

Frequently Asked Questions: Reopening of Restaurant Patios

How many people can sit at a patio table?

No more than 10 people are permitted per table in accordance with the [provincial emergency order](#) that limits social gathering and social circles to 10 people. Tables must be separated from each other by at least 2m (6ft).

If someone does not finish their bottle of wine can they take it home?

According to the [Alcohol Gaming Commission of Ontario \(AGCO\)](#), liquor sales licensees have the option to reseal a partially consumed bottle of commercially made wine so that patrons can take it home instead of trying to finish the entire bottle before they leave. An employee of the licensed establishment must reseal the bottle with a cork that is inserted flush with the top of the bottle so that it cannot be reopened and consumed while in transit. For more information, see the [AGCO's Take Home the Rest Fact Sheet](#). Please note, this only applies to commercially made wine.

What PPE should servers be wearing?

As outlined in the [Workplace Safety and Prevention Services Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Services, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#), workers must use protective equipment as required by their employer. If physical distance and separation cannot be maintained while at work, employees should be provided with personal protective equipment including a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (face shield or goggles).

If the patio is busy, and it starts to rain, can patrons come inside if they are spread out?

Currently, dining is only permitted in outdoor areas. Customer access to indoor facilities is only permitted for food pickup, payment, use of restrooms and other health and safety purposes. For more information see: [Places that can open in Stage 2: Restaurants & Bars](#).

Are there written guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting washroom facilities?

Please refer to the guidelines below. A fact sheet containing these recommendations is currently under development.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- In addition to routine cleaning, [clean and disinfect](#) surfaces that have frequent contact with hands twice per day and when visibly dirty.
- Use disinfectants that have a [Drug Identification Number \(DIN\)](#), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Monitor cleaning frequency by having staff maintain a record.

Washroom supplies

- Ensure washrooms supplies are maintained, including hot and cold water, soap in dispensers, paper towels and toilet paper.
- Ensure portable toilet supplies are maintained, including toilet paper and alcohol-based (60-90% alcohol) hand rub.
- Use paper towel dispensers instead of hand dryers in situations where hands-free taps are not available in order to prevent recontamination of hands when turning off taps.

Waste disposal

- Provide waste bins that visitors do not have to touch when disposing of waste items.

Handwashing

- Post hand-washing signs at the sink areas.
- If hand sanitizer dispensers are provided (in addition to hand wash sinks/supplies), they must be alcohol based (with greater than 60% alcohol).

Ventilation

- Encourage the entry of fresh air by opening doors and windows.
- Where appropriate, prop the door open to reduce touching of door handle upon entry/exit.

Are customers required to wear face coverings/masks?

It is recommended that people wear non-medical masks or face coverings in situations where physical distancing is a challenge, however, if they are with people in their social circle, physical distancing and non-medical masks are not needed. Masks cannot be reasonably requested while eating.

Is there a capacity restriction for patios?

Tables must be separated by at least 2m (6 feet) to allow for adequate physical distancing and movement. According to the AGCO, the capacity of any new patio, or extended patio space where the operator has an existing licensed patio, must not exceed 1.11 square metres per person.

Who determines hours of operation?

Establishments can determine their own hours of operation.

What is the preferred method of payment?

It is recommended but not required to use contactless forms of payment. Please consider equity, as not everyone has access to credit or debit cards.

Can separators/barriers/plexiglas be used between tables to reduce need to social distance?

The [province has outlined](#) that patrons must be served at an outdoor dining area that is in or adjacent to the place of business and is configured to ensure physical distancing of at least two metres between patrons seated at different tables. Licensed establishments however, may create a patio adjacent to their premises or increase the size of their patio. This temporary measure will allow the public to safely enjoy service that meets social distancing requirements and other public health guidelines.

Will fencing or barriers be needed to increase patio capacity outside as within the prescribed areas on our present licence?

[According to the ACGO](#), the requirement for licensed service area boundaries to be defined by at least a 0.9 metre partition has been removed. Licensees must continue to ensure that all licensed areas are readily distinguishable from areas to which the licence does not apply. This change will remain in effect beyond the COVID-19 recovery period.

Liquor sales licensees who wish to temporarily extend the physical size of their existing licensed patio or to temporarily add a new licensed patio within the approved period, are authorized to do so, if the following criteria are met:

1. The physical extension of the premises is adjacent to the premises to which the licence to sell liquor applies;
2. The municipality in which the premises is situated has indicated it does not object to an extension;
3. The licensee is able to demonstrate sufficient control over the physical extension of the premises;
4. There is no condition on the liquor sales licence prohibiting a patio; and,
5. The capacity of any new patio, or extended patio space where the licensee has an existing licensed patio, does not exceed 1.11 square metres per person.