

ORGANIZED INDOOR AND OUTDOOR EVENTS OR GATHERINGS CHECKLIST

SAFE RETURN TO BUSINESS



WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL
Chamber of Commerce

For more detailed recommendations and links to additional helpful resources, please review the **“Safe Return to Business: A Public Health Toolkit for the Windsor-Essex Business Community”** document from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. *This checklist is meant to be a guide for businesses and should not take place of any legal advice or rules put in place by any governing body or legislation.*

The following guidance is intended to help organizers and permit-holders of events and gatherings reduce the spread of COVID-19. Indoor and outdoor events/gatherings covered within this guidance include:

- All organized or spontaneous indoor and outdoor events and social gatherings (e.g. wedding receptions, parties, fundraisers, fairs, funeral receptions).
- Concerts and live shows, including performing arts events
- Meeting or event spaces
- Movie theatres/cinemas

Stay updated on the latest federal actions, current provincial restrictions, and local orders by visiting WECHU’s **Restrictions & Guidance webpage** and visit WECHU’s **Workplace Specific Webpage** to find other Safe Return to Business Checklists providing specific guidance to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

**This document is subject to change and is current as of September 22, 2020
Adapted with permission from Toronto Public Health.*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

- Provide pre-gathering/event communications to attendees to share information on protocols and expected behaviours. Encourage all attending to conduct a self assessment prior to attending. Those who are ill or symptomatic, should not attend the event/gathering.
- Encourage staff and event attendees to download the **COVID-19 Alert App** so that they may receive notifications if they were in close contact with someone who was tested positive for COVID-19.
- Post signage at entrances and throughout the building that clearly communicate procedures for physical distancing between staff and customers. This includes posters and floor markings such as instructional tape/stickers that direct the flow of people or customers

waiting for services (e.g., outdoor waiting areas). Examples of signage can be found in Appendix B in the [Toolkit](#) or the [Resources & Signage](#) section of the WECHU website.

- Post signage to communicate attendee procedures such as [hand sanitizing, cough and sneeze etiquette](#), wearing of cloth masks, and/or screening for symptoms.
- Ensure employees are aware of common [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and instruct them to complete a daily [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) and follow all recommendations before reporting to work. Ensure employees who are feeling ill do not report to work.
- Provide training to employees on effective [hand hygiene practices](#) and if required, the [proper way to put on and remove PPE](#) such as masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Create policies and procedures that outline roles and responsibilities of the employer and the employee, including [cleaning and disinfection of the workplace](#), how workers can report signs of illnesses, how to handle potentially high levels of employee absenteeism, staff return to work after COVID-19 illness, and how work will be scheduled.
- Create a response plan to handle an employee or customer who becomes ill while at work or at your event.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Provide hand sanitizer stations (minimum of 60% alcohol concentration) throughout the venue for staff and customer use.
- Monitor and refill hand hygiene supplies such as hand sanitizer, soap and paper towels in public areas and washroom facilities.
- Print and display posters describing proper methods of [hand washing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) at hand washing stations.
- If a building has been shut down for an extended period of time, it is important to perform a general building inspection that includes:
 - Security system checks.
 - First aid supply checks.
 - Ensuring all tools and equipment are in good working order.
 - Discarding any expired or spoiled inventory.
 - Checking for evidence of pest/rodent infestation such as droppings.
 - Checking the HVAC system to ensure it is in good working order and replace filters if necessary.
 - Flushing all drinking water taps for at least 5 minutes.
 - Performing a deep cleaning and disinfection throughout the business.

- Complete any needed modifications in areas where there will be staff and/or customers, to assist with physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection. For example:
 - Install Plexiglas barriers between workers who must work in close proximity to each other.
 - Replacing fabric/plush furniture with hard surfaces that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
 - Providing additional garbage bins for safe disposal of used PPE, tissues, and paper towels.
- Choose your information sources wisely. Check the [WECHU website](#) regularly for updates and helpful resources and bookmark official municipal, provincial and federal government websites.
- If required, order [supplies](#) including disposable masks for customers and disposable or reusable masks for staff. Medical masks should not be used as these are being conserved for health care workers. Print and display posters describing [proper usage](#).

PROVINCIAL ORDERS

Under the [Reopening Ontario Act – Stage 3 Orders](#), organized public events and gatherings are limited to a maximum of **50 members of the public/spectators indoors** and **100 members of the public/spectators outdoors** with the following restrictions:

- Indoor capacity limits apply to events that are fully or partially indoors. Indoor events and gatherings cannot be combined with an outdoor event or gathering to increase the applicable gathering size.
- The number of people permitted shall be limited so that every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person outside their household or social circle.
- All staff, performers, workers and others providing service for the event/gathering must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person, except:
 - if it is necessary for the performers to be closer to each other for the purposes of the performance or rehearsal;
 - where necessary to facilitate the purchase of admission, food or beverages; or
 - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
- Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any spectators by an impermeable barrier (e.g., Plexiglas) in both indoor and outdoor venues.
- The gathering limits and physical distancing requirements also apply to organized public events and social gatherings held within private dwellings.

Gathering Limit Exceptions

- Indoor gatherings for the purposes of religious services, rites or ceremonies, and wedding ceremonies or funeral services are limited to up to 30% of the venue's capacity.
 - Social gatherings associated with wedding, funeral or religious services, rites or ceremonies (e.g., receptions after these ceremonies) **must comply** with Stage 3 indoor and outdoor gathering limits.
- Cinemas may permit up to 50 customers per auditorium.

- Multi-purpose and large venues with multiple rooms (e.g., banquet halls, convention centres) may permit up to 50 people per room if there are separate entrances/exits and washrooms for each.
- Drive-in and drive-thru venues are not subject to gathering limits. Please review the [Drive-in Venues Checklist](#) for specific guidance.
- Operators of an live entertainment venues or adult only entertainment club, billiard hall, eating or drinking establishment, entertainment establishment/nightclub or place of amusement can review the [Live Entertainment Venues checklist](#) and/or the [Food Premises and Bars Checklist](#) for specific guidance.
- Festivals are strongly discouraged due to gathering limits and difficulty monitoring/restricting entry.

Additional information is provided in the [Events and Social Gatherings Quick Reference Guide](#) below.

SPECIAL EVENT INSPECTION APPLICATIONS & MUNICIPAL PERMITS

COVID-19 mitigation and safety measures are a new consideration as part of event permitting; however, **they do not replace any pre-existing municipal permit or inspection requirements.** Please visit the WECHU [Special Events](#) page for more information and links to the [Special Event/Market Organizer Application Form](#) and the [Special Event Food Vendor Application Form](#).

All planners, organizers, operators and permit-holders of events/gatherings, regardless of their purpose and size, have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with their event/gathering, and their ability to mitigate these risks. They are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who participate in their activities (e.g., staff, performers, volunteers, attendees). This includes management of lines or crowds at entrance and exit points and around the perimeter of the event space.

Provincial orders under the Reopening Ontario Act and/or guidance related to events and social gatherings may change. Please check the WECHU website regularly for updated guidance.

Events and Social Gatherings Quick Reference Guide		
Outdoor Events		
<p>Event with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 100 people. • Guests can mingle, and must maintain 2 metre distancing. • Wear a mask when physical distancing is difficult (e.g., going to the washrooms). • No dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g., dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. 	<p>Event with food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 100 people. • No more than 10 people per table with 2metre distancing if not from the same social circle. • Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave, place an order, pay for purchases or leave (maintain 2 metre distance). 	<p>Drive-in/thru event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No maximum. • Cars must be parked 2 metres from each other. • Can't leave the car except for using the washroom or to purchase food or drink.

<p>Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mingling or dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g., dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	
Indoor Events		
<p>Event with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 50 people. • Guests can mingle, and must maintain 2 metre distancing. • A mask must be worn at all times. • No dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g., dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Event with food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 50 people. *Movie theatres may allow 50 people per auditorium. • No more than 10 people per table with 2 metre distancing if not from the same social circle. • Stay seated at all times, except to use the washroom or leave. • No mingling or dancing among guests. • Performers (e.g., dancers, singers, musicians) can be hired. Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must perform behind a physical barrier. 	<p>Religious service, rite or ceremony in place of worship with NO food or drink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 30% of the room capacity, based on ability to physically distance. • No choir, singing, dancing or performers at this time.
All Events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing of two metres is required by all, unless from the same social circle. • Mask/face covering must be worn at all times indoors except when eating, and outdoors when physical distancing is challenging. • Staff and performers hired by the venue do not count towards gathering limits. 		

PLANNING A WEDDING

Your wedding must adhere to the current public health orders on gathering limits, with preference given to outdoor events to minimize the risk. These limits are:

- Outdoor gathering, up to 100 people
- Indoor gathering, up to 50 people, including receptions held at a restaurant
- Performers and staff do not count towards the gathering limits
- Religious services, rites and wedding ceremonies are limited to 30% of room capacity
- Indoor events cannot be combined with an outdoor event to increase gathering size
- For in-person events, arrange seating by social circles. A social circle has a limit of 10 people. A person cannot belong to more than one social circle. A social circle may interact with each another without physical distancing.

Face Mask Requirements

- It is strongly recommended that all individuals wear a face covering in all indoor spaces, public spaces and in outdoor spaces where physical distancing may be a challenge, except when eating. Note: The couple may remove their masks during the wedding ceremony.
- Local municipalities may have enacted by-laws in addition to the **Section 22 class order** issued by Windsor-Essex County's Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, mandating the use of face coverings in commercial establishments. **Refer to WECHU's 'Face Masks and Coverings' webpage or your local municipality's webpage for more information.**

Guests, Dancing, and Entertainment

- Avoid activities that allow guests to congregate or share items (e.g. photo booths).
- If hiring performers, they must maintain a 2 metre distance from each other and from guests, except if required for the performance.
- Singer or players of brass/wind instruments must perform behind a barrier (e.g. Plexiglas).
- Photographers/videographers must keep a 2 metre distance from others and wear a mask.
- Guests must remain seated at all times, including during the couple's dances, performances and speeches.
- Note: the couple's dance, and dances with their parents (e.g. father-daughter, mother-son) are permitted. However, dancing among guests is not permitted.

Food at the Reception

- Potluck, buffets, and self-serve food stations are not permitted.
- Do not share items such as utensils, salt/pepper shakers, water pitchers, or wine bottles.
- Family-style meals are not recommended at this time. Assign seating, keeping family households and social circles together.
- Guests are to remain seated during food service, except to use the washroom or to leave. Guests are not permitted to walk around to socialize.
- Guests may remove their mask when eating, but should put the mask back on when going to the washroom or when leaving

PLANNING A FUNERAL OR CELEBRATION OF LIFE

When planning for a funeral reception or celebration of life, all attendees must adhere to the current public health orders on gathering limits, with preference given to outdoor events to minimize the risk. These limits are:

- Outdoor gathering, up to 100 people
- Indoor gathering, up to 50 people, including receptions held at a restaurant
- Performers and staff do not count towards the gathering limits
- Religious services or rites are limited to 30% of room capacity
- Indoor events cannot be combined with an outdoor event to increase gathering size

- For in-person events, arrange seating by social circles. A social circle has a limit of 10 people. A person cannot belong to more than one social circle. A social circle can interact with each another without physical distancing.

Face Mask Requirements

- It is strongly recommended that all individuals wear a face covering in all indoor spaces, public spaces and in outdoor spaces where physical distancing may be a challenge, except when eating
- Local municipalities may have enacted by-laws in addition to the **Section 22 class order** issued by Windsor-Essex County's Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, mandating the use of face coverings in commercial establishments. **Refer to WECHU's 'Face Masks and Coverings' webpage or your local municipality's webpage for more information.**

Rituals and Cultural Practices

- Avoid close contact or sharing ceremonial objects or personal items among members of different households. Avoid activities that allow guests to congregate or share items.
- Consider hosting a memorial service virtually, or delay it for when public health measures are less restrictive, or when you can host it outdoors.
- Create a virtual memory book, blog, or webpage for family and friends to share memories, photos or messages of support.
- Seek guidance from a funeral director, if applicable.
- If food is offered at a reception, serve individual plates. Avoid potluck, buffet or family-style meals. Do not share food or utensils.
- In some cultures, bringing gifts and food is an expression of care. Keep a physical distance of at least 2 metres when delivering food or gifts, or consider sending gift cards with contactless food delivery services.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- As per provincial regulations, the person responsible for the establishment must:
 - Record the name and contact information of every patron who enters the establishment (for indoor and/or outdoor events).
 - Although it is highly recommended to collect contact information from every patron, as of August 21, 2020, dining establishments only need contact information for one person in a group/party with some exceptions.
 - Maintain the records for a period of at least one month (30 days)
 - 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

- Records should also be kept of workers assigned to specific events and rooms, if the establishment has event spaces with multiple events at once.
- The person responsible for the establishment that is open to the public shall limit the number of persons in the establishment so that every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility, except where **Schedule 2** allows persons to be closer together.
- Ensure staff practice physical distancing during breaks.
- Physical distancing of two metres between patrons from different households or social circles also continues to apply.
- Nightclubs are not safe to open, except for the purpose of serving food or drinks to patrons in accordance with the same rules that apply to restaurants and bars.

Masks or Face Coverings

- Staff or employees who interact with customers or work in an area where customers have access must wear masks or face coverings. Face coverings must also be worn where no barrier exist and a physical distance of at least two metres cannot be maintained between co-workers.
- Masks or face coverings are required to be worn by all patrons during indoor events, except while actively consuming food or drink. A face covering must be worn when an individual leaves their seat to visit the washroom and for any other purpose.
- Masks or face coverings are strongly recommended outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Refer to WECHU's 'Face Masks and Coverings' webpage or your local municipality's webpage for more information.**

Tickets and Concession

- Provide alternative options for event attendees to purchase tickets and concessions online and/or by telephone service in advance of the event.
- Consider accepting only contactless payment options (e.g., debit/credit card, smartphone, smartwatch) instead of using a PIN pad and avoid accepting cash whenever possible.
 - Install physical barriers (e.g., Plexiglas) at the point of sale or wherever there are likely to be customer and staff interactions.
- Concession stands may be accessed in-person with the following restrictions:
 - Those who access concessions in person must stand two metres apart while waiting to be served, and must immediately return to their vehicle after being served.
 - Refer to WECHU's **Checklist for Food Premises and Bars** for more information for food premises operators about food safety considerations related to COVID-19 (e.g., flow of customers, access to condiments, cutlery, re-usable food service items).

Indoor Events

- The event should avoid allowing additional guests into the space. Once a guest leaves the event, the facility should not allow entry of a new guest to that event (i.e., no sharing passes between guests).
- Access to the facility should only be permitted to registered guests attending the event, security, workers, and the event organizer.
- The need to access a room through other rooms that are not part of the same event should be limited or minimized. This should be monitored by facility staff and security.
- Designate workers to oversee the physical distancing and line-ups of guests prior to entering the facility, inside common areas such as lobbies, washroom facilities, hallways, elevators.
- Encourage guests to arrive no more than 15 minutes before the event starts, while making provisions (e.g., limited common seating) for individuals with mobility issues that are 2 metres apart and cleaned after each use. If guests are waiting outside or are in line, 2 metre distances should be marked and maintained.
- Ensure that guests can access their event area without wandering (i.e., entering other events, meeting rooms, areas) and, if possible, use a dedicated entrance/exit propped open by an automated or manual method by the facility.
- Elevator occupancy should be limited to allow for physical distancing to be maintained. All high touch elevator surfaces should be sanitized frequently.
- Escalators should have signage explaining current procedures to ensure safety including appropriate physical distancing while in use and handrails should be sanitized frequently.
- Arranging washrooms to facilitate physical distancing while in use, including blocking off alternate sinks, stalls, urinals, and other amenities. Specific washrooms should be designated for specific events where there is an ability to do so (i.e., avoid having people from different events be in the same washroom at the same time). Hand dryers should not be used.

Live Performers/Live Adult Entertainment

- Please review the [Live Entertainment Venues Checklist](#) for additional guidance.
- The total number of customers permitted to be in the venue at any one time if an establishment is having performers must be no more than **50 customers indoors or 100 customers outdoors**. These numbers exclude the staff at the venue.
- A person or group under contract with the establishment may dance, sing, or perform music in compliance with the requirements set out in [section 11](#).
- While dancing is not permitted by the general public, they may sing or perform music at the establishment if:
 - They are not singing or performing music in a private karaoke room.
 - They are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by Plexiglas or some other impermeable barrier while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument.

- They maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while singing or performing music; and,
- Any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music must be cleaned and disinfected between each use.

REFERENCES

Government of Ontario

**Ontario Regulation 364/20 made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act:
Rules For Areas in Stage 3**

Toronto Public Health

COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor and Outdoor Events & Gatherings