

## COVID-19 Guidance for Malls and Shopping Centres

This document contains guidance for operators of mall/shopping centres to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It describes the requirements operators must comply with under the [Reopening Ontario Act](#). For public health guidance on individual retail settings and stores, refer to [COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Settings](#).

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist individuals and businesses with information related to the Ontario Government's reopening framework as well as Toronto Public Health requirements to reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is important to know that breaches of some of these directions will constitute offences under provincial regulations or other public health legal requirements. While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. This guidance is not intended to nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional.

As every mall and shopping centre is different, it is ultimately the responsibility of the operator to review their own site-specific circumstances and assess their ability to implement appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

### **What is permitted** ([O. Reg. 263/20](#))

Shopping malls may open if the person responsible for the shopping mall ensures that the following conditions are complied with:

- If the shopping mall is an indoor shopping mall, the shopping mall must actively screen individuals in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health before they enter the indoor premises of the mall.
- Members of the public who enter the shopping mall must not be permitted to loiter in any area of the shopping mall.
- Any interior dining spaces inside the shopping mall, including any tables and seating in food courts, are closed.
- Music played at the shopping mall cannot be above a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible.
- The number of members of the public in the shopping mall at any one time must not exceed the total capacity determined by taking the sum of the capacities of every business in the mall.

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- Retail operators within the mall must ensure that members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business and that the total number of members of the public in the business at any one time does not exceed 50 per cent capacity. See [COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Settings](#) for more details.
- No member of the public may be permitted to line up or congregate outside of the mall unless they are maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons inside or outside the mall.
- No member of the public may be permitted to line up or congregate inside the mall unless they are: a) maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres from other groups of persons inside or outside the mall, and b) wearing a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless they are entitled to any exceptions.

## Measures for all workplaces, organizations & businesses

Review the [Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) to plan and implement protocols to keep staff and patrons safe. Operators must also consider the following:

### ● Health screening for staff and patrons

- Operators are required to **actively screen** all staff before entering the mall. See [Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) for more information on screening, including how to set up a screening station.
- Shopping mall operators are required to actively screen individuals before they enter the indoor premises of the mall.
- Post [signs](#) on the front door explaining the conditions for entry, including screening.

### ● Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Provide hand sanitizer with 70-90% alcohol concentration outside entrances and in multiple locations throughout the mall (e.g. near high-touch surfaces such as bank machines, touch-screen signs, elevators, escalators, stairs, and food courts).
- Encourage everyone to use hand sanitizer when they enter the mall.

### ● Cleaning and disinfection

- Any washrooms, change rooms, or similar amenities made available to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition; and
- Any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- Business hours may need to be adjusted to accommodate enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices.

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- Employees should use gloves if it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with bodily fluids, broken skin, mucous membranes, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces.
- Discourage use of touch screens for wayfinding.
- Handing out of coupons, samples, testers, or flyers is not recommended.
  - If provided, food sampling must be served in a prepackaged format, for take-home consumption.
- Remove soft/porous items that are difficult to sanitize such as upholstery, cushions and rugs.

## Safety plan

- Operators must prepare a safety plan. The safety plan must:
  - Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
  - Include measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning, disinfecting and personal protective equipment (PPE) and preventing and controlling crowds.
  - Be in writing and made available to any person for review, on request.
  - Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.
- Use the [COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist](#) to develop your safety plan.

## Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems

- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:
  - maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or
  - open windows and doors, if it is safe to do so.
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.
- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.
- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, position fan with an upward movement to avoid blowing of air across people and surfaces.
- There is no evidence the use of portable air purifiers will prevent the spread of COVID-19. If used, follow the manufacturer's directions to decide where best to place the device. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on maintenance.
- For more information, review the [COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet](#).

## Use of masks and face coverings

- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per the City of Toronto [By-law 541-2020](#) and [O. Reg. 364/20](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. Use the [Mask By-law Checklist and Sample Policy](#).
- Appropriate personal protective equipment that covers the eyes, nose and mouth must be worn if, while providing service in an indoor area, the person
  - is required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering; and
  - is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Post signs encouraging people to dispose of used masks safely in garbage bins.

## Ensure physical distancing

- Post physical distancing signs at all entrances, service desks or otherwise.
- Expand operating hours to control the number of people permitted in the mall at one time.
  - Consider ways to support vulnerable populations such as dedicated mall hours.
- Assign employees or security to assist with ensuring physical distancing in high-traffic areas.
- Monitor entrances to control the number of people entering the mall at any given time.
  - Restrict and/or direct the flow of people into, throughout and exiting the mall (e.g. designate some doors for entry or exit to avoid two-way traffic, designate some hallways for one-way traffic with signs and floor decals).
  - Encourage patrons to exit the mall as quickly as possible following completion of their shopping/transactions.
- Remove, separate or block off seating at least two metres in shared spaces.
- Limit the number of people in washrooms at any one time.
  - Close toilets, urinals, sinks and hand dryers that are less than two metres apart without barriers between them.
- Place visual / textural markers (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) spaced two metres/six feet apart for patrons lining up when waiting to enter.

## Install transparent barriers

- Consider installing plexiglass or other physical barriers where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as at information kiosks.



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- To be effective the barrier must be large enough to create a shield between the breathing zones of the people on either side.
- [Download](#) information about installing effective barriers.

### **Mall attractions**

- Indoor attractions within malls are closed. However, outdoor attractions are permitted with restrictions. See [COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings](#) for more information.

### **Food Service and Food Courts**

- Any interior dining spaces inside the shopping mall, including any tables and seating in food courts, are closed.
- Prohibit consumption of food or drink while shopping.
- Mall operators, food court vendors and other food establishments within the mall must refer to [COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants](#).
- Mall and/or retail operators should designate locations for mall employees to consume food and beverages safely and away from members of the public.

### **Encourage COVID-19 Vaccination**

- Encourage patrons and staff who were born in 2016 or earlier to get vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine, including a booster dose when eligible. Read and share information [about the vaccine and where to get vaccinated](#).
- Post signs and share [COVID-19 vaccine resources](#), available in multiple languages.

### **Increase communication with patrons**

- Communicate to patrons, tenants and staff about the changes you have made to protect them against COVID-19 through multiple platforms (e.g. signs, website, social media, voice mail).
- Use public announcement systems frequently to deliver key messages to mall visitors (e.g. physical distancing, sanitizing hands at entrances, no gathering/crowding in one area).
- Encourage patrons, tenants and staff to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors, tenants and employees not to enter if they are sick.
- Download information and post or promote educational materials to encourage healthy behaviours that reduce the spread of COVID-19:
  - [COVID-19: Posters & Graphics](#)

- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)

## **Other Resources**

[Ontario Public Health Measures and Advice](#)

[Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

[Guidance for Employers on Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

[Guidance for Retail Settings](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Retail Sector during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Retail: Guidance for Health and Safety Tip sheet](#)

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety COVID-19 Tip Sheets](#)

## **More Information**

For more information visit [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19) to stay up to date.