

COVID-19

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE & EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS

This document has been developed to help support and protect staff, volunteers and patrons in the operation of emergency food programs such as food banks, food drives and food hampers. If you are organizing an event or have further questions, more information is available in the following locations:

- For current updates on COVID-19: <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/>
- For workplace/municipal supports: <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/workplaces/>
- Contact Lambton Public Health at 1-800-667-1839 or CovidInquiries@county-lambton.on.ca

All organizations must be familiar with the measures and restrictions associated with the current level of response in Lambton County, available at the Government of Ontario's [COVID-19 website](#). This guidance is intended to provide additional clarity and recommendations.

Infection Prevention and Control Strategies

- Prepare and make available a [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#). Post the plan in a conspicuous location.
- Persons responsible for a business or organization shall ensure that any person in the indoor area of the premises or in a vehicle that is operating as part of the business or organization, **wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area.** [Exemptions](#) may apply, [details are available](#) on face coverings and masks.
- It is the employer's responsibility to take reasonable precautions to protect a worker. All businesses that are operating must have a written safety plan. Learn how you can create a plan to help protect your workers and others from novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) by reviewing the Ontario Government's [workplace safety planning resources](#).
- Organizations must follow public health recommendations on screening individuals as indicated on the [provincial website](#):
 - Workers must be screened before entering the work environment: [COVID-19 19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#)
 - Actively screen dine-in patrons before they enter the premises. For active screening, use the [Provincial Customer Service Screening Tool](#) if conducting the screening in-person, or use the [Online Screening Tool](#).

- Patrons that temporarily enter the establishment (e.g. picking up a takeout meal) must, at minimum, be *passively* screened (i.e. [post signs](#) at all entrances to inform people to self-screen themselves for COVID-19 before entry). However it is encouraged to *actively* screen patrons using the [COVID-19 customer screening tool](#).
- Patrons and staff should be advised to practice good [hand hygiene](#) (frequent hand washing or alcohol-based hand sanitizer). Glove use does not replace hand washing. Ensure hands are washed before and after handling food, using the bathroom, changing tasks, etc. Gloves are to be replaced/changed at this time as well.
- Ensure hand washing sinks and/or hand sanitizers (with a minimum of 60% alcohol) are available at all entrances.
- Encourage and support attendees, staff or volunteers with staying up to date with developments related to COVID-19. Notify everyone of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained on COVID-19 and preventive measures to take to reduce the risk. Training resources and supports can be found [here](#).
- To support public health contact tracing efforts, organizers should consider collecting the names and contact information of volunteers and patrons present. This information should be retained for 30 days. Please note, **if seated events occur where patrons stay to have meals (when permissible by legislation), patron contact information is required**. Only disclose the records to Lambton Public Health upon request to support case and contact management.
- Patrons and staff should be advised to practice [physical distancing](#) of at least 2 metres from each other at all times and in accordance with the current [COVID-19 restrictions on gathering limits](#). This can be facilitated by limiting gathering through the physical spacing of furniture and adding floor markings indicating where to stand, wait in line and walk through the facility.
- All staff, volunteers and patrons are required to wear masks indoors in publicly accessible areas, in work vehicles or vehicles operating as part of the organization, and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. Masks are not required (however are still recommended) in staff-only areas **if physical distancing of at least 2 metres can be maintained**. [Exemptions may apply](#). Consider providing masks upon entry.
- In indoor areas, workers and volunteers must wear a mask or face covering *as well as* eye protection when providing a service at least 2 metres from a person that is not wearing a face covering.
- If seated meals are provided, ensure patrons seated at different tables are separated by, at least 2 metres spacing, or plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
 - If meals are consumed indoors, masks may be temporarily removed when consuming food/drink.
- The total number of patrons permitted to be seated at the establishment, whether indoors or outdoors, must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from every other person at the establishment.

- Signage must be posted in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity they are permitted to operate under.
- Attendees should be advised not to share food, drinks, or other items.
- Consider offering disposable containers, cutlery and cups. These items should be discarded after use in a non-touch waste receptacle.
- For meal delivery programs, consider meal drop-off at the door and avoid close contact.
- Post [COVID-19 signage](#) to support these measures.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Businesses are still required to clean and disinfect as frequently as necessary to maintain sanitary condition. Learn more information refer to the [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 \(Schedule 1 Section 7\)](#). For any frequently touched surfaces, it is recommended they be [cleaned and disinfected](#) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.

Receiving, Packaging and Giving Donations

Evidence indicates that COVID-19 transmission through contact with food products is relatively low; however, efforts should be made to reduce transmission risk when receiving donations:

- Wash or sanitize hands before and after receiving donations onsite and when picking them up in the community.
- If donations are being picked up, maintain physical distancing and ask for donations to be placed outside for pick up.
- Make hand sanitizer available for donor use before donations are transferred at your program.
- When considering the risk of COVID-19 transmission the safest donations to receive are the following:
 - Donated money for the purchase of food items directly from a grocery store.
 - Donated low risk pre-packaged food such as baked goods, canned goods, uncut fruit and vegetables.
- When picking up or dropping off donations, it is safer for volunteers to travel in a vehicle with those from their household.
- When receiving and packaging donations, staff and volunteers must adhere to public health measures such as physical distancing of at least 2 metres, wearing a mask, use proper hand hygiene and cough & sneeze etiquette, and limiting the number of people in a space.

RESOURCES:

- [Guidelines for Food Donation - Lambton Public Health](#)
- Public Health Ontario: [Multilingual COVID-19 Resources](#)