely to wash their hands when wearing gloves for routine tasks resulting in increased transmission of germs. If used, gloves must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the correct technique, and to avoid touching face.
- Keep a staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.

During Active Operation

- Ensure that masking policy is in place for patrons and staff. Patrons should be encouraged to mask when entering the facility, and when ordering. Masks may be removed for eating and drinking. If patrons continue to remain in an enclosed public space once they have finished eating and drinking, masks should be worn again. Consider posting [signage](#) on proper use of masks in seating area.
- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- Screening of staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and colleagues. Ensure that [active screening](#) of each employee occurs before each shift.
 - Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) and/or contact their primary health provider and get tested.
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting; have them wait outdoors when necessary, but ensure that they do not impinge on the space of diners on the patio.
- Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display posters telling customers if they have symptoms they cannot enter.
- Patrons must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except:
 - while entering the area and while moving to their table,
 - while placing or picking up an order,
 - while paying for an order,
 - while exiting the area,
 - while going to or returning from a washroom,
 - while lining up to do anything described, where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- Make sure that tables are cleaned and sanitized at least daily and between sittings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Loud music is discouraged. 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. No dancing or singing by patrons may be permitted in the dining areas.



- No person shall dance, sing, or perform music at the facility unless under a contract with the establishment. The establishment must ensure compliance with O. Reg. 364/20 Schedule 2, sect. 1(4), and any other applicable legislation related to such activities.
- Assist APH in tracing contacts of COVID-19 cases. Ensure that you obtain a first name and telephone number (or e-mail address) from each person eating at the premises (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. This information may be requested by APH to assist with tracing contacts of someone who ate at your restaurant and subsequently developed COVID-19. You may also be required to post a notice of data collection.

Patios

Restaurants are encouraged to provide patios wherever feasible. Patios provide conditions which reduce the survival and spread of the COVID-19 virus. The rules for distancing, service, and cleaning and sanitation that apply to the indoor area of the food premise also apply to patios. Patios must also comply with all municipal requirements.

- Have serving staff wear masks on the patio.
- If serving staff are not wearing face masks on the patio, then physical distancing must be maintained from other workers and the public. Unmasked servers can maintain their physical distance by having customers order through a barrier (ie plexiglass) and then servers can bring food for the customers to a designated pick-up table on the patio. Customers can pick up their food at their table when called upon and then return to their seat.
- Minimum of two metres/six feet between every diner at a different table, as well as accounting for movement of chair/stool
 - 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.
- Ensure that a distance of two metres/six feet is maintained between customers or groups that are together. Co-mingling should be avoided.
- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers.
- Allow space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
- Consider a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come close to patio customers.
- Mark out floors with markers for any areas where a line-up may occur.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Post [signage](#) promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Provide one or more means of exit

Download and Print Posters for your Restaurant

[Posters for Your Business](#)

[Reopen Safely Algoma](#)

[Self-Screening for Symptoms](#)

[COVID-19: Non-medical Masks and Face Coverings](#)

[Staff Screening Questionnaires](#)

Additional Resources

[Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020, S.O.2020, c.17](#)

[Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#)

[APH Masking Instructions](#)

[Province of Ontario Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises – Best Practices Summary Sheet](#)

More information

As information changes frequently, please visit: www.algomapublichealth.com/healthyworkplaces to stay up to date.