



MEDIA RELEASE

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Entering Step 3 of Ontario's Reopening Plan: What to Expect Locally

As Local COVID-19 Case Incidence Rates Remain High, Health Officials Urge Compliance with Public Health Measures to Prevent a Fourth Wave

Although Peterborough Public Health (PPH) will enter Step 3 of Ontario's Reopening Plan along with the rest of the province tomorrow, local health officials are wary that the number of current cases and outbreaks may grow unless residents continue to practice COVID-19 prevention measures.

"For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic started, PPH's case incidence rate are twice as high as the provincial rate, which means there is more transmission occurring here when compared to other regions," said Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health. "As we move into Step 3, residents will need to carefully follow public health measures and get both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as quickly as possible."

For the week of July 4-10, the case incidence rate for PPH was 16.9 per 100,000, compared to 8.2 for all of Ontario.

Step 3 of Ontario's Reopening Plan takes effect on Friday, July 16, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., which allows many businesses and organizations to reopen and/or expand their services.

Employers will play an important role in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and promoting vaccines in their workplace. Local business and organization operators are asked to review the [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance for Employers](#) to learn more about the benefits of high vaccine coverage in their workplace, and what they can do to promote vaccine coverage at their workplace. Here are general public health measures applicable to all businesses and organizations that are open to the public:

- Employers must ensure that workers are actively screened daily, especially now that there are no longer requirements for workers to work from home.
- All businesses open to the public must post signage, in a conspicuous location, informing patrons how to screen themselves before entry, and some businesses will be required to conduct active screening for all patrons.
- All businesses open to the public must ensure patrons wear a face covering or mask in the indoor area with limited exceptions. Physical distancing must still be practiced.
- All businesses and organizations are required to develop and implement a COVID-19 safety plan.

- Persons responsible for a business or organization that is operating must ensure they educate themselves on the COVID-19 requirements and public health measures for their sector. If businesses have questions, they can reach out to the Stop the Spread line at 1-888-444-3659. For more information, persons responsible for a business or organization are encouraged to review the [O. Reg 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3](#) for requirements specific to their sector.

Julie Ingram, Manager, Environmental Health, reminded business owners that the provincial three-step reopening plan was designed to be cautious and gradual. “If a business is not prepared to implement all required measures, then they should scale back their reopening approach and take it gradually,” said Ms. Ingram.

For all individuals, requirements for face coverings and physical distancing remain in place. Members of the public are responsible for physical distancing from others and wearing a mask or face covering that covers their mouth, nose, and chin when they visit an indoor business or organization, or attending an indoor organized public event and are within two metres of others outside of their household. Residents must also be sure to maintain two metres of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household when attending an outdoor place of business or facility open to the public. In certain circumstances, masks and face coverings are now required outdoors, such as when attending food and drink establishments with outdoor dance facilities.

Other highlights of Step 3 include:

- Outdoor social gatherings and organized events with up to 100 people.
- Indoor social gatherings and organized events with up to 25 people.
- Indoor religious services, rites or ceremonies, including weddings and funerals, with capacity limited to ensure physical distancing.
- Indoor dining permitted with no limits on the number of patrons per table, with physical distancing between tables and other restrictions still in place.
- Buffet-style food service is permitted.
- Live entertainment is permitted but performers must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from spectators or are separated by an impermeable barrier.
- Indoor sports and recreational fitness facilities can open at 50% capacity. Indoor spectator capacity is limited to 50% or 1,000 people, whichever is less. Outdoor capacity is limited to 75% or 15,000 people, whichever is less.
- Personal care services, including services requiring the removal of a face covering are permitted, with capacity limited to the number of people who can maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.
- Museums, galleries, historic sites, aquariums, zoos, landmarks, botanical gardens, science centres, casinos/bingo halls, amusement parks, fairs and rural exhibitions, and festivals are permitted to open at 50% capacity indoors and 75% capacity outdoors.
- Indoor food or drink establishments where dance facilities are provided, including nightclubs, are open at 25% capacity or up to a maximum of 250 people, whichever is less.

As the majority of cases in the Peterborough area are due to the Delta variant, which is even more transmissible than the previously circulating Alpha variant, the need for high two-dose vaccine coverage is necessary to keep local case counts low. Due to the high levels of transmissibility associated with Variants of Concern, the Peterborough Interagency Vaccine Planning Team increased the local target from 75% to 80% for all eligible residents to be fully immunized by September 1, 2021. As of July 14, 54% of local residents aged 12 and up have received two doses.

For more information on vaccines, vaccination clinics and a summary of the new guidelines, please visit www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca.

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