

August 14, 2020

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES THAT PRIMARILY SELL FOOD, BEVERAGES AND CONSUMER PRODUCTS

By law, businesses that primarily sell food, beverages and consumer products necessary to maintain households and businesses can remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These businesses include: **supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores (including gas stations), discount and big box retailers selling groceries, and restaurants.**

In accordance with the regulations made under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#), Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPE Public Health) requires additional prevention measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

General Requirements

- Post [Attention Visitors!](#) signs ([French version](#)) at all public and staff entrances directing those who are sick not to enter.
- Provide portable handwash station or hand sanitizer at the facility entrance.
- Wipe down the carts/baskets with a disinfectant between each customer or provide disinfectant wipes for the customers to wipe the cart/basket.
- Limit the number of customers within the facility based on the design of the establishment.
- Maintain [physical distancing](#) of 2 metres (6 feet) between people within the store/facility (e.g. line up at the cash by placing tape on the floor 2 metres (6 feet) apart, use a shopping cart or other barrier around employees when restocking, one-way direction in the aisles, plexiglass barrier guards at registers, etc.).
- Where available, provide frequent reminders over the PA system to customers and employees regarding physical distancing (2 metres/6 feet) and any other key messaging (e.g. sanitizing hands at entrance, stay home if feeling ill, no gathering/crowding in one area, ensure 2 metres/6 feet apart in line-ups, etc.).
- Designate the first hour of opening to vulnerable populations (i.e. seniors, and immunocompromised individuals).
- Food samples can be provided to customers provided proper precautions are being followed:
 - Staff providing samples or beverages must wear a mask.

North Hastings

1P Manor Ln., L1-024, PO Box 99, Bancroft, ON K0L 1C0
T: 1-800-267-2803 | **F:** 613-332-5418

Prince Edward County

Suite 1, 35 Bridge St., Picton, ON K0K 2T0
T: 613-966-5500 | **F:** 613-476-2919

Quinte West

499 Dundas St. W., Trenton, ON K8V 6C4
T: 613-966-5500 | **F:** 613-965-6535

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- Additions to beverages (such as cream, sweetener and/or sugar) must be added by staff, not the customer.
 - All food handling must occur by the designated staff member and not by customers.
 - Minimize potential contamination by avoiding direct hand contact with any foods or portions of containers that may touch a person's mouth.
 - A temporary hand wash station (with running water, liquid soap, paper towels and a waste water receptacle) may be required within the vendor booth, in addition to an effective hand sanitizer, depending on the types of foods being served.
 - If possible, pre-package samples.
 - Product returns should be set aside for 72 hours before being returned to the shelves.
 - Where available, offer online or telephone food and grocery orders with delivery or pick up services as alternatives to shopping in person.

Cleaning and Disinfection Requirements

- Limit store hours to ensure proper [cleaning and disinfection](#) of all areas of the facility.
- Clean and disinfect debit machines after each customer.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and equipment frequently (e.g. handles on freezer/cooler doors, produce carts, conveyor belts at cash, touch screen surfaces, counters, conveyor belts, etc.).
- Avoid using grocery dividers at cash; otherwise clean and disinfect these after each use.
- Washrooms provided for employees and customers should be frequently cleaned and disinfected (including garbage removal). Facilities must be cleaned and disinfected as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.

III Staff and Customer Requirements

- Station staff at the door and actively screen customers entering the premises for COVID-19 illness.
- As part of active screening at the door, refuse entry to any ill persons who voluntarily report any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - New or worsening cough
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Nasal congestion
 - Chest tightness
 - Chills
 - Muscle aches
 - Fatigue
 - Headache

- Sore throat
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- Actively screen staff by asking if they have any of the above symptoms.
- Actively screen staff at start of each shift, and periodically during all shifts.
- All ill staff must stay away from work, whether or not they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Ill staff reporting the above symptoms must call HPE Public Health immediately at 1-800-267-2803 or 613-966-5500.
- For questions on home isolation or COVID-19, please visit hpePublicHealth.ca.

Requirements for Handwashing, Single-use Gloves, and use of Personal Face Coverings

- [Proper handwashing](#) is the best method to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Ensure increased handwashing by staff: staff must wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Non-food handlers can [use alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) if their hands aren't visibly soiled.
- Staff must avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Staff must cough or sneeze into their sleeve or arm, then immediately wash their hands.
- Staff must avoid close contact with others as much as possible: keep a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) between people.
- If glove use is chosen, gloves must be changed every hour, or more often as necessary, and hands are to be washed and/or sanitized between changes.
- Gloves must be removed when leaving the cash or changing tasks.
- When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time. A box of disposable single-use gloves must be supplied at each cash.
- Follow current instructions on face coverings issued by the Acting/Medical Officer of Health for HPE Public Health, available at hpePublicHealth.ca.

Additional Requirements for Restaurants

- Effective July 31, 2020, provincial regulations specify that customers must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except,
 - i. while entering the area and while moving to their table,
 - ii. while placing or picking up an order,
 - iii. while paying for an order,
 - iv. while exiting the area,
 - v. while going to or returning from a washroom,
 - vi. while lining up to do anything described in subparagraphs i to v, or
 - vii. where necessary for the purposes of health and safety.

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- Effective August 7, 2020, provincial regulations specify that the person responsible for the establishment must,
 - i. record the name and contact information of every patron who enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, other than customers who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order,
 - ii. maintain the records for a period of at least one month, and
 - iii. only disclose the records to a medical officer of health or an inspector under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that HPPA or as otherwise required by law.

Compliance and Enforcement

Non-compliance with these requirements may result in warnings, charges and fines under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. Penalties may be up to \$100,000 per person (per day), one year in jail, up to \$500,000 for the officer or director of a corporation, or up to \$10,000,000 for a corporation.

If you have any questions, or are not able to follow the requirements listed above, contact your Public Health Inspector at 1-800-267-2803 or 613-966-5500 ext. 677 to discuss alternate options to reduce the potential risks to your staff and customers.

References

1. These recommendations have been adapted from Durham Region Health Department [Facts About Grocery Stores & Pharmacies During COVID-19 Pandemic](#), April 1, 2020