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Ontario Eases COVID-19 Restrictions

For additional information, our FAQ section is below.

On Monday, February 14, 2022, the Ontario Government announced that it would be 'fast-tracking' the Province into Step 2 of the Province's Reopening Plan given that key public health and health system indicators continue to improve at a positive rate. The following are the changes that will become effective on **February 17** and **March 1, 2022** (previously set at February 21 and March 14, 2022).

February 17, 2022: Ontario will further ease public health measures, including, but not limited to:

- Increasing social gathering limits to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors
- Increasing organized public event limits to 50 people indoors, with no limit outdoors

- Removing capacity limits in the following indoor public settings where proof of vaccination is required, including but not limited to:
 - Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments without dance facilities
 - Non-spectator areas of sports and recreational fitness facilities, including gyms
 - Cinemas
 - Meeting and event spaces, including conference centres or convention centres
 - Casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments
 - Indoor areas of settings that choose to opt-in to proof of vaccination requirements.
- Allowing 50 per cent of the usual seating capacity at sports arenas
- Allowing 50 percent of the usual seating capacity for concert venues and theatres
- Increasing indoor capacity limits to 25 per cent in the remaining higher-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required, including nightclubs, restaurants where there is dancing, as well as bathhouses and sex clubs
- Capacity limits are removed if the location opts-in to use proof of vaccination or if the service, rite, or ceremony is occurring outdoors. Increasing capacity limits for indoor weddings, funerals or religious services, rites, or ceremonies to the number of people who can maintain two metres physical distance.

Capacity limits in other indoor public settings, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, retail and shopping malls, will be maintained at, or increased to, the number of people who can maintain two metres physical distance.

March 1, 2022: If public health and health system indicators continue to improve, all remaining indoor capacity limits will be lifted. Proof of vaccination requirements will be lifted, with businesses being allowed to implement proof of vaccination requirements voluntarily. Visitors at Ontario's long-term care facilities will continue to be required to provide proof of vaccination. Protective measures for all businesses, such as mask/face covering requirements and active/passive screening of patrons, will continue to be in place.

Answering Your Questions on the Updated COVID-19 Restrictions

Q: Do workers still have to perform their daily COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire each day before being permitted to enter the workplace? Do I have to screen customers too?

A: Yes. Ford's announcement does not affect this requirement. Visitors must continue to be screened passively before entering the workplace.

Q: Do workers still have to physically distance in the workplace?

A: Yes. Ford's announcement does not affect this requirement. Workers who can't physically distance while performing their duties must wear at least a medical mask (KN95 or N95 recommended) and eye protection and should reduce the time spent in close contact with a colleague as much as possible.

Q: Do workers still have to wear face masks?

A: Yes. Ford's announcement does not affect this requirement. The Government, in their announcement, did mention that the mask requirement would be assessed and a further announcement made "at a later date". Workers must still wear a mask that is properly fitting, that is at least 3 layers, and ideally - either a medical mask or KN95/N95 mask for the very best protection.

Q: If the Vaccine Passport System is being removed - does this mean Workplace COVID-19 Vaccination Policies are no longer required after March 1?

A: No. It is still recommended that Employers have COVID-19 Vaccination Policies in place until further direction is given from the Government on this specific topic. Amongst other reasons, it is still important to have a robust COVID-19 Vaccination Policy in place as Employers are still required to contact trace in the workplace and ensure that employees are abiding by the correct self-isolation periods based on their vaccination status, circumstances, etc.

Q: Are workers still required to self-isolate?

A: Yes. Ford's announcement does not affect this requirement. If you are in any doubt as to the correct self-isolation period for an employee(s), please do not hesitate to contact HR Performance & Results for

guidance. At this time, employers must continue to perform contact tracing efforts after learning of a potential/confirmed COVID-19 case to reduce transmission in the workplace. [Click here](#) for the latest information on self-isolation.

Resources

-  [Sector-specific Health & Safety Guidelines, Posters and Tip Sheets](#)
-  [Canada Recovery Hiring Program \(CRHP\)](#)
-  [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#)
-  [Educating Employees on the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
-  [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#)
-  [When and How to Properly Wear a Mask](#)
-  [How to Properly Wash Your Hands](#)

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