

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

DATE: March 22, 2021

EFFECTIVE: March 23 at 12:01 a.m.

TO: All owners, operators and other persons responsible for restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments¹ within Halton Region

The Province of Ontario has issued regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (ROA). The ROA Regulations applicable to Halton Region require all persons responsible for a business or organization that is open to operate the business or organization in compliance with the instructions of public health officials and establish additional requirements for establishments serving food or drink. The following instructions issued by Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region, are intended to supplement the Regulations.

COVID-19 continues to be present in Halton Region and in Ontario. Halton Region and Ontario have also now experienced outbreaks and community transmission of Variants of Concern (**VOCs**) of the virus that causes COVID-19 including – importantly – in the restaurant setting. VOCs are associated with higher rates of transmission and with higher rates of serious illness and death from COVID-19. We are therefore facing heightened risks of both more cases, and more serious cases, of COVID-19 throughout Halton Region.

The key risk factors associated with COVID-19 transmission include close contact, closed spaces, crowded places and forceful exhalation.² Rigorous adherence to physical distancing and related public health measures is essential to stop/slow the spread of VOCs to the greatest extent possible, reducing the spread of infection and protecting our hospital, public health and broader health system capacity from overwhelming demands.

I acknowledge and thank you for your efforts to reopen safely, complying with these rules and requirements to protect your staff, patrons and the community at large, and ask for your compliance and cooperation with these instructions. Halton Region Public Health public health inspectors are available to answer questions and concerns you may have about their implementation and may be reached by calling 905-825-6000.

Please see our website for further information: [halton.ca/COVID-19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID-19)

These instructions remain in effect until amended or rescinded by me.

PLEASE NOTE: These instructions will be enforced by public health inspectors and/or other provincial offences officers responsible for enforcement of the *Reopening Ontario Act*. Failure to comply with these instructions is an offence under that Act, for which you may be charged and penalties imposed including fines, imprisonment and/or closure of premises.

Effective March 23, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., all owners, operators and other persons responsible for restaurants, bars, food trucks, concession stands and other food or drink establishments with indoor and/or outdoor dining areas open to the public located within Halton Region must implement the following measures:

¹ Ontario Regulation 263/20 under the ROA establishes the Rules for Stage 2 that now apply to Halton: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200263>; as amended by <https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-217-21-amending-263-20.pdf>. Schedule 2, section 1(3) of that regulation provides certain exemptions from the rules for food and drink establishments; sections 1(5) and (6) provide clarity regarding those to whom the rules do apply.

² Province of Ontario, *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario safe and open*, dated February 19, 2021.

1. Comply with all requirements that apply to your business, place, facility or establishment as set out under the ROA and the applicable regulations³, as well as the requirements set out in these instructions.

Where these instructions impose one or more additional requirements not set out in the ROA and ROA Regulations, the requirement(s) under these instructions must be followed.

2. Patrons seated at different tables to be separated by 2 metres or plexiglass or another impermeable barrier. Absent plexiglass or other impermeable barrier, establishments must calculate the minimum 2 metre distance between dining spaces from the most outward part on all sides, i.e., the most outward part of the chair with someone seated at it, to the most outward part of another adjacent chair.
3. Every patron who enters an indoor or outdoor eating or drinking area in/at the establishment (unless the patron temporarily enters the area to place, pick up or pay for a take-out order) must be actively screened for COVID-19 in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (**CMOH**) before they enter. Among other requirements established by the CMOH, screening results must be collected and reviewed to determine whether the patron may enter.

Access the CMOH advice, recommendations and instructions for specific requirements at: [Required Questions in the COVID-19 Tool for Businesses and Organizations](#) .

The Ontario Ministry of Health has created a computer-based active screening tool for patrons, found [here](#).

4. The following information for contact tracing and related public health purposes must be collected and recorded from every patron upon entry to an indoor or outdoor eating or drinking area in/at the establishment, unless the patron temporarily enters the area to place, pick up or pay for a take-out order:
 - a. First and last name;
 - b. Telephone number and municipality of residence; and if possible, email or mailing address;
 - c. Attendance details: date; arrival time; table number or location; and departure time (recorded on departure);
 - d. The results of the active screening required in para 3 above; i.e., confirmation that screening was completed and the patron passed screening;
 - e. Verbal attestation that the patron will be seated⁴:
 - i. At a table only with their own household members, with or without one other person who lives alone or a caregiver;
 - ii. At a table only with one other household, if they live alone; or
 - iii. At a table with another household, if they are a caregiver (essential for maintaining mental or physical health) for someone in that household.

This information must be recorded and maintained to enable owners, operators and other persons responsible for an establishment to provide the information by email or fax to Halton Region Public Health **within two (2) hours of a request**.

5. All records containing the information required in para 4 above must be retained for a period of at least one month. These records must be stored and destroyed in a secure manner to preserve the privacy of patrons.
6. Do not seat, serve or permit any patron to enter an indoor or outdoor eating or drinking area in/at the establishment, unless the patron provides all information required in para 4 above.
7. Establish physical and other requirements to ensure the workplace is arranged to enable all workers, suppliers and others involved in service delivery in/at the establishment to maintain 2 metres distance from each other and

³ The provincial government changes these requirements from time to time. All owners, operators and persons responsible for food premises with indoor and/or outdoor dining areas open to the public located within Halton Region must ensure they are aware of all such changes.

⁴ A recent change to the ROA Regulations now places responsibility with establishments (not just patrons) to ensure: "All people who are seated together in the establishment must be members of the same household, a member of one other household who lives alone or a caregiver for any member of either household."

from all patrons at all times; e.g., spacing of stations and visual cues; physical and other arrangements for employees on breaks, etc.

8. Every worker, supplier and other person(s) who works in/at the establishment must be actively screened for COVID-19 in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (**CMOH**) on a daily basis before they enter the establishment; i.e., each day the person works in/at the establishment. Among other requirements established by the CMOH, screening results must be collected and reviewed to determine whether the employee may enter.

Access the [CMOH advice, recommendations and instructions](#) for specific requirements.

The Ontario Ministry of Health has created a computer-based active screening tool: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screening/worker/>.

9. All records containing the information required in para 8 above must be retained for a period of at least one month. These records must be stored and destroyed in a secure manner to preserve the privacy of those to whom the information relates.

This information must be recorded and maintained to enable owners, operators and other persons responsible for an establishment to provide the information by email or fax to Halton Region Public Health **within two (2) hours of a request**.

10. To encourage honest and forthright reporting of COVID-19 symptoms and/or contact by workers, ensure that all workers are aware of any benefits and/or pay to which they may be entitled if they must self-isolate because they are a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, have symptoms and are awaiting COVID-19 test results, otherwise have reasonable grounds to believe they have COVID-19 symptoms and/or are a close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case.⁵
11. Follow all further instructions from Halton Region Public Health pertaining to COVID-19 that apply to your establishment.



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These instructions shall be posted at: [halton.ca/COVID-19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID-19).

⁵ For example, see my Class Order requiring Self-Isolation issued in Halton Region effective October 5, 2020: [https://www.halton.ca/Repository/Class-Order-Made-pursuant-to-section-22\(5-0-1\)-of](https://www.halton.ca/Repository/Class-Order-Made-pursuant-to-section-22(5-0-1)-of)