

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES (INCLUDING SKI HILLS AND TRAILS) – GREY LOCKDOWN

Last revised: March 1, 2021

This guidance document is intended to provide public health guidance and regulatory requirements for outdoor recreational amenities (including downhill ski hills and snow tubing hills) as well as municipalities, businesses and community groups who operate snowmobile, cross country ski, dogsledding, and snow shoe trails in the County of Simcoe and the District of Muskoka to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Due to the developing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial regulatory response, the guidance contained within this document is focused on stage 1 requirements for operation under [Ontario Regulation 82/20](#) as per the Province of Ontario's [COVID-19 response framework: keeping Ontario safe and open](#).

Effective on Monday March 1, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) will be identified as a Stage 1 health unit in the Grey-Lockdown zone of the Ontario's [COVID-19 response framework](#); therefore is subject to the regulations contained in [Ontario Regulation 82/20](#). Ski and snow sport operations including trails for snowmobiling, cross country skiing, dog sledding and snowshoeing, are designated in this Regulation as “outdoor recreational amenities” and as such have a responsibility to implement the legal requirements related to this designation as well as broader requirements within the same regulation for businesses in stage 1. This document also refers to the Province of Ontario's public health recommendations contained in “[Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)” as applicable.

Outdoor recreational amenities must follow the [instructions](#) from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Setting	Requirements
Outdoors (including lineups, chairlifts, outdoor equipment rental, outdoor washroom facilities and outdoor food and beverage service)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained at all times unless other persons are members of a single household. Any person in line at the outdoor recreational amenity, including a line for a ski lift or a surface lift, must wear a mask or face covering that is tightly fitted to cover their mouth, nose and chin during the time they are in the line (see exceptions for masking, below). Tour operations are not permitted
Outdoor vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any person, including a person who performs work at the amenity, while driving or riding on an open air vehicle within the amenity, must wear a mask or face covering in a manner that is tightly fitted to cover their mouth, nose and chin unless all persons driving or riding on the vehicle are members of a single household (see exceptions for masking, below).
Outdoor classes, organized programs and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor classes, organized programs and activities cannot proceed in Grey-Lockdown.
Chairlifts and surface lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any person using a downhill ski lift, including a surface lift, must wear a mask or face covering that is tightly fitted to cover their mouth, nose and chin unless all other persons using the ski lift are members of a single household. Physical distancing is not required for the following where masks or face coverings are in use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons using the ski lift are members of a single household Persons using a downhill ski lift that is a surface lift Persons using a ski lift chair if at least one empty seat is left between any persons who are not members of a single household Physical distancing is not required for Parasport participants and their attendants or guides.

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<p>Indoors (this includes work vehicles, enclosed warming stations, all workplace buildings and washrooms)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure physical distancing 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained at all times unless other persons are members of a single household. • Employees, volunteers and members of the public are required to wear non-medical masks or face coverings when indoors (see exceptions for masking, below). • The person responsible for a place of business or facility that is open to the public shall limit the number of members of the public in the place of business or facility so that, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from every other person in the business or facility; and b) the maximum number of members of the public in the business or facility at any one time does not exceed 50% capacity, as determined by taking the total square metres of floor area accessible to the public in the business or facility, not including shelving and store fixtures, dividing that number by 8 and rounding the result down to the nearest whole number. • The person responsible for a place of business or facility that engages in retail sales to the public must post a sign in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity they are permitted to operate under.
<p>Indoor Food Premises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEW: May open only for the purpose of providing take-out, drive-through or delivery service. • When providing delivery/take-out, ensure physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained at all times unless other persons are members of a single household. • Non-medical masks or face coverings that are tightly fitted to cover their mouth, nose and chin are required at all times (see exceptions for masking, below). • Post signage to promote wearing face coverings, self-screening and maintaining physical distancing. Sample signage can be found here.
<p>Gathering limits for organized public events and social gatherings (including team sports & tournaments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice and playing of team sports is prohibited including tournaments. • For outdoor organized public events that are not related to a sporting event (e.g. media event, entertainment, etc.) the gathering limit is 10 people. Outdoor social gatherings are likewise limited to 10 people. • Indoor organized public events and social gatherings are prohibited. • SMDHU recommends canceling or postponing all non-essential public events (e.g. meetings, dinners, communal services), particularly if they include people who are more vulnerable to the virus, such as the elderly or those who are immunocompromised.
<p>Locker rooms, change rooms, showers and clubhouses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All closed, except to the extent they provide access to equipment storage, a washroom or a portion of the amenity that is used to provide first aid.

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EXCEPTIONS FOR MASKING

- i. children younger than two years of age,
- ii. person who has a medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering,
- iii. person who is unable to put on or remove their mask or face covering without the assistance of another person,
- iv. person who needs to temporarily remove their mask or face covering as may be necessary for the purposes of health and safety,
- v. person who is being accommodated in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, or
- vi. person who is being reasonably accommodated in accordance with the *Human Rights Code*.

COMMUNICATE PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS TO ATTENDEES AND VOLUNTEERS BEFORE COMING TO THE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITY

- Encourage attendees and volunteers to conduct a [self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms](#) before attending an outdoor recreational amenity and remind them to stay home if they have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), seek testing and [self-isolate](#).
- Encourage attendees and volunteers to maintain a 2 metre (6 feet) distance from those they don't live with, when possible, and to wear a mask or a [face covering](#) outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Post signage to reinforce these messages. Sample signs can be found [here](#).
- Encourage attendees and volunteers to [wash their hands](#) frequently and/or use an [alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) with minimum 60% alcohol content and to practice proper [cough/sneeze etiquette](#). Post signage to reinforce these messages, such as the samples linked.
- Remind attendees and community volunteers that it is mandatory to wear a mask or a face covering in all indoor public spaces.
- Limit the volume of music to be no louder than the volume of a normal conversation.
- Post a [Safety Plan](#) in a conspicuous location for settings where this is required.

LIMIT ATTENDANCE AND ENSURE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- It is recommended that outdoor recreational amenities implement capacity control measures (i.e. parking lot monitoring, booking times, online reservations, gathering limits per day, etc.) to ensure that outdoor attendance does not overwhelm indoor facilities which could result in indoor gathering limits exceeding the regulated gathering limits.
- Physical distancing means keeping a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from those you don't live with.
- Plan and modify the layout of trails and outdoor areas to ensure enough space is provided for employees, volunteers and attendees to maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Ensure sufficient space during breaks and within the lunchroom(s) that allows for appropriate physical distancing of at least 2 meters (6 feet) between volunteers and staff. Consider staggering break times to prevent overcrowding or individuals from grouping together.
- Using visual cues (e.g., signs, posters, floor markings, stanchions, etc.) to guide patrons from outside to throughout the facility (including hallways, common areas) to exit. Recommendation for routing people through the facility are outlined in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#).
- Develop procedures that allow for uncongested entry and exit (e.g., dedicated one-way entry and exit pathway for each activity area).

SAFETY PLAN

- Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 82/20, the person responsible for a business, place, facility or establishment that is open shall prepare and make available a [safety plan](#) that outlines all public health measures and is posted in a conspicuous place where it is most likely to come to the attention of individuals working in or attending the location.
- The safety plan shall describe the implementation in the location including by screening, physical distancing, masks or face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, and the wearing of personal protective equipment.
- For more information on preparing your safety plan, please see provincial guidance called "[Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan](#)", as well as [SMDHU guidance](#).

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SCREENING, RECORD-KEEPING AND RESERVATIONS

- All staff must be actively screened prior to attending work. Please see the [instructions](#) from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Medical Officer of Health for direction on screening employees and volunteers.
- It is recommended that active screening occur for all persons who attend the facility including guests, staff, and contractors, and keep related records for a period of 30 days. See screening section of [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#).
- It is recommended that all visitors and members are required to make a reservation.

MUSIC

- Music must not be played at a decibel level that exceeds the level at which normal conversation is possible.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Disinfection recommendations for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities are set out in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for health and safety* and specific instructions.

- Any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of users of the facility must be [cleaned and disinfected](#) between each use.
- Activities that require the use of equipment or fixed structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between each use must not be practised or played within the facility.

HAND HYGIENE, PUBLIC WASHROOMS & WASTE RECEPTACLES

- Post [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) posters in high traffic areas.
- Encourage proper [cough etiquette](#) and individuals to perform [hand hygiene](#) when entering and leaving rooms within the facility.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol content available at entrances and exits.
- Follow [Public Health Guidance for Use of Public Washrooms](#) for important information about requirements for safety and cleaning precautions.
- Provide sufficient numbers of garbage receptacles for attendees to dispose of used sanitizing wipes, masks, gloves, and other waste properly.

DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS

- Private drinking water supplies must be sampled ahead of opening, with samples sent to a private [licensed laboratory](#) and operators continuing to sample throughout the operating season in accordance with drinking water regulations.
- Small Drinking Water System (SDWS) operators must provide specific information to the SMDHU Medical Officer of Health in writing before reopening after a 60 day closure, or alter the construction, installation, alteration, or extension of the SDWS. To comply with these requirements, owners/operators must complete and submit the [SDWS notice and designation form](#).
- Limit the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from them. Sample signage can be found [here](#).

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SYMPTOMATIC PATRONS AND STAFF

Recommendations for symptomatic patrons or workers are set out in the Province of Ontario's [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#) -- see the section entitled *Recommendations for symptomatic patrons or workers* and specific instructions including:

1. *Patrons or workers who become unwell while at the facility should be instructed to immediately self-isolate and separate themselves from others. They should be told to go home immediately (if possible, with private transportation, avoiding taxis, ride shares, and public transit) and encouraged to get tested. [Information about assessment centres can be found here](#). If they have questions related to COVID-19, they should contact their primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) or visit Ontario's [COVID-19 website](#).*
2. *Workers who become unwell while at work should notify their supervisor immediately.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To assist outdoor recreational amenities with policy development and review, resources in addition to Ontario Regulation 82/20 are provided below to ensure your procedures incorporate necessary control measures to help prevent transmission of COVID-19.

- [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#)
- Face covering [FAQ](#), [signage](#), and [Do's and Don'ts of Wearing a Face Covering](#)
- Hand hygiene factsheets ([hand washing](#) and [alcohol based hand rub](#))
- PHO [cleaning and disinfecting](#) factsheet
- [Guide for Developing your Workplace COVID Plan](#)
- Provincial [resources for workplaces](#)
- Training video for staff training [how to wear a mask](#)

Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit if you have any questions at 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

REFERENCES

- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2020) *Risk mitigation tool for outdoor recreation spaces and activities operating during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-mitigation-tool-outdoor-recreation-spaces-activities-operating-covid-19.html>
- Government of Ontario. (2020). *Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational activities during COVID-19*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guidance-facilities-sports-and-recreational-fitness-activities-during-covid-19>
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. (2020). *Public Health Guidance for Use of Public Washrooms*. Retrieved from: http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-/public-washrooms-guidance-document_aodaweb.pdf?sfvrsn=