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## Federal:

**January 12, 2021** - The COVID-19 travel restrictions in place at the Canada-U.S. land border are being extended another month and will now remain in effect until February 21, 2021.

**January 4, 2021** - The Government of Canada has announced that as of January 7, 2021, all air travellers over age five (including Canadians and Permanent Residents) will be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test result prior to entering Canada. Specifically, air travellers must provide a negative polymerase chain reaction (“PCR”) test result, taken within the 72-hour period before boarding a flight to Canada. This new entry requirement is an addition to the current entry requirements which include:

- Submitting an ArriveCan application via the app/website prior to boarding;
- Using the ArriveCan application post-arrival for mandatory reporting; and
- Remaining in quarantine for at least 14 days upon arrival to Canada.

Travellers unable to take a PCR test before flying will not be able to fly to Canada. Rather, they will need to delay their trip until they can provide a negative test result. The only exception is if the traveller can demonstrate that they are travelling from a country where PCR testing is not available. In this instance, they may be able to board their flight, but once in Canada will be immediately directed to federally approved quarantine facilities where they will remain for the duration of their 14-day quarantine.

**December 23, 2020** - Health Canada has completed their review of the Moderna vaccine and found it to be safe and effective. We now have the green light to start rolling it out across the country.

The federal government has extended the temporary suspension of passenger flights from the U.K. to Canada for another two weeks—until January 6—to prevent this new variant of COVID-19 from spreading in Canada.

**December 11, 2020** - The COVID-19 travel restrictions in place at the Canada-U.S. land border are being extended another month and will now remain in effect until Jan. 21, 2021.

**December 9, 2020** - Health Canada has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in this country. It is a critical moment in Canada’s fight against the novel coronavirus, as it is the first vaccine to receive the green light.

**December 7, 2020** - Canada has secured an agreement with Pfizer to begin early delivery of doses of their vaccine candidate. Canada is now contracted to receive up to 249,000 of the initial doses of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine in the month of December. Pending Health Canada approval, the first shipment of doses is tracking for delivery next week. Shipments will continue to arrive into 2021, with millions of doses on the way. This will move Canada forward on the timeline of vaccine rollout and is a

positive development in getting Canadians protected as soon as possible. Pfizer, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the provinces and territories, are working together to finalize preparations at the first 14 vaccination sites this week. The regulatory process is ongoing and experts are working around the clock. Canada also has agreements with six other vaccine candidates, making the range of potential vaccines the broadest and most diverse in the world. In addition to Pfizer-BioNTech, there are also Moderna, AstraZeneca-Oxford, and Johnson & Johnson who have already submitted their vaccine candidates to Health Canada. The government is working hard to ensure that Canadians have access to a safe and secure vaccine as soon as possible, as soon as the doses are ready.

**November 30, 2020** - The federal government has unveiled a new round of financial supports to respond to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. The economic update includes a series of new measures building on the federal government's ongoing response which has included a suite of emergency response aid programs, the support for local community organizations on the front lines, and the \$19.9-billion safe restart package sent to provinces.

The federal government has announced plans to spend more on COVID-19 testing, vaccines, self-isolation support, and procuring personal protective equipment, reduce the cost of face shields and face masks for Canadians by removing sales taxes, and improve ventilation in public buildings. Some specific announcements are highlighted below:

- The government is proposing to increase the maximum employer wage subsidy rate to 75 per cent for the period beginning December 20, 2020 and to extend this rate until March 13, 2021, to provide greater certainty to employers. The government will continue to monitor health and economic conditions to determine details for subsequent periods.
- To provide greater certainty to businesses and other organizations, the government is proposing to extend the current subsidy rates of the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy for an additional three periods. This means a base subsidy rate of up to 65 per cent will be available on eligible expenses until March 13, 2021. This would ensure that businesses and other organizations continue to have the support they need through the second wave of the pandemic and the winter.
- To simplify the process for both taxpayers and businesses, the CRA will allow employees working from home in 2020 due to COVID-19 with modest expenses to claim up to \$400, based on the amount of time working from home, without the need to track detailed expenses, and will generally not request that people provide a signed form from their employers. This measure will help taxpayers access deductions they are entitled to receive and simplify the tax filing process. Further detail will be communicated by the CRA in the coming weeks.

Further details on this financial update can be found here: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/fes-eea/2020/report-rapport/toc-tdm-en.html>

**November 20, 2020** – The Prime Minister announced that the Canada USA border closure has been extended to Dec 21, 2020.

**November 19, 2020** - Starting November 21, 2020, all travellers (including Canadian citizens and permanent residents), whose destination is Canada, are required to provide contact and quarantine information before and after entering Canada through ArriveCAN. This information is mandatory as part of Canada's efforts to prevent the importation and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Before Arriving to Canada - All travellers entering Canada by air must submit the following information to ArriveCAN, either by downloading the ArriveCAN mobile app or submitting the information [online](#):

- Contact information (name, date of birth, e-mail address, phone number and passport details);
- Travel details (date of arrival, flight number/airline/airport or port of entry) and purpose of travel (work, study, family reunification, exempt travel);
- COVID-19 symptom self-assessment; and
- Quarantine plan (unless exempted).

If the information is not submitted prior to boarding, air travellers may face delays at the border due to additional questioning from public health authorities. In addition, they may face an enforcement action ranging from a warning to a \$1,000 fine. Those travelling to Canada by land or sea are strongly encouraged to submit travel information **before** their arrival using ArriveCAN. Submitting this information in advance will speed up processing at the port of entry and limit physical contact with border and public health officials. Travellers entering Canada who are or may be exempt from quarantine must still use the ArriveCAN app or website to submit their contact information, travel details and advise if they are experiencing any symptoms. On entry to Canada, border officers will request a copy of the submission receipt for verification.

After Entering Canada - Starting November 21, 2020, all travellers who have entered Canada by air, land or sea (unless exempted from mandatory quarantine/isolation requirements) must:

- Confirm within 48 hours of arrival that they have reached the quarantine/isolation location that was provided; and
- Complete COVID-19 symptom self-assessments on a daily basis during the quarantine period.

This information can be provided through the ArriveCAN app or website (if the traveller initially submitted their information digitally) or by calling 1-833-641-0343. If the traveller does not provide the required follow-up information, they may be contacted by public health authorities and enforcement for non-compliance may be taken.

**November 5, 2020** - The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) now says the novel coronavirus can be transmitted through small airborne droplets. PHAC updated its virus transmission guidance as part of a larger overhaul of COVID-19 advice that also included a new recommendation that all face masks should contain three layers of material. According to the new guidance, the droplets and aerosols can infect a person by being inhaled or by otherwise coming into contact with the mouth, nose or eyes. Contact with contaminated surfaces, followed by touching the face without first handwashing, remains in the guidance as another potential method of transmission. "This is why we have been advising Canadians to try to avoid the three Cs – closed spaces with [poor] ventilation, crowded places with large numbers of people gathered and close contact situations where you can't maintain physical distancing," Dr. Theresa Tam said. Canada's new wording around aerosols is very similar to that of the World Health Organization, which first recognized aerosol transmission in July.

**November 3, 2020** - The Public Health Agency of Canada has updated its recommendations on non-medical face masks with the country's top doctor now suggesting Canadians wear coverings that are made of three layers including a filter. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam said that masks with a filter will help trap small infectious particles and further protect against COVID-19. She said the degree of protection varies based on the construction, materials, and particularly the fit of non-medical masks. Tam stressed that Canadians currently using two-layered masks do not need to throw them in the trash but should instead purchase a disposable filter to insert between the layers. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, a non-medical mask should be made of at least three layers, two of which should be tightly woven material fabric, such as cotton or linen. The third, middle layer should be a filter-type fabric, such as non-woven polypropylene fabric. Reusable masks with a non-woven filter

layer already built in should be washed daily and can be washed multiple times. Those with disposable filters should be changed daily or as directed by the manufacturer, according to the updated guidelines.

**October 19, 2020** - The COVID-19 travel restrictions in place at the Canada-U.S. land border will remain in effect until Nov. 21 at least. The current agreement on the U.S.-Canada border closure to non-essential travel was first imposed in March and has been renewed every month since. Tourists and cross-border visits remain prohibited, although trade and commerce are exempted as are certain family members and loved ones who can make a case on compassionate grounds to be allowed into Canada.

**October 9, 2020** - The Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, announced the government's intention to introduce new, targeted supports to help hard-hit businesses and other organizations experiencing a drop in revenue. The government plans to introduce legislation to provide support that would help these businesses safely get through the second wave of the virus and the winter, cover costs so they can continue to serve their communities, and be positioned for a strong recovery, including:

- The new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, which would provide simple and easy-to-access rent and mortgage support until June 2021 for qualifying organizations affected by COVID-19. The rent subsidy would be provided directly to tenants, while also providing support to property owners. The new rent subsidy would support businesses, charities, and non-profits that have suffered a revenue drop, by subsidizing a percentage of their expenses, on a sliding scale, up to a maximum of 65 per cent of eligible expenses until December 19, 2020. Organizations would be able to make claims retroactively for the period that began September 27 and ends October 24, 2020.
- A top-up Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy of 25 per cent for organizations temporarily shut down by a mandatory public health order issued by a qualifying public health authority, in addition to the 65 per cent subsidy. This follows a commitment in the Speech from the Throne to provide direct financial support to businesses temporarily shut down as a result of a local public health decision.
- The extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy until June 2021, which would continue to protect jobs by helping businesses keep employees on the payroll and encouraging employers to re-hire their workers. The subsidy would remain at the current subsidy rate of up to a maximum of 65 per cent of eligible wages until December 19, 2020. This measure is part of the government's commitment to create over 1 million jobs and restore employment to the level it was before the pandemic.
- An expanded Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA), which would enable businesses, and not-for-profits eligible for CEBA loans—and that continue to be seriously impacted by the pandemic—to access an interest-free loan of up to \$20,000, in addition to the original CEBA loan of \$40,000. Half of this additional financing would be forgivable if repaid by December 31, 2022. Additionally, the application deadline for CEBA is being extended to December 31, 2020. Further details, including the launch date and application process will be announced in the coming days. An attestation of the impact of COVID-19 on the business will be required to access the additional financing.

**October 1, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced \$10 billion in new major infrastructure initiatives to create jobs and economic growth. The Canada Infrastructure Bank's (CIB) Growth Plan will help Canadians get back to work and is expected to create approximately 60,000 jobs across the country. The three-year plan will connect more households and small businesses to high-speed Internet, strengthen Canadian agriculture, and help build a low-carbon economy.

The Growth Plan will invest in five major initiatives:

- \$2.5 billion for clean power to support renewable generation and storage and to transmit clean electricity between provinces, territories, and regions, including to northern and Indigenous communities.
- \$2 billion to connect approximately 750,000 homes and small businesses to broadband in underserved communities, so Canadians can better participate in the digital economy.
- \$2 billion to invest in large-scale building retrofits to increase energy efficiency and help make communities more sustainable.
- \$1.5 billion for agriculture irrigation projects to help the agriculture sector enhance production, strengthen Canada's food security, and expand export opportunities.
- \$1.5 billion to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure so Canadians can have cleaner commutes.

To accelerate the delivery of projects in which the CIB intends to invest, it will also allocate \$500 million for project development and early construction works.

**September 30, 2020** – The House of Commons has unanimously passed legislation authorizing new benefits for workers left jobless or underemployed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new benefits have changed slightly since first announced:

1. Canada Recovery Benefit - The CRB would provide \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks for workers who have stopped working or had their income reduced by at least 50% due to COVID-19, and who are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI).
2. Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit - The CRSB would provide \$500 per week for up to a maximum of two weeks, for workers who are unable to work because they contracted COVID-19; self-isolated for reasons related to COVID-19; or have underlying conditions that would make them more susceptible to COVID-19.
3. Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit - The CRCB would provide \$500 per week, for up to 26 weeks per household to eligible workers unable to work because they must care for a child under the age of 12 or family member because they are unable to attend their schools, day-cares or facilities due to COVID-19.

Full details of these benefits can be found on the [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#) website.

**August 26, 2020** – The Prime Minister announced up to \$2 billion in support for provinces and territories through the Safe Return to Class Fund. This will provide the complementary funding they need, as they work alongside local school boards to ensure the safety of students and staff members throughout the school year. For example, the Fund will help provinces and territories by supporting adapted learning spaces, improved air ventilation, increased hand sanitation and hygiene, and purchases of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies.

**August 20, 2020** - The federal government is extending the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) into September, before transitioning the millions of people who are still claiming CERB onto a revamped Employment Insurance program starting Sept. 27. The EI system itself is getting a facelift, opening up the criteria for the next year to make it so that Canadians with 120 insurable hours—which equates to 3.5 weeks of work in the last 52 weeks—across Canada can apply and receive a minimum payment of \$400 per week, and a maximum of \$573 per week, depending on past earnings. The reworked EI can be claimed for between 26 and 45 weeks, depending on time worked prior.

In addition, the federal government is launching three new benefits meant to target specific reasons why Canadians may be out of work or in need of financial aid. These will also come into effect on Sept. 27. These benefits are also taxable, meaning the tax will be deducted from the payments.

1. Canada Recovery Benefit - available for 26 weeks to workers who are self-employed, gig or contract workers, or otherwise not EI eligible but still cannot return to work. To qualify for this \$400-a-week program, Canadians must be looking for work and had stopped working or had their income reduced due to COVID-19. Workers will need to repay \$0.50 of every dollar earned above an annual net income of \$38,000 through their income tax return.
2. Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit - for those who don't already have paid sick leave through their employer, to make it easier for people to stay home from work when they are sick or have to self-isolate due to COVID-19, without worrying about their income. This benefit will provide \$500 per week, for up to two weeks, which remains the current time frame required for Coronavirus isolation. It cannot be claimed if the employee has paid sick leave through their workplace.
3. Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit - for instances where someone needs to stay home to care for a loved one such as a child under the age of 12, a family member with a disability, or a dependent because schools, daycares, or other care facilities are closed due to the pandemic, or because a medical professional has deemed them to be at high-risk of severe illness if they were to contract COVID-19. This program offers up to 26 weeks per household, with just one adult per household able to claim the program at a time and provides \$500 a week. It can only be used when facilities are closed and not because people "prefer" to keep their loved ones at home.

**August 14, 2020** - Canadian and U.S. officials have agreed to keep the border between the two countries closed to non-essential travel for another month. The current extension of the cross-border agreement expires on August 21, though as the spread of COVID-19 continues in both countries, the restrictions on recreational travel will remain in place until at least Sept. 21. The agreement, as it stands, exempts the flow of trade and commerce, as well as temporary foreign workers and vital health-care workers such as nurses who live and work on opposite sides of the border. Tourists and cross-border visits remain prohibited. As of June 9, foreign nationals who are immediate family members of either Canadian citizens or permanent residents can enter Canada to be reunited, under a limited exemption to the current border restrictions. This has allowed both foreign and cross-border Canada-U.S. families to reunite under certain stipulations.

**August 13, 2020** - The federal government is offering \$31 million to help communities find ways to adapt to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. The money could be used for everything from pop-up bike paths to art installations to apps to support local markets -- efforts to improve quality of life as people live through the pandemic, said Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna. The new program, the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, is aimed at non-governmental organizations that will work with municipalities and other groups to identify projects over the next two years.

**August 11, 2020** - Canadians boarding a flight without a mask will now be forced to provide medical proof that they can't wear one, per a revised federal travel order. Non-medical masks have

been mandatory on flights since April 20. But until last week passengers could say they have “breathing difficulties unrelated to COVID-19” as a reason for not wearing a mask. That’s no longer the case, under an updated Transport Canada order issued on Friday that states a medical certificate will need to be shown that shows the traveller is unable to wear a mask for a medical reason.

**July 17, 2020** - the Government of Canada announced proposed changes to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). The aim of the proposed changes is to broaden the reach of the program and provide better targeted support so that more workers can return to their jobs quickly as the economy restarts. The proposed changes loosen eligibility requirements and allow employers to receive wage subsidy amounts in proportion to any revenue loss. The proposed changes in the Government’s draft legislative proposals would:

- allow the extension of the CEWS until December 19, 2020, including redesigned program details until November 21, 2020
- make the subsidy accessible to a broader range of employers by including employers with a revenue decline of less than 30 per cent and providing a gradually decreasing base subsidy to all qualifying employers
- introduce a top-up subsidy of up to an additional 25 per cent for employers that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic (50 per cent or more loss in revenue)
- provide certainty to employers that have already made business decisions for July and August by ensuring they would not receive a subsidy rate lower than they would have had under the previous rules
- address certain technical issues identified by stakeholders

The changes, if passed, will be effective retroactive to July 5, 2020 for the fifth claim period.

**July 16, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced today that the Canada and the United States have agreed to extend the current border measures by one month, until August 21, 2020.

The Prime Minister also announced a federal investment of more than \$19 billion to help provinces and territories safely restart their economies and make our country more resilient to possible future waves of the virus. New federal funding will address seven priority areas:

- enhanced capacity for testing, contact tracing, and data management and information sharing to mitigate future outbreaks.
- investments in health care to respond to the pandemic, including support for Canadians experiencing challenges with substance use, mental health, or homelessness.
- support for vulnerable Canadians – including those in long-term care, home care, and palliative care – who are at risk of more severe cases of COVID-19.
- funding to secure a reliable source of personal protective equipment, and to recover some of the costs from previous investments made by provincial and territorial governments.
- support to ensure that safe and sufficient child care spaces are available to support parents’ gradual return to work.
- joint funding with the provinces and territories to support municipalities on the front lines of restarting the economy, including by putting in place precautions for public spaces and essential services to reduce the spread of the virus, as well as a dedicated stream of funding for public transit.
- a temporary income support program that will provide workers who do not have paid sick leave with access to 10 days of paid sick leave related to COVID-19.

**July 13, 2020** – The Prime Minister, announced his intentions to extend the wage subsidy into December. Further details will be available later this week.

**June 18, 2020** - The Prime Minister, announced the upcoming launch of a new nation-wide mobile app to provide notifications of exposure to COVID-19 across Canada, with beta testing to begin in Ontario. The app, originally developed by the Government of Ontario, will help Canadians and public health officials identify and isolate the spread of the virus more quickly, which is an important step toward containing the virus and safely restarting the economy.

Use of the app will be voluntary. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, a health care provider will give them a unique temporary code, so they can upload their status anonymously to a national network. Other users who have downloaded the app and come in contact with that person will be notified, through the app, that they may have been exposed to the virus. The app will also provide users with information on steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe, and we are working with the provinces and territories so they can customize public health information based on their own jurisdiction.

To protect confidentiality and privacy, the app will not disclose the identity of users. This information will never be shared with any other entity, will not be stored by the app, and will never leave the user's phone. No personal information is collected by the app, and it does not track the user's location to ensure the privacy of all Canadians.

**June 16, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced that the government is extending the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) by eight weeks, to ensure Canadians have the help they need as they transition back to work. This extension will make the benefit available to eligible workers for up to a total of 24 weeks. The CEWS is being extended to August 29, 2020, to protect jobs, allow businesses to keep employees on the payroll, and re-hire workers who were previously laid off.

**June 12, 2020** – The Prime Minister announced the government has been working with airlines and airports on standards they should have in place, whether that's enhanced cleaning, or putting distancing measures as people wait in line. Our government is mandating temperature screening for air passengers through a phased approach, first for those travelling to Canada, then for those travelling from Canada, and finally for those travelling within Canada. A passenger who has a fever will not be permitted to board their flight. Employees in the secured areas of airports will also be required to have their temperature checked.

**June 8, 2020** - Effective at midnight, immediate family members of citizens or permanent residents who are foreign nationals can enter Canada to be reunited, under a new limited exemption to the current border restrictions. This new policy will allow immediate family members from the United States, as well as from other countries, to be able to enter Canada under a series of stipulations. In order to be allowed in, the family members must have a plan to stay in Canada for at least 15 days, and they will have to self-quarantine for 14 days as soon as they enter the country. The purpose of this measure is not to allow people to come and go into Canada whenever they like, but rather to help Canadian families reunite during this unprecedented time.

**May 20, 2020** - Canada's chief public health officer is officially recommending Canadians wear non-medical face masks when maintaining a two-metre distance isn't possible.



**May 19, 2020** - An agreement has been reached between Canada and the United States to keep the border closed to all non-essential travel for another month (June 21). Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is cautioning that it could be months still before non-essential travel is allowed.

**May 14, 2020** - Starting June 1, 2020, Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada will gradually resume some operations at selected national parks, national historic sites, national marine conservation areas and national wildlife areas.

**May 13, 2020** - The application period for the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) will begin on Friday, May 15, 2020. The CESB, which will be delivered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), will provide temporary income support to eligible post-secondary students and new graduates who are unable to work or find work this summer due to COVID-19, or are working and are not making over \$1000.

The CESB will be available from May to August 2020 to students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and who are enrolled in a post-secondary education program leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate; or who ended their studies no earlier than December 2019. It will also be available to Canadian students studying abroad, as well as high school graduates who will be starting a post-secondary program in the coming months. The CESB will provide \$1,250 every four weeks to eligible students, or \$2,000 every four weeks to eligible students with disabilities, or those with children or other dependants.

**May 11, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced new measures to support businesses so they can keep their workers on the payroll and weather this pandemic.

- Establish a Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF) to provide bridge financing to Canada's largest employers, whose needs during the pandemic are not being met through conventional financing, in order to keep their operations going. The objective of this support is to help protect Canadian jobs, help Canadian businesses weather the current economic downturn, and avoid bankruptcies of otherwise viable firms where possible. This support will not be used to resolve insolvencies or restructure firms, nor will it provide financing to companies that otherwise have the capacity to manage through the crisis. The additional liquidity provided through LEEFF will allow Canada's largest businesses and their suppliers to remain active during this difficult time, and position them for a rapid economic recovery.
- Expand the Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) to mid-sized companies with larger financing needs. Support for mid-market businesses will include loans of up to \$60 million per company, and guarantees of up to \$80 million. Through the BCAP, Export Development Canada (EDC) and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) will work with private sector lenders to support access to capital for Canadian businesses in all sectors and regions.
- Continue to provide financing to businesses through Farm Credit Canada, the BDC, and EDC, including through the Canada Account. This will ensure the government is able to respond to a wide range of financing needs, including for some large employers facing higher risks, with stricter terms in order to adequately protect taxpayers.

These measures are part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, which has helped protect Canadian jobs, and committed billions in support to Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of the pandemic. This includes an [extension on the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy](#), which allows businesses to keep workers on the payroll.

**May 8, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced that the federal government will be extending the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) beyond June. Further details will be released in the coming week.

**April 28, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced that the federal, provincial, and territorial governments have come together and agreed to a set of common principles for restarting the Canadian economy, based on shared understanding and appreciation of what science and experts are telling us. They acknowledge the importance of restarting the economy through a gradual approach that protects the health of Canadians, including high-risk groups, as well as the need to ensure public health capacity for future waves of the virus, while at the same time continuing to support a range of economic sectors and Canadian workers.

The provinces and territories will take different steps at different times in order to ease restrictions, reflecting the specific circumstances in each jurisdiction. They identify four main principles, including taking a science and evidence-based approach to decision-making, coordination and collaboration between all jurisdictions, continued accountability and transparency of all governments, and flexibility and proportionality as information changes over time.

The criteria and measures that need to be in place in order to begin to take steps to restart the economy:

- COVID-19 transmission is controlled, so new cases are contained at a level that our health care system can manage.
- Sufficient public health capacity is in place to test, trace, isolate, and control the spread of the virus.
- Expanded health care capacity exists to support all needs, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.
- Supports are in place for vulnerable groups, communities, and key populations. This includes the protection of seniors, residents of group living facilities, workers in close quarters, homeless people, and Indigenous people and those living in remote locations, health care workers and other essential workers, and inmates.
- Support and monitoring of workplace protocols are in place to keep Canadians safe at their jobs and prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19.
- Restrictions on non-essential travel are eased and managed in a coordinated manner.
- Communities are supported in managing local disease activity, including in childcare, schools, and public transportation, and industry and economic sectors are engaged to support the health of Canadians, reduced viral activity, and protection of the economy as it restarts.

**April 27, 2020** – The Government of Canada launches applications for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy with payments expected to start as early as May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**April 24, 2020** - The Prime Minister that the federal government has reached an agreement in principle with all provinces and territories to implement the **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance** (CECRA) for small businesses. This program will lower rent by 75 per cent for small businesses that have been affected by COVID-19. The government is also providing further details on the program:

- The program will provide forgivable loans to qualifying commercial property owners to cover 50 per cent of three-monthly rent payments that are payable by eligible small business tenants who are experiencing financial hardship during April, May, and June.
- The loans will be forgiven if the mortgaged property owner agrees to reduce the eligible small business tenants' rent by at least 75 per cent for the three corresponding months under a rent

forgiveness agreement, which will include a term not to evict the tenant while the agreement is in place. The small business tenant would cover the remainder, up to 25 per cent of the rent.

- Impacted small business tenants are businesses paying less than \$50,000 per month in rent and who have temporarily ceased operations or have experienced at least a 70 per cent drop in pre-COVID-19 revenues. This support will also be available to non-profit and charitable organizations.

**April 23, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced more than \$1 billion in support of a national medical research strategy to fight COVID-19 that includes vaccine development, the production of treatments, and tracking of the virus. This new funding builds on the \$275 million investment for coronavirus research and medical countermeasures announced in March.

Separately, the Government of Canada is providing over \$675,000 through the Stem Cell Network to support two new research projects and one clinical trial. The clinical trial will evaluate the safety of a potential cell therapy to reduce the impacts and severity of acute respiratory distress associated with COVID-19, and the two projects will generate critical information about how cells in the airway and brain are affected by the virus.

**April 22, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced comprehensive support of nearly \$9 billion for post-secondary students and recent graduates. This plan will help provide the financial support they need this summer, help them continue their studies in the fall, and help many get the experience they need to start their careers. These measures include launching:

- the proposed **Canada Emergency Student Benefit**, which would provide support to students and new graduates who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. This benefit would provide \$1,250 per month for eligible students or \$1,750 per month for eligible students with dependents or disabilities. The benefit would be available from May to August 2020.
- the new Canada Student Service Grant, which will help students gain valuable work experience and skills while they help their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. For students who choose to do national service and serve their communities, the new Canada Student Service Grant will provide up to \$5,000 for their education in the fall.

The Government of Canada will expand existing federal employment, skills development, and youth programming to create up to 116,000 jobs, placements, and other training opportunities to help students find employment and develop valuable skills this summer and over the coming months. In addition, to help students continue their studies in the fall, the government will:

- double the Canada Student Grants for all eligible full-time students to up to \$6,000 and up to \$3,600 for part-time students in 2020-21. The Canada Student Grants for Students with Permanent Disabilities and Students with Dependents would also be doubled.
- broaden eligibility for student financial assistance by removing the expected student's and spouse's contributions in 2020-21, in recognition that many students and families will struggle to save for school this year.
- enhance the Canada Student Loans Program by raising the maximum weekly amount that can be provided to a student in 2020-21 from \$210 to \$350.
- increase existing distinctions-based support for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation students pursuing post-secondary education by providing an additional \$75.2 million in 2020-21.
- extend expiring federal graduate research scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, and supplement existing federal research grants, to support students and post-doctoral fellows, by providing \$291.6 million to the federal granting councils. In addition, the government intends to

enhance work opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows through the National Research Council of Canada.

**April 21, 2020** - The Government has now released an online resource which employers can use to determine their eligibility for the CEWS as well to obtain an estimate of the subsidy value which they may be entitled to. Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Calculator for Employers:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-calculate-subsidy-amount.html>

**April 17, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced new actions to protect Canadian jobs and provide more support to businesses and organizations dealing with the economic impacts of COVID-19. The Government of Canada will provide over \$1.7 billion for targeted measures, including:

- \$675 million to give financing support to small and medium-sized businesses that are unable to access the government's existing COVID-19 support measures, through Canada's Regional Development Agencies.
- \$287 million to support rural businesses and communities, including by providing them with much-needed access to capital through the Community Futures Network.
- \$500 million to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations to help address the financial needs of affected organizations within these sectors so they can continue to support artists and athletes. This measure is consistent with the government's other existing COVID-19 support measures for wages and fixed costs for organizations.
- \$250 million to assist innovative, early-stage companies that are unable to access existing COVID-19 business support, through the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program.
- \$20.1 million in support for Futurpreneur Canada to continue to support young entrepreneurs across Canada who are facing challenges due to COVID-19. The funding will allow Futurpreneur Canada to provide payment relief for its clients for up to 12 months.

The government recognizes some sectors are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, such as Canada's energy sector, which is dealing with low prices caused by a surge in global crude oil supply and a decline in demand due to the economic effects of the pandemic. That's why the government is announcing new measures to help retain and create approximately 10,000 well-paying jobs in the energy sector. To support Canadians working in this sector, the Government of Canada will:

- provide up to \$1.72 billion, including funding to the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, and the Alberta Orphan Well Association, to clean up orphan and/or inactive oil and gas wells – creating thousands of jobs and having lasting environmental benefits.
- provide up to \$750 million to create a new proposed Emissions Reduction Fund to reduce emissions in Canada's oil and gas sector, with a focus on methane. This fund will provide primarily repayable contributions to conventional and offshore oil and gas firms to support their investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Of this amount, \$75 million will be allocated to the offshore sector.
- expand eligibility for the new Business Credit Availability Program announced on March 13, 2020, to help Canadian businesses get the financing they need during this period of uncertainty. The support will be available to medium-sized businesses with larger financing needs, beginning with companies in Canada's energy sector, to help them maintain operations and keep their employees on the job.

**April 16, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced new measures to support Canadian businesses so they can keep their doors open and their employees on the job. The Government of Canada is expanding the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to businesses that paid between \$20,000 and \$1.5 million in total payroll in 2019. This new range will replace the previous one of between \$50,000 and \$1 million, and will help address the challenges faced by small businesses to cover non-deferrable operating costs. Since the launch of the CEBA on April 9, 2020, more than 195,000 loans have been approved by financial institutions, extending more than \$7.5 billion in credit to small businesses. The Canada Emergency Business Account provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, to help cover their operating costs during a period where their revenues have been temporarily reduced.

**April 15, 2020** – The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced that the government is stepping up to better support those who need help but don't qualify for the CERB, and Canadians working in essential jobs who make less than they would if they received the benefit.

To help more Canadians benefit from the CERB, the government will be changing the eligibility rules to:

- Allow people to earn up to \$1,000 per month while collecting the CERB.
- Extend the CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their usual seasonal work as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Extend the CERB to workers who recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job or return to work because of COVID-19.

**April 14, 2020** - The Prime Minister announced on that effective at midnight, anyone who is returning to Canada from abroad has to have a “credible quarantine plan” or they will be forced to spend 14 days in isolation in a “quarantine location.” This strengthening of the Quarantine Act will give authorities the ability to evaluate the plan presented by the person coming into Canada and determine whether it’s adequate or if they need to be placed in a location “like a hotel.”

**April 11, 2020** - The House of Commons and the Senate on April 11, 2020, the Government of Canada introduced legislation amending the *Income Tax Act (Canada)* (ITA) to implement the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which passed in both chambers and received royal assent the same day. Details of the legislation can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan/wage-subsidy.html>

**April 8, 2020** - Although the legislation has not yet been implemented, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced today that the requirement to have a 30% revenue decline to qualify for the 75% wage subsidy will be relaxed for March. At present, it is anticipated that businesses will only need a 15% revenue decline to qualify in March, with the 30% decline still applicable to April and May.

The Prime Minister also announced that changes are coming to the Canada Summer Jobs program, with subsidies of up to 100% being made available to qualifying organizations.

**April 3, 2020** - The Canadian government has implemented additional measures for domestic air travel. Domestic flights will apply measures similar to that of international flights to protect travellers. Many provinces have taken a stand with entering travellers:

- Nova Scotia has declared anyone entering the province must self-isolate for 14 days, regardless of being asymptomatic;

- Alberta advises that passengers in affected seats from domestic flights are considered “close contacts” and are at risk of exposure and are legally required to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms;
- Travellers entering Manitoba are strongly recommended to self-isolate for 14 days if they are from a different province, with a few exceptions.
- Quebec has implemented restrictions on travel between regions for non-essential purposes, in order to protect its population and try to flatten the curve. It is currently recommend to avoid all non-essential travel.

**April 1, 2020** - Federal Government provided additional details pertaining to the administration of **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** (the 75% Wage Subsidy Program). Eligible employers who suffer a drop in gross revenues of at least 30% in March, April or May, when compared to the same month in 2019, will be able to access the subsidy.

An employer’s entitlement will be based entirely on the salary or wages actually paid to employees. Eligible employers will be able to access the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy by applying through the Canada Revenue Agency online portal, more details in how to apply will follow. The subsidy will cover up to 75% of wages on the first \$58,700 that an employee earns, up to a maximum of \$847 a week. The program will be in place for a 12-week period, from March 15 to June 6, 2020.

The **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** (“CERB”) is an income support payment payable to eligible workers for up to four (4) months within the period falling between March 15, 2020 and October 3, 2020 for workers who have ceased work and are not receiving income as a result of COVID-19. The Federal Government has announced that the amount of the benefit will be \$2,000 per month.

To qualify for the CERB, a worker must be at least 15 years of age, and must have a total income of at least \$5000 (or such other amount as prescribed) for 2019 or in the 12 months prior to their application from employment, self-employment, EI benefits, or provincial pregnancy and parental benefits. The CERB will be available to the following workers, including self-employed individuals:

- who have lost their job or income due to COVID-19;
- who are unable to work as a result of sickness or quarantine; and
- who need to provide care of an individual who is sick or in quarantine, or who need to provide care or supervision to a child due to school or daycare closures

A worker must have ceased working for reasons related COVID-19 for at least 14 consecutive days within the 4-week period for which they apply for the benefit in order to be eligible. A worker is not eligible for the CERB if they quit their employment voluntarily. The CERB will not be payable to those who are in receipt of employment or self-employment income (subject to exceptions that may be made by regulation), EI benefits or provincial pregnancy and parental benefits for the days on which they have ceased working.

**March 30, 2020** - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced further details of the amended wage subsidy program. Eligible businesses – now including non-profits, charities as well as large and small companies – whose revenues have decreased by at least 30% due to COVID-19 will apparently qualify for the subsidy. The subsidy will cover up to 75% of wages on the first \$58,700 that an employee earns, up to a maximum of \$847 a week.

**March 27, 2020** - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the initial 10% wage subsidy implemented to help businesses adversely affected by COVID-19 was insufficient and would be

increased to a **75% wage subsidy** for qualifying businesses. The announced subsidy is intended to be backdated to March 15, 2020. While these same eligibility criteria are presumed to also be intended to apply to the new 75% wage subsidy, details of the program are still being worked out, and more information is expected to be released by Monday, March 30, 2020.

The Prime Minister also announced today the launch of a new **Canada Emergency Business Account** for qualifying small business loans. Under this program, small and medium sized businesses will be eligible for loans of up to \$40,000.

As well, businesses and self-employed individuals will be permitted to defer GST, HST and import duty payments to the end of June 2020. The deferral will apply to the following GST/HST reporting periods:

- **For monthly filers** – the February, March and April 2020 reporting periods;
- **For quarterly filers** – the January 1-March 31, 2020 reporting period;
- **For annual filers** – the amounts collected and owing for their previous fiscal year and installments of GST/HST in respect of the current fiscal year
- The deferral for GST and customs duty payments on imported goods will include amounts owing for March, April and May 2020.

**March 25, 2020** - Federal Government announced that the Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit previously announced on March 18, 2020 as part of the Federal Economic Response Plan were being eliminated and replaced by the amalgamated **Canada Emergency Response Benefit**. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will provide \$2000 per month for four (4) months for workers who are not receiving income as a result of COVID-19. This is a taxable benefit, but taxes will not be deducted at source. The government announced that this will include workers, including self-employed individuals:

- who have lost their job or income due to COVID-19;
- who are unable to work as a result of sickness or quarantine; and
- who need to provide care of an individual who is sick or in quarantine, or who need to provide care or supervision to a child due to school or daycare closures.

It is currently unclear whether this benefit, like the Emergency Care and Emergency Support Benefits which it replaced, will only be available to individuals who do not qualify for EI or EI sickness benefits. The Federal Government is creating an online portal to receive applications for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and indicates that the goal is for first payments to be issued in April. Additional details to follow as they become available.

**March 20, 2020** - While Canada has not defined what is considered “essential” travel, the United States has defined “essential” as:

- U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents returning to the US
- individuals traveling for medical purpose
- individuals travelling to attend education institutions
- individuals travelling to work in the US
- individuals travelling for emergency response and public health purposes
- individuals engage in lawful cross-border trade (i.e. truck drivers), etc.

The land border between Canada and the US will be closed for all non-essential travel for the next 30 days, to April 30, 2020.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Canada announced that temporary foreign workers and students with valid visas to enter Canada will be allowed to re-enter. As with anyone re-entering Canada, these foreign workers will be required to self-isolate for 14 days on their return.

**March 18, 2020** – Government of Canada has closed the US-Canada border, with exceptions only for trade, commerce and essential services. They also announced an Economic Response Plan:

EI Sickness Benefits - provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement and is available to eligible those who are unable to work because of illness, injury or quarantine, to allow them time to restore their health and return to work. Canadians quarantined can apply for EI sickness benefits. The one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits has been waived for claimants who have been quarantined, as has the requirement for a medical certificate.

Regular EI Benefits - there have not been changes made to regular EI benefits. Employees who are laid off may apply for regular EI benefits if they qualify under existing guidelines. If Employees are not eligible for EI, they may be eligible for Emergency Support Benefits.

Tax Flexibility Measures for Individuals - The CRA has deferred the filing due date for 2019 tax returns for individuals to June 1, 2020. Individuals who may be entitled to receive enhanced benefits under the GST credit or Canada Child Benefit are encouraged to file their returns as soon as possible. The CRA will also allow taxpayers to defer the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18, 2020 and before September 2020 until after August 31, 2020, without the accrual of interest or penalties. The CRA will also recognize electronic signatures for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act* on a temporary basis in order to reduce the necessity of meeting between taxpayers and tax preparers as a result of COVID-19.

Tax Flexibility Measures for Businesses - The CRA will allow all businesses to defer the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18, 2020 and before September 2020 until after August 31, 2020, without the accrual of interest or penalties. The CRA will not initiate any post assessment GST/HST or Income Tax audits in the four weeks commencing on March 18, 2020 for small or medium businesses and will temporarily suspend audit interactions for the vast majority of businesses.

Business Credit Availability Program - Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada will be permitted to provide more than \$10 billion of additional support targeted predominantly to small and medium-sized businesses.

**March 17, 2020** - Mortgage and Credit Support - Canada's big six banks announced 6-month payment deferrals would be available for mortgages, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The big six banks also announced that other flexible solutions and opportunities for relief would be available to customers facing financial disruptions as a result of COVID-19. The Federal Government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC"), will provide increased flexibility by permitting lenders to allow payment deferral on homeowner CMHC-insured mortgages.



# COVID-19 Legislation Updates

Updated: January 18, 2021

**March 16, 2020** - anyone, including Canadian citizens and permanent residents, who exhibit symptoms abroad will be restricted from returning to Canada. Employers should be prohibiting international travel at this time as well as any non-essential travel within Canada.

Persons returning to Canada from international travel travelling, including the USA, have been requested to self-isolate on their return for 14 days.

**March 15, 2020** – the Federal Government will waive the one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits for absences from work caused by COVID-19 quarantine. No medical certificate is required for individuals claiming EI sickness benefits due to quarantine.

**March 13, 2020** - Government of Canada has requested Canadians to avoid any travel outside of Canada.

## Ontario:

**January 12, 2021** - In response to a doubling in COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks, the Ontario government is immediately declaring a second provincial emergency under s 7.0.1 (1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMPCA). Effective Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., the government is issuing a stay-at-home order requiring everyone to remain at home with exceptions for essential purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services, for exercise or for essential work. In addition to limiting outings to essential trips, all businesses must ensure that any employee who can work from home, does work from home. The government will enact the following additional public health measures:

- Outdoor organized public gatherings and social gatherings are further restricted to a limit of five people with limited exceptions. This is consistent with the rules during the lockdown during the first wave of COVID-19 in spring 2020 and will allow individuals and families to enjoy time outdoors safely.
- Individuals are required to wear a mask or face covering in the indoor areas of businesses or organizations that are open. Wearing a mask or face covering is now recommended outdoors when you can't physically distance more than two metres.
- All non-essential retail stores, including hardware stores, alcohol retailers, and those offering curbside pickup or delivery, must open no earlier than 7 a.m. and close no later than 8 p.m. The restricted hours of operation do not apply to stores that primarily sell food, pharmacies, gas stations, convenience stores, and restaurants for takeout or delivery.
- Non-essential construction is further restricted, including below-grade construction, exempting survey.

These measures will come into effect between Tuesday January 12, 2021 and Thursday, January 14, 2021, including the provincial declaration of emergency under the EMCPA, orders under that Act, and amendments to regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

**January 7, 2021** - As COVID-19 cases continue to rise at an alarming rate throughout the province, the Ontario government is extending certain measures to keep students, education staff, and residents of Northern Ontario safe. This includes extending online teacher-led learning until January 25, 2021 for elementary school students in the 27 Southern Ontario public health unit regions and extending the shutdown in Northern Ontario for another 14 days, aligning with the shutdown period in Southern Ontario. To support families during this extended school closure, childcare centers, and home-based childcare services will remain open. Ontario is also expanding eligibility for the Ministry of Education's targeted emergency childcare program for a broader number of frontline health and safety workers.

**January 6, 2021** - The Ontario government is launching a new voluntary and free border testing pilot program at Toronto Pearson International Airport for eligible international travelers returning to Ontario to help quickly identify and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the province. Eligible travelers will be able pre-register for the program or proceed to get tested when they arrive at the airport. Those choosing to participate in the pilot will receive a free, self-collected lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test and be supervised by a health care provider either in-person or by video as the traveler self-administers the test. Switch Health, a health service provider, will provide the monitored self-swabbing tests in a convenient and dedicated space in the airport. Test results will be reported into Ontario's Lab Information System within 48 hours and local public health units will follow up on all positive tests. All international travelers will continue to be required to follow the federal requirement for a mandatory

14-day quarantine after arriving or returning to Canada, regardless if they have a negative or positive test.

**December 22, 2020** - The province is expanding the Support for Learners program to include secondary school students and lowering electricity prices to a discounted off-peak rate 24/7 for all time-of-use and tiered customers. In January 2021, students aged 13 through Grade 12 will be eligible for funding under an expanded Support for Learners program. Parents or guardians will receive a one-time payment of \$200 per eligible student to help offset education expenses. Support will be available for those who attend a public or private school or who are homeschooled. To support people as they stay home during the Provincewide Shutdown, the government will hold electricity prices to the off-peak rate of 8.5 cents per kilowatt-hour for all time-of-use and tiered customers on a temporary basis starting January 1, 2021. This low rate will be available 24 hours per day, seven days a week for a 28-day period. The off-peak price will automatically be applied to bills of all residential, small business, and farm customers who pay regulated rates.

**December 21, 2020** - The Ontario government is imposing a Provincewide Shutdown. Additional restrictions will be put into place and reinforce that Ontarians should stay at home as much as possible to minimize transmission of the virus and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. The Provincewide Shutdown will go into effect as of Saturday, December 26, 2020, at 12:01 a.m. Measures include, but are not limited to:

- Restricting indoor organized public events and social gatherings, except with members of the same household (the people you live with). Individuals who live alone may consider having exclusive close contact with one other household.
- Prohibiting in-person shopping in most retail settings - curbside pickup and delivery can continue. Discount and big box retailers selling groceries will be limited to 25 per cent capacity for in-store shopping. Supermarkets, grocery stores and similar stores that primarily sell food, as well as pharmacies, will continue to operate at 50 per cent capacity for in-store shopping.
- Restricting indoor access to shopping malls - patrons may only go to a designated indoor pickup area (by appointment only), essential retail stores that are permitted to be open (e.g. pharmacy, grocery store), or, subject to physical distancing and face covering requirements, to the food court for takeout purchases. Shopping malls may also establish outdoor designated pickup areas.
- Prohibiting indoor and outdoor dining. Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments will be permitted to operate by take out, drive-through, and delivery only.
- Limit inter-provincial travel to essential only, with 14-day isolation upon arrival. Advised to stay home as much as possible with trips outside the home limited to necessities such as food, medication, medical appointments, or supporting vulnerable community members.
- Employers in all industries are asked to make every effort to allow employees to work from home.

The government is also providing \$12.5 million to implement a High Priority Communities Strategy to contain the virus in high-risk communities. The strategy will take a tailored, community-based approach to fund community agencies in 15 priority communities in the York, Peel, Durham, Ottawa, and Toronto regions. The funding will also allow for the hiring of community ambassadors to make people aware of available services and assistance, for coordination of increased testing opportunities and for the arrangement of wraparound supports for those who are COVID-positive. Additional funding of \$42 million will also be available to establish isolation centres.

**December 14, 2020** - Effective December 11, 2020, individuals requesting a COVID-19 test for international travel clearance are no longer eligible for a publicly funded COVID-19 test in Ontario. This step is being taken to ensure taxpayer dollars are appropriately allocated to key priorities and to preserve capacity within the provincially funded COVID-19 testing network. The province continues to provide testing to anyone who needs a test per provincial testing guidelines at no cost. This includes people who are symptomatic, or people who have been in contact with someone who has symptoms.

**December 8, 2020** - The Ontario government introduced the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act, 2020* that would, if passed, protect employers from an unexpected increase in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) premiums, while maintaining an increase to the maximum earnings cap for worker benefits. The loss of jobs among lower wage workers, including those in the retail, hospitality and the service sector, during the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in the average industrial wage (AIG) of Ontario workers by 7.8 per cent, compared to an average increase of 2-3 per cent. The proposed amendment would limit the impact the increase the AIG has on WSIB premiums to 2 per cent, making sure struggling business owners aren't subject to sudden undue costs during these challenging times. Additionally, this new amendment will not impact the 7.8 per cent increase in the earning cap for workers, ensuring they will continue to be fairly compensated for work-related injuries and occupational diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**December 7, 2020** - The Ontario government is ready to distribute COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they are received, beginning with vaccinating vulnerable populations and those who care for them. Groups receiving the early vaccine doses in the first few months of the Ontario immunization program will include:

- Residents, staff, essential caregivers, and other employees of congregate living settings (e.g., long-term care homes and retirement homes) that provide care for seniors as they are at higher risk of infection and serious illness from COVID-19;
- Health care workers, including hospital employees, other staff who work or study in hospitals, and other health care personnel;
- Adults in Indigenous communities, including remote communities where risk of transmission is high; and
- Adult recipients of chronic home health care.

Ontario will also be prioritizing the rollout of the vaccine in regions with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection, including those in the Red-Control and Lockdown zones. The immunization program will focus on healthcare workers and the most vulnerable populations in those regions.

**December 4, 2020** – The Ontario government is planning to invest \$13.5 billion to help individuals, families and workers who need it most to navigate the second wave of COVID 19 and beyond. This funding includes \$600 million in relief to support eligible businesses required to close or significantly restrict services due to enhanced public health measures, doubling its initial commitment.

In addition, our government is providing tax relief for small businesses, including a proposal to provide municipalities with the ability to cut property taxes for small businesses, reducing business education taxes and permanently increasing the Employer Health Tax payroll exemption to \$1 million. This would mean 90 per cent of employers would pay no EHT.

**November 26, 2020** - The Ontario government is providing \$13.6 million to enable school boards to hire more teachers and staff in regions recently moved to the Red-Control level and providing stabilization funding for school boards, if needed. The province is also expanding testing in school communities and

launching new online learning portals. These initiatives will enhance safety measures for schools and alleviate potential budget shortfalls during COVID-19.

Ontario is launching targeted voluntary testing of asymptomatic students and staff in regions of the province which currently have a high number of active COVID-19 cases. The Ministry of Education, along with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health, are working with participating school boards and local public health units to support implementation. This initiative will make it easier to track and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools. It may also inform public health decisions and help to manage outbreaks.

**November 24, 2020** - The Ontario government has deployed new COVID-19 rapid tests to provide faster results in regions of high transmission and rural and remote areas. As an additional tool to help keep essential workers safe, rapid tests will also be used to screen staff in long-term care homes and select workplaces. These new tests will provide Ontarians with more access to innovative testing options and will help to quickly identify and manage outbreaks to stop the spread of COVID-19.

**November 20, 2020** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has extended all orders currently in force under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (ROA) until December 21, 2020. The province is moving certain public health unit regions to new levels in the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#), which includes moving Toronto and Peel into Lockdown. These necessary measures are being taken to limit community transmission of COVID-19 in order to keep schools open, safeguard health system capacity, and protect the province's most vulnerable populations. Measures under Lockdown include, but are not limited to:

- Schools, before and after school programs, and childcare will remain open;
- Post-secondary schools open for virtual learning with some limited exceptions for training that can only be provided in-person, such as clinical training or training related to a trade;
- No indoor organized public events or social gatherings except with members of the same household. Individuals who live alone, including seniors, may consider having exclusive, close contact with one other person;
- Outdoor organized public events or social gatherings limited to a maximum of 10 people;
- Wedding services, funeral services and religious services, rites or ceremonies where physical distancing can be maintained can have up to 10 people indoors or 10 people outdoors;
- Retail permitted to be open for curbside pick-up or delivery only, with certain exceptions such as for supermarkets, grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, discount and big box retailers selling groceries, beer, wine and liquor stores, safety supply stores, and convenience stores, which will be allowed to operate at 50 per cent capacity;
- Restaurants, bars, and food and drink establishments will only be able to provide takeout, drive-through and delivery. Indoor and outdoor dining services are prohibited;
- Personal care services closed;
- Casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments closed; and
- Indoor sports and recreational facilities, including pools, closed with limited exceptions.

**November 13, 2020** - The Ontario government is taking immediate action to respond to the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and is updating the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#), by lowering the thresholds for each level in the framework. These necessary updates will help limit the spread of COVID-19 while keeping schools open, maintaining health system capacity, protecting the province's most vulnerable, and avoiding broader lockdowns. The framework changes are in response to the current data and trends, and will lower the threshold for each of the five levels for: weekly incidence

rates, positivity rate, effective reproductive number (Rt), outbreak trends and the level of community transmission.

**November 9, 2020** - The Ontario government is taking immediate action to enhance the local public health response to COVID-19 in Peel Region by expanding access to testing as well as increasing case and contact management and hospital capacity. In response to the increased need for local COVID-19 testing, Ontario is providing more sites and innovative options. Ontario is also exploring opportunities to engage with community leaders to help promote awareness of the importance of COVID-19 testing and to develop culturally and linguistically sensitive targeted communications to encourage testing in the region. To support hospital capacity pressures and the continuation of surgeries and procedures, Ontario is investing \$42 million for up to 234 new beds at three hospitals and their alternate health facilities in Peel Region.

**November 7, 2020** – Due to a worsening pandemic picture, Dr. Lawrence Loh, Medical Officer of Health for the **Region of Peel**, today issued directives to the community that are stricter than those required for the Red – Control stage. The measures in the directive will help stop the spread of COVID-19 and are effective at 12:01 a.m. Nov. 9, 2020, unless otherwise noted. They will remain in effect until further notice, except where noted, and will be re-evaluated every 14 days as the pandemic picture evolves:

- Social gatherings celebrating holidays and life events in business establishments are not allowed, starting at 12:01 a.m. Nov. 13, 2020.
- Wedding receptions and associated gatherings are not allowed, starting at 12:01 a.m. Nov. 13 until at least Jan. 7, 2021.
- Religious services, rites or ceremonies should be virtual. When not possible, in-person religious events, including weddings and funerals, must:
  - Reduce indoor capacity to 30% capacity to a maximum 50 people per facility.
  - Seat households and essential supports together, at least 2 metres from other groups.
- Bars, restaurants and other food establishments must restrict seating to people from the same household, or their essential supports. No mixed seating is permitted.
- Workplaces must prohibit all non-essential visitors and make work-from-home options available, as much as possible.
- Gyms and fitness centres must make sure all fitness class participants pre-register and provide accurate contact information to help with contact tracing if there is an exposure. No walk-in participation is allowed.
- Meeting and event spaces, including banquet halls, must close.
- Residents of Peel must restrict their contact to members of their household and essential supports only. Those that live alone may join one designated household.
- Residents of Peel should not visit any other household or allow visitors to their homes or yards, except for emergency reasons, including medical and repairs, renovations or construction, deliveries and one-on-one tutoring. Proper precautions must always be used in these situations, including mask wearing, distancing, hand hygiene, and isolating if sick.

All additional measures have been put in place under the authority of Ontario Regulation 263/20, Rules for Areas in Stage 2, s.2(2) (or as current).

**November 3, 2020** - In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, the Ontario government has developed the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#). It ensures that public health measures are targeted, incremental and responsive to help limit the spread of COVID-19, while keeping schools and businesses open, maintaining health system capacity and protecting vulnerable people, including those in long-term care.

The framework takes a gradual approach that includes introducing preventative measures earlier to help avoid broader closures and allow for additional public health and workplace safety measures to be introduced or removed incrementally. It categorizes public health unit regions into five levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Lockdown being a measure of last and urgent resort. Each level outlines the types of public health and workplace safety measures for businesses and organizations. These include targeted measures for specific sectors, institutions and other settings.

Going forward, the government will continually assess the impact of public health measures applied to public health unit regions for 28 days, or two COVID-19 incubation periods.

**October 21, 2020** - The Ontario government is providing \$24.3 million in targeted investments to hire additional staff, increase access to counselling and therapy, create new programs to help manage stress, depression and anxiety, and address eating disorders and other challenges facing children and youth. This funding is part of the government's \$176 million investment in the [Roadmap to Wellness](#), a comprehensive plan to build a fully connected mental health and addictions system across the province.

**October 16, 2020** - The Ontario government is introducing additional health measures for York Region. This public health region will be subject to modified Stage 2 restrictions for a minimum of 28 days and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Effective Monday, October 19, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., York Region will join Ottawa, Peel and Toronto public health regions in a modified Stage 2, as a result of their trends in public health indicators, including higher than average rates of COVID-19 transmission.

In addition to the measures being implemented in the Ottawa, Peel, Toronto and York Regions, the Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to remind all Ontarians to:

- Limit trips outside of home, except for essential purposes such as work where it is not possible to work from home, school, grocery shopping, medical appointments, and outdoor healthy physical activity;
- Stay home if unwell, even with mild symptoms;
- Limit travel to other regions in the province, especially from higher transmission to lower transmission areas, for essential purposes only;
- Practise physical distancing of at least two metres with those outside your household;
- Wear a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so;
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly; and
- Follow social gathering and organized public event limits.

For additional protection, the Ontario government is encouraging everyone to download the new COVID Alert app on their smart phone from the Apple and Google Play app stores.

**October 13, 2020** - The Ontario government is helping to keep the cost of energy low for families, small businesses and farmers by keeping electricity rates stable and providing customers with more choice and energy assistance programs. Customers eligible for the [Ontario Electricity Rebate \(OER\)](#) will automatically receive a 33.2% reduction off their energy bill when [new electricity rates](#) for Regulated Price Plan (RPP) customers come into effect November 1, 2020. At the same time, customers paying Time-of-Use (TOU) rates under the RPP will also have the option to switch to tiered rate pricing. Time-of-use electricity rates vary by time of day and are comprised of three different rate periods of off-peak, mid-peak and on-peak pricing. Tiered electricity rates provide customers with a set rate for electricity up to a certain level of consumption.

The province has also revised the eligibility requirements for the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program for Small Business (CEAP-SB). Households, small businesses and charitable organizations who made partial payments on amounts owing before the COVID-19 emergency period are now eligible for the CEAP and CEAP-SB one-time on-bill credit to help pay down electricity bill debt. The expanded eligibility also eliminates the requirement for residential consumers to be unemployed when applying for CEAP. Local utilities will re-assess previously rejected applications and start accepting new applications on October 16, 2020.

Ontario is also introducing a new streamlined Energy Affordability Program (EAP) for households struggling to pay their electricity bills. Beginning the week of January 4, 2021, EAP will:

- Provide free electricity saving measures to help participating households manage their electricity-use and lower their electricity costs by up to \$1,000 per year;
- Tailor energy-efficiency upgrades based on household income, home heating system, location, and an energy needs assessment; and,
- Simplify access to new and updated electricity saving measures through a single program that replaces the Affordability Fund Trust and Home Assistance Program, which are ending in 2020.

**October 9, 2020** - The Ontario government is introducing additional targeted public health measures in the Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto public health unit regions. These modified Stage 2 restrictions will be for a minimum of 28 days and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Effective Saturday, October 10, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., these targeted measures are being implemented in as a result of their higher than average rates of transmission. Measures under a modified Stage 2 include:

- Reducing limits for all social gatherings and organized public events to a maximum of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained. The two limits may not be combined for an indoor-outdoor event;
- Prohibiting indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, including nightclubs and food court areas in malls;
- Closing of:
  - Indoor gyms and fitness centres (i.e., exercise classes and weight and exercise rooms);
  - Casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments;
  - Indoor cinemas;
  - Performing arts centres and venues;
  - Spectator areas in racing venues;
  - Interactive exhibits or exhibits with high risk of personal contact in museums, galleries, zoos, science centres, landmarks, etc.;
- Prohibiting personal care services where face coverings must be removed for the service (e.g. makeup application, beard trimming);
- Reducing the capacity limits for:
  - Tour and guide services to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors
  - Real estate open houses to 10 people indoors, where physical distancing can be maintained.
  - In-person teaching and instruction (e.g. cooking class) to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors, with exemptions for schools, child care centres, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, private career colleges, the Ontario Police College, etc.
  - Meeting and event spaces to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors, and
- Limiting team sports to training sessions (no games or scrimmages).



Schools, child care centres, and places of worship will remain open in these communities and must continue to follow the public health measures in place. Before-school and after-school programs will also be exempt from these new restrictions.

**October 5, 2020** - the Ontario government is announcing the allocation of \$35 million to provide additional immediate school board supports in the communities of Peel, Ottawa, Toronto and York Region to enhance public health measures and protection strategies as they confront higher rates of transmission in their communities. To further enhance the safety of students and staff, this funding will be used for:

- Providing increased distancing between students through the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators, and educational assistants; and
- Providing increased remote learning supports, including the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators and educational assistants, as well as devices for students who have chosen to learn remotely.

**October 2, 2020** – The government is taking additional steps to respond to the second wave of COVID-19 and prevent and stop the spread of the virus, while safely keeping schools and businesses open.

These include:

- Transitioning to appointment-based testing at Ontario assessment centres beginning Tuesday, October 6, 2020;
- Beginning on Sunday, October 4, 2020, assessment centres will discontinue walk-in testing services;
- Continuing mobile testing and pop-up testing centres to reach vulnerable populations and provide targeted testing for long-term care, congregate care, and other vulnerable populations;
- Expanding the number of pharmacies where people with no symptoms within provincial testing guidance can get tested; and
- Implementing updated testing guidance for children to help parents determine when it is most appropriate for students, children and their families to seek a test for COVID-19.

Ontario is also taking longer-term actions to increase the province's test processing capacity so people can get their results faster, including:

- Increasing testing and processing capacity to 50,000 tests per day by mid-October and 68,000 tests per day by mid-November; and
- Introducing new testing methods once they are approved by Health Canada, including point of care testing and antigen testing.

Targeted measures will also be implemented in Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto as a result of their higher than average rates of transmission. These include:

- Setting an indoor capacity limit to restrict occupancy at restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments (including nightclubs) to the number of patrons who can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other patron, to a maximum of 100 patrons, permitting no more than six patrons per table, requiring operators to ensure patrons lining up or congregating outside of their establishment maintain physical distancing, and mandating that the name and contact information for each patron be collected;
- Restricting group exercise classes at gyms and other fitness settings to 10 individuals, as well as restricting the total number of people allowed at these facilities to a maximum of 50; and
- Setting a limit on the number of people allowed at meeting and event facilities, including banquet halls, to six people per table and 50 people per facility.

**October 1, 2020** – In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is updating its COVID-19 school and childcare screening guidance. This additional information will help parents determine when it is most appropriate for students, children and their families to seek a test for COVID-19. The screening guidance is being updated with two sets of questions about symptoms and information to help parents make informed decisions about whether their children should attend school or child care, need to consult a health care provider, or get tested for COVID-19. The guidance can be found immediately at the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children in School and Child Care](#), and the refreshed online tool will launch on Friday, October 2 for download. The first set of questions asks about symptoms such as fever or cough. Students and children with any of these symptoms will still be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test.

The second set of questions asks about other symptoms that are commonly associated with other illnesses, such as a runny nose or headache:

- Students and children with only one of these symptoms will be advised to stay home for 24 hours, after which they can return to school or childcare if their symptoms are improving.
- Students and children with two or more of these symptoms will be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test.

In addition, based on the latest public health guidance the symptom list for children in school and childcare no longer includes abdominal pain or conjunctivitis (pink eye).

The Ontario government is supporting personal support workers (PSWs) and direct support workers in the home and community care, long-term care, public hospitals, and social services sectors by investing \$461 million to temporarily enhance wages. This investment will help the province attract and retain the workforce needed to care for patients, clients and residents in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**September 30, 2020** - The Ontario government released updated COVID-19 modelling, which shows the province is experiencing a second surge in cases similar to what other jurisdictions have experienced. Key highlights from the modelling update include:

- Ontario is currently on an upward trajectory similar to what its peer jurisdictions, including Victoria, Australia and Michigan in the United States, have experienced.
- Cases are currently doubling approximately every 10 to 12 days.
- The growth in cases was initially in the 20 to 39 age group but now cases are climbing in all age groups.
- Forecasting suggests that Ontario could be around 1,000 cases per day in the first half of October.
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) occupancy is currently steady, but it is predicted that admissions will likely rise with an increase in COVID-19 patients being hospitalized.
- Ontario may see between 200 and 300 patients with COVID-19 in ICU beds per day if cases continue to grow.
- In order to reduce the spread and the number of new cases, it remains critical that Ontarians continue to adhere to public health measures, including avoiding large gatherings, physical distancing and wearing a face covering.

The Ontario government has developed a \$2.8 billion COVID-19 fall preparedness plan to ensure the province's health care, long-term care and education systems are prepared for the immediate challenges of the fall, including a second wave of COVID-19 and the upcoming flu season. [Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19](#) will enable the province to quickly identify,

prevent and respond to surges and waves of the virus to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians. The plan focuses on six key areas to rapidly identify and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks and surges, build health system capacity, and reinforce the province's health care workforce. These areas are:

1. Maintaining strong public health measures, including continued expansion of testing and case and contact management:
2. Implementing the largest flu immunization campaign in Ontario's history:
3. Quickly identifying, managing and preventing COVID-19 outbreaks:
4. Accelerating efforts to reduce health service backlogs:
5. Preparing for surges in COVID-19 cases:
6. Recruiting, retaining, training and supporting health care workers, while also continuing to engage families and caregivers:

**September 26, 2020** - Ontario continues to see increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in what may be a second wave of the virus. As a result, on Saturday, September 26, 2020, pre-entry COVID screening of all workers and "essential visitors" became mandatory for all businesses in Ontario – effective immediately- regardless of sector. To be clear, the new screening requirement does not include temperature testing and does not apply to customers or patrons of businesses that serve the public directly (e.g. retailers, hospitality, etc.). There are no changes with respect to workers who are working from home. However, all businesses that workers are attending are required to establish some method of pre-entry screening for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure risks. The regulation and recommendations do not set requirements for implementation of the pre-entry screening. Employers, constructors, and property owners, therefore, have some flexibility to implement the screening in a manner that is as efficient as possible for the workplaces for which they are responsible.

**September 25, 2020** - Over the past five weeks, Ontario has experienced an increase in the rate of new COVID-19 cases. Private social gatherings continue to be a significant source of transmission in many local communities, along with outbreak clusters in restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments, including strip clubs, with most cases in the 20-39 age group. To ensure the continued health and safety of Ontarians, reduce the risk of transmission, and limit future outbreaks of COVID-19, an amended order will apply province-wide effective 12:01 a.m. on Saturday September 26 and will:

- Apply additional measures and restrictions to restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments (including nightclubs) by prohibiting the sale of alcohol after 11 p.m., and prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on the premises after 12:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. (including employees), and requiring establishments to close by 12:00 a.m. and remain closed until 5:00 a.m. except for takeout or delivery;
- Close all strip clubs across the province; and
- Require businesses or organizations to comply with any advice, [recommendations](#), and instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health on screening for COVID-19.

In addition, the province will work with the municipal sector and other partners to encourage increased enforcement of existing businesses, facilities, workplaces, etc. to comply with all public health and workplace safety measures and restrictions in the Stage 3 regulation.

**September 23, 2020** - The Ontario government is providing people with convenient and timely access to free COVID-19 testing at pharmacies in the province. As of Friday, up to 60 pharmacies in Ontario will begin offering testing by appointment only, with further locations coming online in the coming weeks. This initiative will expand testing capacity well beyond the province's 150 assessment centres.

Individuals, within provincial testing guidance, will be able to visit select pharmacies by appointment only, and they will be pre-screened and then tested at no charge. When visiting a pharmacy Ontarians should continue to follow COVID-19 public health measures, including wearing a face covering, frequent handwashing, and maintaining physical distance from those outside their household or social circle.

**September 22, 2020** - The Ontario government is implementing the largest flu immunization campaign in Ontario's history. The campaign is part of the province's comprehensive plan to prepare the health system for a second wave of COVID-19. The annual spread of the flu presents an additional challenge to Ontario's response to future waves of COVID-19. That's why the province is investing almost \$70 million to purchase flu vaccines to deliver a robust and expanded campaign this year. Ontario has implemented several measures, such as:

- Ordering 5.1 million flu vaccine doses in partnership with the federal government and other provinces and territories, 700,000 more than the approximated usage last year. This includes 1.3 million high-dose vaccine doses for Ontario seniors, especially those with pre-existing health conditions;
- Prioritizing early distribution of the flu vaccine for vulnerable populations in long-term care homes, hospitals and retirement homes;
- Investing an additional \$26.5 million to purchase additional flu vaccine doses if required and made available through the national vaccine bulk procurement program;
- For the first time in Ontario's history, improving access by allocating high-dose flu vaccines for seniors to participating pharmacies; and
- Launching a public education campaign to encourage getting the flu shot.

The flu shot will be available in the coming weeks at primary care provider offices and public health units for anyone over the age of six months, and participating pharmacies for anyone five years of age or older. When getting the flu shot, Ontarians should continue to follow COVID-19 public health measures, including wearing a face covering, frequent handwashing, and maintaining physical distance from those outside their household or social circle.

**September 19, 2020** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Measures Table, is reducing limits on the number of people permitted to attend unmonitored and private social gatherings across the entire province. Unmonitored and private social gatherings include functions, parties, dinners, gatherings, BBQs or wedding receptions held in private residences, backyards, parks and other recreational areas. The new limit on the number of people allowed to attend an unmonitored private social gathering across the province is:

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (previous limit of 50); or
- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (previous limit of 100).

Indoor and outdoor events and gatherings cannot be merged together. Gatherings of 35 (25 outdoors and 10 indoors) are not permitted. These new limits are effective immediately.

**September 17, 2020** – In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, local medical officers of health and local municipal leaders, the Ontario government has amended order [O. Reg 364/20](#), setting a new limit reducing the number of people permitted to attend unmonitored social gatherings and organized public events in three regions experiencing higher rates of transmission of COVID-19. This includes functions, parties, dinners, gatherings, BBQs or wedding receptions held in private residences, backyards, parks and other recreational areas. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the amended order will set a new limit on the number of people allowed to attend an unmonitored social gathering or organized public event in three specific regions to:

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (previous limit of 50); or

- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (previous limit of 100).

Indoor and outdoor events and gatherings cannot be merged together. These are not accumulative and gatherings of 35 (25 outdoors and 10 indoors) are not permitted. The new limits will only apply to persons within the boundaries of the following public health units: Ottawa Public Health; Peel Public Health; and Toronto Public Health. This amended order will come into effect on September 18 at 12:01am. The new limits will not apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities, such as bars, restaurants, cinemas, convention centres or banquet halls, gyms, and recreational sporting or performing art events. Existing rules, including public health and workplace safety measures, for these businesses and facilities continue to be in effect.

The Ontario government has introduced the *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act* that would, if passed, freeze rent in 2021 for most rent-controlled and non-rent-controlled residential units. The bill would provide the vast majority of Ontario's tenants with financial relief as the province continues down the path of renewal, growth and economic recovery.

**September 16, 2020** - The Ontario government launched a [new voluntary interactive screening tool](#) to assist parents, students and staff with the daily assessment of COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors that is required before attending school. The results will let parents, students, and education staff know whether they should attend school each day or guide at-risk individuals to proper resources. This tool is another layer of prevention that the province is using to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the communities where they live and work.

**September 11, 2020** - Today, the government is launching a [webpage to report COVID-19 cases in schools and child care centres](#). This page will be updated every weekday with the most up-to-date COVID-19 information available, including a summary of cases in schools and licensed child care centres and agencies, if a COVID-19 case is confirmed at your school and where the numbers come from.

**September 10, 2020** - Ontario is investing over \$2.9 million to fund eight research projects that aim to support Ontario's response to COVID-19. These projects will focus on a wide variety of areas such as supporting the mental health and well-being of families and children, assessing the long-term health effects of COVID-19, the development of an app to better manage the care of patients, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of wearing masks to block the virus. These research projects will inform the health response to COVID-19 and ensure patients continue to receive quality care for their physical and mental wellness.

**September 8, 2020** - As part of the government's commitment to safely reopen schools, Ontario is providing up to \$1.3 billion in supports for the education sector. Key investments include:

- \$100 million to hire more teachers to keep class sizes small;
- \$90 million for personal protective equipment for staff and students;
- \$62.5 million to hire 625 public health nurses to monitor for COVID-19 in schools;
- \$23.6 million for testing;
- \$79 million to hire up to 1,300 additional dedicated custodians and purchase cleaning supplies;
- \$65.5 million for enhanced cleaning and safety measures for student transportation;
- \$10 million for health and safety training of occasional teachers and education workers;
- \$42.5 million to support students with special needs and provide student mental health supports;
- \$50 million in one-time funding to support improved ventilation, air quality and HVAC system effectiveness in schools;

- \$54 million to hire additional principals, vice-principals and administrative staffing supports to better deliver and oversee remote learning;
- \$100 million to be responsive to local school board reopening plan priorities supporting a broad range of activities such as increasing the number of educators, custodians, additional bussing supports, and keeping class sizes small;
- \$15 million to purchase approximately 30,000 technological devices for students;
- \$44.5 million towards the school bus driver retention strategy;
- Up to an additional \$11 million in funding to support school boards that do not have sufficient reserves to promote equitable school re-opening plans province wide; and
- Up to \$496 million by allowing boards to unlock reserves and access up to two per cent of their operating budget from their reserve funds. This funding can be applied to local priorities of each board, based on the immediate needs on the ground to prepare for the start of school.

The following public health protocols and procedures will be implemented to help protect students, teachers, staff and visitors:

1. Parents must screen their children and all staff must self-screen every day before attending school. Students and staff who are unwell must stay home from school.
2. Schools must immediately report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school to the local public health unit. Every day, school boards must report any staff or student absences due to confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the ministry.
3. Students in Grades 4-12 will be required to wear face coverings (non-medical or cloth masks) indoors in school, including in hallways, entrances and during classes. Face coverings are not required but are encouraged for students up to Grade 3. The province is funding each school board to provide PPE to teachers and other school-based staff, including medical masks and eye protection (for example, face shields).
4. Schools will teach and remind students about appropriate hand hygiene and provide breaks in schedules to allow students to wash their hands. Teachers and staff are also receiving additional health and safety training.
5. Each student will be kept with the same group of children and teachers as much as possible throughout the school day.
6. Schools will significantly limit visitors, including parents.
7. Schools will keep rigorous daily class attendance records, seating charts, lists of bussed students, and approved daily visitors (e.g. supply and occasional teachers, custodians) for contact-tracing purposes.

**August 26, 2020** - The Ontario government's back-to-school plan, developed in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health officials, is being further enhanced by additional federal investments and resources to support the return to class in the fall. Today's federal announcement provides \$381 million to Ontario, on top of the nearly \$900 million provided by the province to support provincial back-to-school plans. The federal funding will support several priority provincial initiatives such as reopening plan Implementation, student transportation, special education and mental health supports enhancement, additional public health nurses, and remote learning.

The province is also setting aside \$50 million for any future pandemic learning needs, to ensure that Ontario is prepared for every scenario this Fall. Pending federal approvals in December, the Ministry of Education will announce the second half of the payment later this year for the remainder of the school year.

**August 21, 2020** - The Ontario government is safely reopening more of the economy by easing restrictions for facilities that rent out professional meeting and event spaces. Beginning August 21, 2020, facilities can have up to 50 guests for each indoor meeting room or event space within the facility. The facility would have to adhere to a plan approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The current indoor gathering limit will now apply on a per meeting room or event space basis at professional meeting and event facilities, including convention centres, hotels, motels, resorts, banquet halls and conference centres. Outdoor meeting and event facilities remain subject to the 100-person gathering limit for the entire outdoor area. Capacity limits exclude employees or event personnel. Safely allowing these facilities to host more meetings and events is an important step in Ontario's economic recovery.

In addition, new regulatory amendments have come into force requiring contact information for only one person in a party entering indoor or outdoor dining areas starting today, with exceptions. This will reduce the administrative burden on businesses such as restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, and tour and guide services, while continuing to support case and contact tracing.

**August 14, 2020** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is supporting the safe reopening of many sport, fitness and recreation facilities by applying a capacity limit on a per room basis to help more businesses reopen their doors, get more people back to work and promote the return to a healthy and active lifestyle for all Ontarians. Beginning August 15, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., these facilities can have up to 50 patrons for each indoor sport or fitness room, while ensuring physical distancing of at least two metres.

**August 13, 2020** - The Ontario government is providing more than half a billion dollars in supports to school boards to ensure schools across the province will reopen safely in September and to protect students and staff. These supports will enable school boards to provide more physical distancing in classrooms and direct funding to utilize non-school community spaces and will allow boards to make adjustments based on their local needs. The government is allowing boards to make necessary adaptations, in consultation with their local public health unit. Adaptations could include smaller class sizes and leasing additional space. Additional measures include:

- Unlocking access to reserves up to \$496 million, an increase of \$244 million, by allowing boards to access up to 2 per cent of their operating budget from their prior year accumulated surplus. This funding can be applied to local priorities of each board, based on the immediate needs on the ground to prepare for the start of school. For boards that do not have sufficient reserves, the government will provide up to an additional \$11 million in funding to support equitable school re-opening plans provincewide.
- Providing a record-setting \$50 million in one-time funding to support improved ventilation, air quality and HVAC system effectiveness in schools. School boards will continue to maximize their use of existing school renewal funding, which totals over \$1.4 billion this school year. Boards will focus on improving air systems in older schools, portables, and in neighbourhoods with higher rates of community transmission.

The government is also releasing a [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\)](#) that ensures students receive a high quality and consistent teacher-led remote learning experience. This directive will significantly strengthen minimum expectations, as well as provide a consistent approach across the province to ensure students are fully engaged in their learning, and have a predictable timetable for synchronous, live learning. In addition, the government is investing \$18 million to help school boards hire principal and administrative support to better deliver and oversee synchronous, live learning.

Students will continue to have several opportunities throughout the school year to re-enter classroom learning, and boards need to provide at least one re-entry point in the fall.

**August 10, 2020** - On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer Health and the local medical officer of health, Windsor-Essex will be allowed to move into Stage 3 on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 12:01 a.m. The decision was based on positive local trends of key public health indicators, including lower transmission of COVID-19, ongoing hospital capacity, public health capacity to conduct rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing.

**July 30, 2020** - The government announced the safe reopening of schools for in-class instruction beginning this September that prioritizes the health and safety of students and staff, and provides school boards with unprecedented resources and flexibility, while accommodating regional differences in trends of key public health indicators. This plan was developed in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the COVID-19 Command Table and paediatric experts. Elementary schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8) will reopen provincially, with in-class instruction five days a week. Secondary schools with lower risk will reopen with a normal daily schedule, five days a week, while most secondary schools will start the school year in an adapted model of part-time attendance with class cohorts of up to 15 students alternating between attending in-person and online. Students from Grade 4-12 and school staff will be required to wear masks.

Parents will continue to have the option to enroll their children in remote delivery, which respects their fundamental role in making the final determination of whether they feel safe with their children returning to school.

The Ontario government also announced its plan to allow licensed child care centres across Ontario to open at full capacity starting September 1, 2020. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the COVID-19 Command Table. As a result, parents will be able to return to work knowing their children are in a safe and supportive care setting. EarlyON Child and Family Centres will also be permitted to reopen with in-person programming along with before- and after-school programs for school aged children which will be permitted to operate with standard ratios and maximum group size requirement

**July 29, 2020** - Additional businesses and public spaces will be reopening as the Ontario government allows the City of Toronto and Peel Region to move into Stage 3 of reopening the province on Friday, July 31 at 12:01 a.m. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local medical officers of health. It is based on positive local trends of key public health indicators, including lower transmission of COVID-19, ongoing hospital capacity, public health capacity to conduct rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing.

**July 20, 2020** - The Ontario government is allowing seven more regions to enter Stage 3 on Friday, increasing the number of businesses and public spaces that will reopen across the province. The following regions will remain in Stage 2 until local trends of key public health indicators demonstrate readiness to move into Stage 3:

- Peel Public Health;
- Toronto Public Health; and
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.



**July 13, 2020** - The Ontario government announced nearly all businesses and public spaces will reopen in Stage 3 of the province's reopening framework with public health and workplace safety measures and restrictions in place. As part of the Stage 3 reopening, Ontario will be increasing gathering limits for those regions entering the next stage to the following:

- Indoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 50 people;
- Outdoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 100 people;
- Gathering limits are subject to physical distancing requirements.

Regions remaining in Stage 2 will maintain the existing gathering limit of 10. Social circles in all stages at this point will also be kept to a maximum of 10 people province-wide, regardless of stage. To see the list of the regions moving into Stage 3, follow this link - <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/07/nearly-all-businesses-and-public-spaces-to-reopen-in-stage-3.html>

As the province safely and gradually enters Stage 3, childcare centres and home child care providers across Ontario will be able to continue to operate with strict safety and operational requirements in place. Beginning on July 27, 2020, childcare centres will be permitted to operate with cohorts of 15 children, which is an increase from the current cohort cap of 10. This change will allow parents to return to work, and bring the childcare sector to approximately 90 per cent of its operating capacity before the COVID-19 outbreak.

**June 24, 2020** - The Ontario government is allowing Windsor-Essex to move into Stage 2 of reopening on Thursday, June 25, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., with the exception of the Municipality of Leamington and the Town of Kingsville. These areas are being held back due to the higher transmission rates in the local agriculture and agri-food sector. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the local Medical Officer of Health of Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

**June 22, 2020** - The Ontario government is allowing more businesses and services to open and getting more people back to work by moving the City of Toronto and Peel Region into Stage 2 on Wednesday.

**June 19, 2020** - the Ontario government released its safety plan for the resumption of class for the 2020-21 school year, outlining scenarios for how students, teachers and staff can safely return to classrooms in September. The plan also provides choice to parents, enhanced online learning, and additional funding. While the decision to return to the normal school day routine will continue to be based on medical advice, boards and schools are being asked to plan for alternative scenarios that may need to be implemented in September depending on the province's COVID-19 situation.

**June 18, 2020** - The Ontario government continues to move forward with 37 major infrastructure projects across the province using the public-private partnership (P3) model. Ontario's P3 model is part of the government's plan to build new infrastructure including transit, highways, schools and hospitals faster, improve productivity, help businesses get goods to markets, and create jobs. List of projects can be found in the Spring 2020 P3 Market Update:

[https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/uploadedFiles/CONTENT/News/2\\_Market\\_Update/Spring-2020-P3-Market-Update.pdf](https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/uploadedFiles/CONTENT/News/2_Market_Update/Spring-2020-P3-Market-Update.pdf)

**June 15, 2020** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local medical officers of health, is enabling more regions of the province to enter Stage 2 of the government's reopening framework. These regions are able to reopen due to positive trends of key public health indicators at the local level, including lower transmission of COVID-

19, sufficient hospital health system capacity, local public health capacity to assist with rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing provincially. The following regions will remain in Stage 1 under ongoing assessment until trends of key public health indicators demonstrate readiness to move into Stage 2:

- Peel Public Health;
- Toronto Public Health; and
- Windsor-Essex County Health Uni

**June 12, 2020** - People throughout Ontario are being encouraged to establish a social "circle" of no more than 10 people who can interact and come into close contact with one another without physical distancing. Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health updated public health advice to come into effect immediately province-wide to allow social circles of up to 10 members, including those outside the immediate household. Social circles will support the mental health and well-being of Ontarians and help reduce social isolation. Ontarians who wish to form a safe social circle should follow these five simple steps:

1. Start with your current circle: the people you live with or who regularly come into your household;
2. If your current circle is under 10 people, you can add members to your circle, including those from another household, family members or friends;
3. Get agreement from everyone that they will join the circle;
4. Keep your social circle safe. Maintain physical distancing with anyone outside of your circle; and
5. Be true to your circle. No one should be part of more than one circle.

**June 9, 2020** - The Ontario government announced its plan to reopen childcare centres across the province to support the next stage of the province's reopening framework. As the province continues to implement its *Framework for Reopening the Province*, childcare centres and home care providers across Ontario will be able to reopen with strict safety and operational requirements in place, similar to the safety guidelines required for emergency child care centres. Centres will be required to adopt specific rules, including:

- Cohorting — putting children and staff in groups of 10 or less day over day;
- COVID-19 response plan — all childcare settings will be required to have a plan in place if a child, parent or staff member/provider is exposed to COVID-19;
- Screening — all staff and children must be screened prior to entry to the childcare setting. Anyone feeling unwell must stay home;
- Daily attendance records — child care settings must keep daily records of all attendees in order to support contact tracing;
- Cleaning — child care settings must be thoroughly cleaned before opening and frequently thereafter;
- No visitors — only essential visitors are permitted entry into the childcare setting;
- Implementing drop-off and pick-up protocols in a way that facilitates physical distancing.

Effectively immediately, staff can re-enter childcare facilities and begin preparation for reopening. When these operators have met all the strict and stringent guidelines for reopening, they will be permitted to reopen.

**June 8, 2020** - Effective Friday, June 12, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., the province will increase the limit on social gatherings from five to 10 people across the province, regardless of whether a region has moved to

Stage 2. Additionally, all places of worship in Ontario will also be permitted to open with physical distancing in place and attendance limited to no more than 30 per cent of the building capacity to ensure the safety of worshippers. At the beginning of each week, the government will provide an update on the ongoing assessment of these regions, and whether they are ready to move into Stage 2 at the end of the week.

Businesses and services permitted to reopen with proper health and safety measures in place in regions entering Stage 2 include:

- Outdoor dine-in services at restaurants, bars and other establishments, including patios, curbside, parking lots and adjacent properties;
- Select personal and personal care services with the proper health and safety measures in place, including tattoo parlours, barber shops, hair salons and beauty salons;
- Shopping malls under existing restrictions, including food services reopening for take-out and outdoor dining only;
- Tour and guide services, such as bike and walking, bus and boat tours, as well as tasting and tours for wineries, breweries and distilleries;
- Water recreational facilities such as outdoor splash pads and wading pools, and all swimming pools;
- Beach access and additional camping at Ontario Parks;
- Camping at private campgrounds;
- Outdoor-only recreational facilities and training for outdoor team sports, with limits to enable physical distancing;
- Drive-in and drive-through venues for theatres, concerts, animal attractions and cultural appreciation, such as art installations;
- Film and television production activities, with limits to enable physical distancing; and
- Weddings and funerals, with limits on social gatherings to 10 people.

As more people return to work, the services they rely on will need to be available regardless of the stage a region is in. The province will soon release more details on:

- Child care;
- Summer camps;
- Post-secondary education pilots to help people graduate;
- Training centres; and
- Public transit.

**June 2, 2020** - In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario is extending the provincial Declaration of Emergency to June 30. The decision supports the government's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and protect the health and safety of Ontarians as the province reopens in a measured and responsible way.

**June 1, 2020** - The government announced that it has enacted a new regulatory amendment that will put non-unionized employees on Infectious Disease Emergency Leave during the COVID-19 outbreak any time their hours of work are temporarily reduced by their employer due to COVID-19. This will ensure businesses aren't forced to terminate employees after their ESA temporary layoff periods have expired.

**May 30, 2020** - The Ontario government is gradually reintroducing camping in Ontario Parks and recreational camping on Crown land, starting June 1, 2020, to give people more opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, while staying safe and practicing physical distancing. As of June 1, backcountry camping

will be available at Ontario Parks, including access points, paddle and portage routes and hiking trails. Ontario Parks will also be expanding day-use activities to include picnicking and off-leash pet areas.

Following current provincial restrictions, no more than five people will be allowed to occupy a backcountry campsite during their stay, unless they live in the same household. The closure of all other overnight camping and some day-use activities at provincial parks and conservation reserves has been extended to June 14 and will continue to be reassessed. All buildings and facilities including campgrounds, roofed accommodations, visitor centers, park stores, playgrounds, and beaches remain closed. Some washroom facilities may be available.

**May 29, 2020** - As the province carefully and gradually reopens the economy, the Ontario government is implementing the next phase of its COVID-19 testing strategy to detect and quickly stop the spread of the virus. Testing will now be available to more people in more locations across the province. They have released the next phase of the province's COVID-19 testing plan, [\*Protecting Ontarians Through Enhanced Testing\*](#), which includes three branches of testing:

1. **Assessment Centre Testing:** expanding who gets tested to now include asymptomatic individuals concerned about exposure and continued routine symptomatic testing at assessment centres.
2. **Targeted Campaigns:** detecting and containing cases by expanding asymptomatic surveillance for vulnerable populations, including in long-term care homes and other shared living spaces like shelters and group homes, as well as targeted testing of workplaces in priority sectors which work with priority populations and where it may be difficult to physically distance.
3. **Outbreak Management:** testing to ensure rapid and agile response capacity for outbreak management, including in specific neighbourhoods and regions or at hospitals, institutions and workplaces.

**May 22, 2020** - the Ontario government is helping people affected by COVID-19 get back to work. The province is investing in Ontario's first Virtual Action Centre, an online counselling and training portal, to support laid off and unemployed hospitality workers, and is helping apprentices by providing grants to purchase tools, protective equipment and clothing for their trade, along with forgiving previous loans to purchase tools.

The government is providing an Ontario Tools Grant of \$2.5 million in 2020-21 and \$7.5 million in 2021-22 and ongoing. This will help new eligible apprentices purchase the equipment they need to start their careers. The funding amounts will be distributed as follows:

- \$1,000 for those in motive power sector trades;
- \$600 for those in construction and industrial sector trades;
- \$400 for those in service sector trades.

To be eligible for the new grant, apprentices must have:

- completed level 1 training on or after April 1, 2020;
- an active registered training agreement; and
- been registered as an apprentice for at least 12 months.

**May 20, 2020** - As the Ontario government carefully and gradually reopens the province, those taking public transit, returning to work or going out shopping are being urged to continue to adhere to public

health advice as the best line of defence against COVID-19. To assist the public, the Ministry of Health today released specific recommendations on how to choose, wear and care for appropriate face coverings used in public where physical distancing is not possible, along with additional safety measures for provincial transit agencies.

**May 19, 2020** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has extended all emergency orders currently in force until May 29, 2020. That includes the closure of bars and restaurants except for takeout and delivery only, restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and staff redeployment rules for long-term care homes and congregate settings like retirement homes and women's shelters. The government is also allowing drive-in religious gatherings.

The Ontario government is protecting the health and safety of students during the COVID-19 outbreak by keeping schools closed for the rest of this school year. This decision was made after consulting with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, health experts on the COVID-19 Command Table, and medical experts at The Hospital for Sick Children. At the same time, the government is planning for the reopening of schools for the 2020-21 school year, the gradual reopening of child care, and the opening of summer day camps subject to the continuing progress in trends of key public health indicators.

**May 14, 2020** - Today, the Ontario government announced businesses and health & community service providers who will be permitted to open or expand their services on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., provided that the general trend on health indicators continues to improve as part of the first stage of the government's reopening framework. As soon as 12:01 a.m. on **Saturday, May 16, 2020**:

- Golf courses will be able to open, with clubhouses open only for washrooms and restaurants open only for take-out.
- Marinas, boat clubs and public boat launches may open for recreational use.
- Private parks and campgrounds may open to enable preparation for the season and to allow access for trailers and recreational vehicles whose owners have a full season contract.
- Businesses that board animals, such as stables, may allow boarders to visit, care for or ride their animal.

Assuming trends in key public health indicators continue to improve, Ontario's first stage of reopening will begin on **Tuesday, May 19, 2020** at 12:01 a.m. and will include:

- Retail services that are not in shopping malls and have separate street-front entrances with measures in place that can enable physical distancing, such as limiting the number of customers in the store at any one time and booking appointments beforehand or on the spot.
- Seasonal businesses and recreational activities for individual or single competitors, including training and sport competitions conducted by a recognized national or provincial sport organization. This includes indoor and outdoor non-team sport competitions that can be played while maintaining physical distancing and without spectators, such as tennis, track and field and horse racing.
- Animal services, specifically pet care services, such as grooming and training, and regular veterinary appointments.
- Indoor and outdoor household services that can follow public health guidelines, such as housekeepers, cooks, cleaning and maintenance.
- Lifting essential workplace limits on construction.

- Allowing certain health and medical services to resume, such as in-person counselling; in-person services, in addition to virtual services, delivered by health professionals; and scheduled surgeries, all based on the ability to meet pre-specified conditions as outlined in *A Measured Approach to Planning for Surgeries and Procedures During the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

**May 12, 2020** - The Ontario government is extending the Declaration of Emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. This additional time will ensure the province has the necessary tools and health care capacity to contain COVID-19, while gradually reopening businesses, services, and amenities safely. The Declaration of Emergency has been extended until June 2 and will allow Ontario to continue to enforce current emergency orders, such as restricting retirement and long-term care home employees from working in more than one facility and prohibiting events and gatherings of more than five people.

**May 6, 2020** - The Ontario government is allowing all retail stores with a street entrance to provide curbside pickup and delivery, as well as in-store payment and purchases at garden centres, nurseries, hardware stores and safety supply stores. The business owners should review the health and safety guidelines developed by the province and its health and safety association partners.

- Friday, May 8 at 12:01 a.m., garden centres and nurseries will be able to open for in-store payment and purchases, operating under the same guidelines as grocery stores and pharmacies.
- Saturday, May 9 at 12:01 a.m., hardware stores and safety supply stores will be permitted to open for in-store payment and purchases.
- Monday, May 11 at 12:01 a.m., retail stores with a street entrance can begin offering curbside pickup and delivery. The government is also expanding essential construction to allow below-grade multi-unit residential construction projects like apartments and condominiums to begin and existing above-grade projects to continue. This will help clear the way for the housing and jobs our economy will need to support economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**May 1, 2020** - The Ontario government is allowing certain businesses and workplaces to reopen as long as they comply with strict public health measures and operate safely during the COVID-19 outbreak. Those permitted to start up include seasonal businesses and some essential construction projects. The government, in partnership with Ontario's health and safety associations, has developed more than 60 guidelines in response to COVID-19. These sector-specific measures will help employers prepare their workplaces so they can be reopened safely and ensure workers, customers and the general public are protected. By following the proper health and safety guidelines these businesses will be permitted to begin operations on **Monday, May 4 at 12:01 a.m.:**

- Garden centres and nurseries with curbside pick-up and delivery only;
- Lawn care and landscaping;
- Additional essential construction projects that include:
  - shipping and logistics;
  - broadband, telecommunications, and digital infrastructure;
  - any other project that supports the improved delivery of goods and services;
  - municipal projects;
  - colleges and universities;
  - child care centres;
  - schools; and

- site preparation, excavation, and servicing for institutional, commercial, industrial and residential development;
- Automatic and self-serve car washes;
- Auto dealerships, open by appointment only;
- Golf courses may prepare their courses for the upcoming season, but not open to the public; and
- Marinas may also begin preparations for the recreational boating season by servicing boats and other watercraft and placing boats in the water, but not open to the public. Boats and watercraft must be secured to a dock in the marina until public access is allowed.

Although certain businesses are being permitted to reopen, it is critical that people continue to stay home, practise physical distancing and only go out for essential reasons, to pick up groceries, prescriptions or to keep a medical appointment. It is through these simple actions that Ontario is making progress to stop the spread of COVID-19.

**April 30, 2020** - In anticipation of the gradual re-opening of the economy, the Province of Ontario, in conjunction with four provincial health and safety associations, released safety guidelines for employers such that work can be conducted safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. These new sector-specific guidelines feature recommended actions employers can begin to plan for as they prepare to adapt to the new reality during COVID-19, including:

- Ways to ensure appropriate physical distancing, like eliminating pay-at-the-door options, holding team meetings outdoors, staggering shift times and using ground markings and barriers to manage traffic flow.
- Changes to the workplace, like installing plexiglass barriers, increasing the air intake on building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to increase air flow, and using boot sanitizing trays.
- Promoting proper workplace sanitation, providing personal protective equipment, substituting dry dusting with vacuuming, ensuring customer-facing staff are given hand sanitizer, providing a place to dispose of sanitizing wipes, and enforcing handwashing before and after breaks.

The safety guidelines pertaining to each sector can be found here:

[https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace?\\_ga=2.7966518.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934](https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace?_ga=2.7966518.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934)

**April 28, 2020** - The Ontario government is launching the *COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers* website to help businesses overcome the unique challenges created by the global pandemic. Businesses working to retool their operations to produce health-related products, or those that want to continue their operations in this new environment of physical distancing, can submit any potential roadblocks to the website. The province is prepared to allow temporary changes to provincial rules and regulations in order to remove any barriers that are hindering business and negatively impacting Ontario's supply chain. [https://www.ontario.ca/page/frontline-business-help-us-support-you-during-covid-19?\\_ga=2.130287115.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934](https://www.ontario.ca/page/frontline-business-help-us-support-you-during-covid-19?_ga=2.130287115.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934)

**April 27, 2020** - the Ontario Government unveiled *A Framework for Reopening the Province* – a three-stage plan to gradually reopen the economy following several weeks of shutdown due to COVID-19. As proposed, the three-stage plan would see a gradual loosening of restrictions, with 2-4 week assessment periods to consider the daily impact on new COVID-19 cases. Highlights of the plan:

## Stage 1:

- Allowing select businesses that are able to immediately meet or modify operations to meet public health guidance and occupational health and safety requirements (eg. curbside pick-up or delivery);
- Allowing some outdoor spaces, like parks, to open, and allow for a greater number of individuals to attend certain types of events, like funerals; and
- Allowing for hospitals to offer some non-urgent and scheduled surgeries, and other health care services.

## Stage 2:

- Opening more business based on risk assessments, including the possibility of opening some service industries, offices and retail workplaces; and
- Opening more outdoor spaces, and allowing some larger public gatherings.

## Stage 3:

- Opening all workplaces;
- Further relaxing restrictions on public gatherings, which still restricting large public gatherings – such as concerts and sporting events – for the foreseeable future.

Underscoring all of these stages is the need to continue to protect vulnerable populations and the requirement to continue practices of physical/social distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene. In order to be considered a “safe workplace”, it is expected that the workplace have a plan that promotes and adheres to strict hygiene and sanitation standards, and provides for physical/social distancing to the extent possible. This may require adjusting both work practices and physical environments.

No timetable has been attached to the reopening plan in Ontario, either in terms of whether the plan will take effect, or the length of each stage. The full plan is outlined here:

[https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-after-covid-19?\\_ga=2.37833383.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934](https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-after-covid-19?_ga=2.37833383.580909676.1587989289-2024361983.1555443934)

**April 24, 2020** - The Ontario government is partnering with the federal government to provide urgent relief for small businesses and landlords affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. The province is committing \$241 million through the new Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA). The total amount of provincial-federal relief that would be provided is more than \$900 million, helping to ensure small businesses are ready to reopen their doors when the emergency measures are lifted.

**April 16, 2020** - The Ontario government is enabling auto insurance companies to provide temporary insurance premium rebates to drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The province has amended a regulation under the *Insurance Act* to help ease the financial pressure on working people and families during this public health crisis. By amending this regulation insurance companies would be able to provide auto insurance premium rebates to consumers for up to 12 months after the declared emergency has ended.

**April 14, 2020** - On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and with the approval of the Ontario legislature, the Ontario government is extending the Declaration of Emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* for a further 28 days. This will allow the government to continue to use every tool at its disposal to protect the health and safety of the people of Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**April 3, 2020** – Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government reduced the list of businesses classified as essential and ordering more workplaces to close. These non-essential businesses will be required to close as of 11:59pm on April 4, 2020. This closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension as the situation evolves. Teleworking, online commerce and other innovative ways of working remotely are permitted at all times and are strongly encouraged for all businesses. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces#section-10>

**April 2, 2020** - Ontario's Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) formalized its adjudicative approach related to COVID-19, including information related to claims of potential exposure incidents at work. As a means of determining whether a COVID-19 claim is work-related, the decision-maker will assess whether:

1. the nature of the worker's employment created a risk of contracting COVID-19 that the public at large was not normally exposed to; and
2. the WSIB is satisfied that the worker's COVID-19 condition has been confirmed.

If the two conditions above are established, they will be considered persuasive evidence that the worker's employment contributed significantly to the worker's illness. However, claims which do not meet the conditions will be reviewed on their own merit, having regard to the circumstances of each case.

**April 1, 2020** - In an effort to ensure that residents are maintaining physical distancing as a means of slowing the outbreak of COVID-19, municipalities across Ontario have begun imposing hefty fines to promote compliance. The imposition of these fines follow the Government of Ontario's physical distancing orders made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, whereby gatherings of more than five (5) people were prohibited.

**March 29, 2020** – The Ontario government has stepped up measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites. These measures include:

- providing better on-site sanitation, including a focus on high-touch areas like site trailers, door handles and hoists
- communicating roles, responsibilities, and health & safety policies, by, for example, posting site sanitization schedules and work schedules
- enabling greater distances between workers by staggering shifts, restricting site numbers and limiting elevator usage
- protecting public health by tracking and monitoring workers

Full details can be found at - [https://www.ontario.ca/page/construction-site-health-and-safety-during-covid-19?\\_ga=2.6300466.1042988516.1585499296-2024361983.1555443934](https://www.ontario.ca/page/construction-site-health-and-safety-during-covid-19?_ga=2.6300466.1042988516.1585499296-2024361983.1555443934)

**March 25, 2020** – Premier Doug Ford announced Ontario's *Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19*. This \$17 billion response is a critical first step to ensure our health care system, communities and economy are positioned to weather the challenges ahead. Key initiatives in the government's plan to support people, families, workers and employers include:

- A one-time payment of \$200 per child up to 12 years of age, and \$250 for those with special needs, including children enrolled in private schools.
- Providing approximately \$5.6 billion for electricity cost relief programs in 2020-21, which is an increase of approximately \$1.5 billion compared to the *2019 Budget* plan.
- Setting electricity prices for residential, farm and small business time-of-use customers at the lowest rate, known as the off-peak price, 24 hours a day for 45 days to support

ratepayers in their increased daytime electricity usage as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, addressing concerns about time-of-use metering.

- Cutting taxes by \$355 million for about 57,000 employers through a proposed temporary increase to the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption.
- Providing \$9 million in direct support to families for their energy bills by expanding eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and ensuring that their electricity and natural gas services are not disconnected for nonpayment during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Providing six months of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loan and interest accrual relief for students, leaving more money in people's pockets.

The government's plan also includes measures that will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flows over the coming months, including:

- Providing five months of interest and penalty relief for businesses to file and make payments for the majority of provincially administered taxes.
- Deferring the upcoming June 30 quarterly municipal remittance of education property tax to school boards by 90 days, which will provide municipalities the flexibility to, in turn, provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses, while ensuring school boards continue to receive their funding.
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) allowing employers to defer payments for up to six months. They will not be required to opt in to receive this benefit.

**March 23, 2020** – Premier Doug Ford announced that all non-essential business will be required to close as of 11:50pm on March 24, 2020. The mandatory closure will be in effect for a minimum of 14 days, with the possibility of a further extension. Details surrounding what compensation or relief, if any, will be made available to business arising from this mandatory closure should be made available on March 25, 2020. The list of essential Workplaces can be found here:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/list-of-essential-workplaces-2.html>

**March 19, 2020** – New Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (Bill 186 – passed) provides for a new **unpaid**, job-protected **emergency leave** to any employee who is not performing the duties of his or her position due to:

- being under medical investigation, supervision or treatment related to a designated infectious disease
- acting in accordance with a relevant order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* related to a designated infectious disease
- being in quarantine isolation or subject to a control measure (which can include self-isolation) implemented as a result of information or direction related to a designated infectious disease which has been issued to the public by a public health official, a qualified health practitioner, Telehealth Ontario, the provincial or federal governments, or a municipal council or board of health
- being directed by their employer not to work due to a concern that the employee may expose other individuals in the workplace to a designated infectious disease
- providing care or support to any one of a defined group of individuals related to a designated infectious disease which “concerns” that individual (including school and daycare closures); or

- being directly affected by travel restrictions related to the designated infectious disease and who cannot reasonably return to Ontario.

**Length of Leave:** may last for as long as the employee is not performing their position for any one of the mandated reasons related to the designated infectious disease. An employee who takes COVID-19 Leave in order to remain in self-isolation may only require a 14-day leave. An employee who is caring for a child as a result of a COVID-19-related school closure may require a significantly longer leave if those closures are extended. An employee who is suffering from the effects of COVID-19 may require a lengthy leave of unknown duration.

**Who's covered** - includes all categories of employees, whether they are full-time, part-time, students, assignment employees or casual workers.

**Employment Entitlements** - The general provisions in the *ESA* concerning other types of statutory leaves, such as pregnancy/parental leave or family medical leave, also apply to COVID-19 Leave. This includes:

- The right to reinstatement (subject to the caveat that if an employer has dismissed an employee for legitimate reasons that are totally unrelated to the fact that the employee took COVID-19 Leave, the employer does not have to reinstate the employee)
- The right to be free from penalty or “reprisal”
- The right to continue to participate in benefit plans (provided any applicable employee contributions are made) and
- The right to earn credits for length of employment, length of service and seniority (as applicable).

**Employer Obligations** - employers have the following reporting obligations:

- to report all occupational illnesses, including COVID-19, to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within four days and
- to notify their workplace’s joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative and a trade union, as applicable.

One aspect of COVID-19 Leave that is unique is the apparent ability of an employer to “trigger” an unpaid statutory leave of absence by directing the employee not to work due to COVID-19 related concerns. This provides some helpful clarity regarding the employer’s right to exercise control over the issue of COVID-19 in the workplace.

**March 17, 2020** – Ontario Emergency Declaration ordered the closure of all facilities that provide indoor recreation programs, private schools, public libraries, licensed childcare centres, theatres, cinemas and concert venues. There is also a ban on public events with over 50 people, which includes services within places of worship. These orders are in place until March 31, 2020.

**March 16, 2020** - Ontario government announced its intention to introduce legislation that will amend the *Employment Standards Act* by protecting jobs for employees who are unable to work due to COVID-19. If passed, the legislation would provide job protection to employees who cannot work due to COVID-19.

## Alberta:

**January 14, 2021** – The Alberta government is easing restrictions around outdoor gatherings, personal services and funeral attendance effective January 18, 2021. While indoor gatherings remain prohibited, up to 10 people will be allowed at outdoor social gatherings. Personal and wellness services will be allowed to open by appointment only. Funeral ceremony attendance will be increased to 20 people, with mandatory masking and two meter physical distancing. Funeral receptions are still not allowed.

**January 7, 2021** - All students will return to in-person learning, as planned, on Jan. 11. Mandatory health measures will remain in effect across the province until at least Jan. 21. While students return to in-person learning, all Albertans, businesses, organizations and service providers must continue to follow existing health measures until at least Jan. 21. Active evaluation of the latest public health data is underway and will be used to re-evaluate the current level of restrictions over the coming weeks.

**December 21, 2020** – Alberta government is urging all travellers who have arrived from the United Kingdom within the past 14 days to immediately get a COVID-19 test, whether they have symptoms or not. Travellers will be contacted directly by Alberta Health Services to book a test. Also, travellers from the United Kingdom who are participating in the border pilot must immediately quarantine, whether they've had a negative test or not. All returning travellers currently in quarantine must remain in quarantine for the full 14 days.

**December 17, 2020** – Starting Dec. 18, rapid point-of-care testing will begin at long-term care and designated supportive living facilities in the Edmonton Zone using dedicated mobile testing centres. Mobile testing centres are expected to be ready to deploy in Calgary Zone starting the week of Dec. 21. Mobile testing centres will be focused first on outbreak sites. Expansion to long-term care and designated supportive living facilities outside Edmonton and Calgary zones is expected to follow shortly after.

**December 15, 2020** – Alberta is launching a [comprehensive outreach program](#) to reach communities with high levels of COVID-19 spread in Edmonton and Calgary. COVID-19 Care Teams will be providing information about how to access supports people need to keep themselves and their families safe. People in these areas who test positive for COVID-19 will be eligible for a free-of-charge hotel room stay of 14 days, complete with culturally appropriate food and temporary financial aid in the amount of \$625 when they have completed their self-isolation.

**December 9, 2020** - Alberta will deliver its first COVID-19 vaccines to critical health-care workers next week. The initial shipments of the vaccines must be administered on-site at dedicated vaccine sites and cannot be transported to long-term care or other facilities. Therefore the first immunizations will focus on health-care workers crucial to supporting vulnerable Albertans and caring for critically ill patients. Alberta Health Services will begin booking appointments with intensive care unit health-care workers, respiratory therapists and long-term care workers eligible to be immunized. Eligibility will begin with workers at the highest risk facilities. In addition to the groups mentioned above, also in Phase 1 of Alberta's vaccine strategy are seniors aged 75 and older, on-reserve First Nations individuals and on-settlement Metis individuals age 65 and older, and health-care workers who are most likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at greatest risk and who are critical for maintaining hospital capacity. Phase 2 is expected to begin by April 2021 and will again be targeted to the next groups of prioritized populations. Final decisions regarding eligibility in Phase 2 have not yet been determined. Phase 3 will involve rolling out vaccinations to the general Alberta population, anticipated to start later in 2021.

**December 8, 2020** - Expanded health measures will be in effect provincewide. New expanded mandatory measures come into effect Dec. 8 for social gatherings and mandatory masking. All others come into effect at 12:01 a.m., Dec. 13. All Albertans, businesses, organizations and service providers must follow all new health measures. These restrictions will be in place for a minimum of four weeks (Jan. 12, 2021).

- **Social Gatherings** - All indoor and outdoor social gatherings – public and private – are prohibited. Close contacts are limited to household members only. Individuals who live alone will be allowed up to two close contacts for in-person visiting, with those two people remaining the same for the duration of the restriction period. Festivals, parades, events, concerts, exhibitions, competitions, sport and performance remain prohibited.
- **Masking** - The mandatory indoor public masking requirement will be extended provincewide. Public spaces include locations where a business or entity operates and is applicable to employees, visitors and the general public. Applies to all indoor workplaces and facilities outside the home. Farm operations are excluded. Rental accommodations used solely for the purposes of a private residence are excluded.
- **Places of worship** – All places of worship will be limited to 15 per cent of fire code occupancy for in-person attendance. Virtual or online services are strongly encouraged. Drive-in services where individuals do not leave their vehicles and adhere to guidance will be permissible and are not subject to capacity restrictions. Mandatory mask mandate, physical distancing and other guidelines remain in place.
- **Retail** - Retail services must reduce customer capacity to 15 per cent of fire code occupancy, with a minimum of five customers permitted. Curbside pickup, delivery and online services are encouraged. Shopping malls will be limited to 15 per cent of fire code occupancy.
- **Closures** – Restaurants, pubs, bars, lounges and cafes will be closed to in-person service. Only takeout, curbside pickup and delivery services are permitted. Casinos, bingo halls, gaming entertainment centres, racing entertainment centres, horse tracks, raceways, bowling alleys, pool halls, legions, and private clubs will be closed. Recreational facilities – fitness centres, recreation centres, pools, spas, gyms, studios, day and overnight camps, indoor rinks and arenas – will be closed. Outdoor recreation is permitted, but facilities with indoor spaces except for washrooms will be closed. Entertainment businesses and entities – libraries, science centres, interpretive centres, museums, galleries, amusement parks and water parks – will be closed. Hotels may remain open but must follow restrictions – no spas, pools or in-person dining. Room services only. Personal and wellness services, including hair salons, nail salons, massage, tattoos, and piercing, will be closed. Health services, including physiotherapy or acupuncture, social or protective services, shelters for vulnerable persons, emergency services, childcare, and not-for-profit community kitchens or charitable kitchens will remain open for in-person attendance.
- **Working from home** - Mandatory work from home measures will be implemented unless the employer determines that work requires a physical presence for operational effectiveness.

**December 2, 2020** - The Alberta government has appointed a new COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. The Task Force will build on the steps that Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services have already taken to prepare for the delivery of a vaccine. Once approved, Alberta anticipates receiving enough doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to initially immunize up to 435,000 Albertans who are most at-risk, between January and March 2021. Immunization will be phased, starting with Phase 1 in early January, once vaccines are received. Those vaccinated in Phase 1 include long-term care and designated supported living residents and staff in those facilities, on-reserve First Nations individuals over age 65, seniors aged 75 and older, and health-care workers most needed to ensure workforce capacity and who

are most likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at greatest risk. Phase 2 is expected to begin by April 2021 and will again be targeted to prioritized populations. Phase 3 will involve rolling out vaccinations to the general Alberta population, anticipated to start by fall 2021.

**November 24, 2020** - Alberta's government is declaring a state of public health emergency and putting aggressive measures in place to protect the health system and reduce the rising spread of COVID-19 cases. Not following mandatory restrictions could result in fines of \$1,000 per ticketed offence and up to \$100,000 through the courts.

## **Provincewide measures**

Public and private gatherings - Effective immediately, mandatory restrictions on social gatherings are in effect provincewide. These measures will be in place until further notice and include:

- No indoor social gatherings are permitted in any setting, including workplaces.
- Outdoor social gatherings are limited to a maximum of 10 people.
- Funeral services and wedding ceremonies must follow all public health guidance and are limited to a maximum of 10 in-person attendees. Receptions are not permitted.

Schools - In all schools, Grades 7-12 will move to at-home learning on Nov. 30, ending in-person classes early.

- Students in early childhood services and Grades K-6 will remain learning in-person until Dec. 18.
- All students will return to at-home learning after the winter break and resume in-person learning on Jan. 11, 2021.
- These measures are mandatory.
- Diploma exams are optional for the rest of the school year. Students and their families can choose whether to write the exam or receive an exemption for the January, April, June, and August 2021 exam sessions.

## **Measures for regions under enhanced status**

Effective immediately, mandatory restrictions on places of worship, businesses and services are in effect in areas under enhanced status. These measures will be in place until further notice.

### Places of worship

- Places of worship are limited to a maximum of one-third normal attendance per service.
- Physical distancing between households and masking are required.
- Faith-based leaders are encouraged to move services online.
- In-person faith group meetings can continue but must maintain physical distancing and public health measures must be followed.

Businesses and services - Starting Nov. 27, business and service restrictions fall under three categories: closed for in-person business, open with restrictions, and open by appointment only. Impacts by category are available here: [alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx](https://alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx). These measures will remain in place for three weeks but will be extended if needed. Albertans are encouraged to limit in-person visits to retail locations, shop local and use curbside pickup, delivery, and online services, where possible.

## **Specific measures for Calgary, Edmonton, and surrounding communities**

Mandatory mask requirements - Effective immediately, a new mandatory mask requirement for indoor workplaces is in place for Edmonton, Calgary and surrounding areas. This includes any location where employees are present, and applies to visitors, including delivery personnel, and employees or contractors. This measure will be in place until further notice. All existing guidance and legal orders

remain in place in all areas. Alberta Health, AHS and local municipalities continue to closely monitor the spread across the province.

**November 12, 2020** - New health measures will help protect Alberta's health-care system, keep schools and businesses open, and protect vulnerable Albertans from COVID-19. There will be a two-week ban on group fitness classes, team sport activities and group performance activities in Edmonton and surrounding areas, Calgary and surrounding areas, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Fort McMurray and Red Deer. This will be in place from Nov. 13-27.

- In all regions under enhanced status, restaurants, bars, lounges and pubs will be required to stop liquor sales by 10 p.m. and close by 11 p.m. This will be in place from Nov. 13-27.
- In all regions under enhanced status, there are additional measures also being implemented:
  - 50-person limit on wedding ceremonies and funeral services.
  - All faith-based organizations should limit attendance at services to one-third of capacity.
  - It is strongly recommended that no social gatherings occur in private homes.
  - It is strongly recommended that Albertans living in areas under enhanced precautions not move social gatherings to neighbouring communities with lower rates.
  - Employers should reduce the number of staff in office buildings at any one time wherever possible.

All existing guidance, measures and legal orders remain in place in all areas. If these measures are not successful, it will be necessary to implement more restrictive measures.

**October 29, 2020** - Effective Nov. 2, Alberta is removing runny nose and sore throat from the list of core symptoms requiring mandatory isolation for those under the age of 18. This includes the [daily checklist](#) used for school and child care settings. This change is only for those with no known exposure. If a child is a close contact or known to have been exposed in the previous 14 days and develops symptoms, testing is recommended and the child would still need to isolate. Also effective Nov. 2:

- If a child has only one of the non-core symptoms on the checklist, they should stay home and monitor for 24 hours. If their symptom is improving, testing is not necessary and they can return to normal activities when they feel well.
- If the child has two or more of the non-core symptoms, or if one of their symptoms gets worse, testing is still recommended and they should stay home until the symptoms go away or they test negative for COVID-19 and feel better.

The COVID-19 symptoms list for anyone over the age of 18, including teachers and daycare staff, remains unchanged. Health officials will continue to monitor evidence closely.

**October 26, 2020** - Effective immediately, a mandatory 15-person limit on all social gatherings in the City of Edmonton and City of Calgary is in effect.

- This limit applies to gatherings such as dinner parties, wedding and funeral receptions, banquets and other gatherings.
- It does not currently change measures for structured events such as dining in restaurants, theatres, worship services or wedding and funeral ceremonies.

This temporary limit will be reassessed in one month. Along with the mandatory limit on social gatherings, voluntary public health measures remain in place for the entire Edmonton Zone and are also recommended for anyone living in or visiting the City of Calgary:

- Wear non-medical masks in all indoor work settings, except when alone in workspaces such as offices or cubicles where you can be safely distanced from others or an appropriate barrier is in place.

- Limit each individual to no more than three cohorts (a core/household cohort, a school cohort, and one additional sport, social or other cohort). Young children who attend child care may be part of four cohorts, as child care cohorts have not been seen to be a high-risk context for spread.

Surrounding communities in the Edmonton Zone should continue to follow the voluntary public health measures in place to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. No additional measures are being implemented in the communities surrounding Calgary. All existing guidance and public health orders remain in place.

**October 22, 2020** - A joint pilot program from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada – the first of its kind in the country – will safely test an alternative to the current 14-day quarantine requirement for international travellers while continuing to protect Canadians from COVID-19. The new pilot announced Oct. 22 will explore the feasibility of using a rigorous testing and monitoring program as a strategy to reduce the mandatory quarantine period, while keeping Canadians safe.

Beginning on Nov. 2, COVID-19 testing will be offered initially at two ports of entry into Canada: the Coutts land border crossing and the Calgary International Airport in Alberta. Travellers who participate will receive a COVID-19 test upon entry into Canada before proceeding into the required quarantine. Once the test comes back negative, they will then be allowed to leave their place of quarantine so long as they commit to getting a second test on day six or seven after arrival, at a community pharmacy participating in the pilot program. Participants will be closely monitored through daily symptoms checks. They will also be required to follow enhanced preventive health measures, such as wearing masks in public places and avoiding visiting high-risk groups.

**October 21, 2020** - New legislation will introduce prompt payment timelines into Alberta's construction sector, ensuring contractors and subcontractors get paid on time. Proposed changes to the *Builders' Lien Act* are the first in almost 20 years and address long-standing concerns within the construction industry, including payment timelines, lien periods and adjudication. The proposed legislation would:

- Eliminate the need for contracted timelines by requiring owners, contractors and subcontractors to pay invoices within 28 days.
- Extend the deadline for unpaid contractors and subcontractors to file liens against a project with the government's Land Titles Office from 45 days to 60 days.
  - Workers in the concrete and oil and gas industries would have 90 days to file liens.
- Prohibit 'pay-when-paid' clauses from construction contracts to end the practice of transferring financial risk to subcontractors.
- Establish an adjudication system to resolve disputes, rather than rely on the courts.

**October 20, 2020** – Alberta is pressing pause on asymptomatic COVID-19 testing to help reduce testing wait times, speed up results and limit the spread. Testing remains readily available for any Albertan with symptoms, as well as anyone who has no symptoms but is a close contact or is linked to an outbreak. As of Oct. 20, AHS and pharmacies will not book new appointments for Albertans seeking asymptomatic testing. All existing appointments will be honoured until Nov. 4.

**October 13, 2020** - Effective Oct. 14, AHS assessment centres will move to an appointment-only approach. Drop-in options in Calgary and Edmonton will no longer be available to those patients who



arrive without a prearranged appointment. Testing can be booked using the online screening tool at AHS.ca. Those who don't have access to a computer can call HealthLink at 811 to complete the assessment and booking process. Priority testing remains available across the province to: any person exhibiting any [symptom of COVID-19](#); all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases; all workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites. Voluntary asymptomatic testing is also available to: school teachers and staff; health-care workers; staff and residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care; Albertans experiencing homelessness; travellers who require testing prior to departure. Asymptomatic testing will be offered to additional groups, if required. Albertans who don't have symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 should speak with their health-care provider if they have concerns about their health.

**October 8, 2020** - Alberta's government is implementing [voluntary public health measures](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Edmonton Zone and protect the health of Albertans. Effective immediately, all residents and visitors to the Edmonton Zone should:

- Limit their social and family gatherings to no more than 15 people.
- Wear non-medical masks in all indoor work settings, except when alone in workspaces, such as offices or cubicles, and where separated from others or an appropriate barrier is in place.
- Limit their number of cohorts to no more than three (a core/household cohort; a school cohort; and one additional sport, social or other cohort). Young children who attend childcare could be part of four cohorts, given that child care cohorts have not shown a high-risk of spreading COVID-19.

These additional public health measures are voluntary for the Edmonton Zone but strongly recommended. All existing guidance and public health orders remain in place. Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services and local partners in the Edmonton Zone will continue closely monitoring the spread in Edmonton and across the province to determine if additional recommendations should be made. All other health zones in the province must continue to follow the public health orders and guidance in place.

**October 1, 2020** - Parents and guardians can now access the COVID-19 test results for children under the age of 18 through [MyHealth Records](#) (MHR) as soon as they are ready. To access children's test results, parents need to provide their personal health number and the date of their child's COVID-19 test. Albertans age 14 and older could already access their COVID-19 test results immediately after signing up without waiting for mail-out verification. Sign-up is free, the only requirement is an Alberta driver's licence or identification card.

Alberta's chief medical officer of health is [not cancelling Halloween](#). Outdoor Halloween activities are lower risk and supported by public health. A new [tip sheet](#) online will help Albertans of all ages enjoy a safe and healthy Halloween. Printable posters will let people know if you are handing out treats.

**September 28, 2020** - Alberta is splitting \$2.1 million among [seven research projects](#) that include antibody detection, serology testing, treatment strategies and the real-life experiences of patients and caregivers. Five projects will be at the University of Alberta, and two at the University of Calgary.

**September 24, 2020** – In advance of Thanksgiving, the Alberta government has released a guideline for [safe holiday entertaining](#). This guideline is aimed to help families remain safe while enjoying the holiday.

**September 22, 2020** - Licensed child care programs will receive \$87 million in new funding as part of Alberta's Recovery Plan and the federal Safe Restart agreement. Licensed day care, out-of-school care, family day homes, group family child care, innovative child care and preschool programs will benefit from grant payments.

- \$15 million already provided in September (\$109 per licensed/approved space).
- The Safe Restart Agreement payments will be distributed on Oct. 15 and Nov. 15 (\$200 per licensed/approved space, plus \$2,500 per licensed program or approved agency, each month).

These grants will help licensed and approved program operators purchase additional cleaning supplies, safety equipment, and any other upgrades necessary to comply with health guidelines without increasing parent fees

**September 10, 2020** - A new [online map](#) which lists every school where there are two or more confirmed cases and an outbreak is declared. The map is updated daily and will also list schools that have shifted into scenario 2 or 3 to protect the health of students and staff. Work is underway to expand the map to include all schools where one confirmed case has been identified and alerts have been issued.

**August 18, 2020** - Albertans with no symptoms of COVID-19 will now be able to access timely testing in their community by booking asymptomatic test appointments at Shoppers Drug Mart and pharmacies in stores owned by Loblaw. More than 50 Shoppers Drug Mart and Loblaw pharmacies in Real Canadian Superstore locations are already offering asymptomatic testing, and by September 1, 2020 all 234 of the company's pharmacies in Alberta (including pharmacies at Independent Foods, Extra Foods, City Market, and No Frills) will offer asymptomatic COVID-19 testing.

**August 12, 2020** - the Alberta government has release the following recommendations for COVID-19 testing before the 2020-21 school year:

- Asymptomatic testing is recommended for all teachers and staff in the Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 education system prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year.
- Teachers and staff who wish to access asymptomatic testing are encouraged to book a test as soon as possible through Alberta Health Services using the online self-assessment tool or by contacting a participating local community pharmacy.
- Parents can continue to access testing for their children through Alberta Health Services. Testing is only recommended for those children with symptoms or pre-existing medical conditions that have symptoms similar to COVID-19.
- To ensure availability for teachers and staff, Albertans who are asymptomatic and have no known exposure to COVID are asked to wait until after Sept. 1 to access asymptomatic testing.
- Work is underway to expand Alberta's testing capacity and information about additional options for testing will be shared soon.

**July 30, 2020** - Alberta is expanding asymptomatic testing at community pharmacies, helping more people access timely COVID-19 testing close to home. Any pharmacy in the province that wants to participate and is able to meet the safety requirements can now offer testing to Albertans who have no symptoms and no known exposure to COVID-19. The expanded pharmacy testing follows the success of Alberta's pilot program launched in June. An initial group of pilot pharmacies safely tested more than 10,300 Albertans, increasing testing capacity and helping support a safe relaunch. To date, almost 677,000 COVID-19 tests have been completed across the province. Asymptomatic testing is particularly encouraged:

- Before or after spending time with individuals who have a higher risk of serious health outcomes (e.g., anyone over 65 or with underlying medical conditions)
- Before or after travelling internationally, attending an event with recent travellers or hosting them.
- Before or after participating in activities or events that may have put you at a higher risk of exposure (e.g., a large gathering where physical distancing was not followed).
- For frontline workers who have regular interactions with Albertans, particularly those at higher risk of serious outcomes.

**July 28, 2020** - Municipalities will receive \$1.1 billion to build core infrastructure that will get Albertans working, support municipal and public transit operating costs and create thousands of good-paying jobs now. Alberta's government is providing municipalities with \$500 million in additional funding to build shovel-ready infrastructure projects starting in 2020, creating thousands of jobs as part of Alberta's Recovery Plan. In addition, Alberta will match \$233 million in federal funding to support municipal operating costs during the pandemic and \$70 million to support public transit operating costs – for a total of \$606 million under the Safe Restart Agreement. Municipalities and Metis Settlements may begin applying for funding to build roads, bridges, water and wastewater treatment plants, and other important infrastructure that would not have been built in 2020 or 2021 without the stimulus.

**July 21, 2020** - Students will return to learning in classrooms across Alberta at the beginning of the new school year. Alberta's government has developed a [re-entry tool kit](#) to prepare parents and students for what to expect in the new school year. The tool kit includes videos for students explaining some of the health measures, a guide for parents, frequently asked questions, school posters, a self-screening questionnaire in multiple languages, and links to health guidelines.

**June 30, 2020** - More Albertans can attend outdoor community events. The outdoor gathering limit has been increased from 100 to 200 people. The increase applies to attendees at community outdoor events such as festivals, fireworks displays, rodeos and sporting events, and outdoor performances. All public health measures, including physical distancing, remain in place. Seated outdoor events will still require the necessary space between families and cohorts within stadium-style seating. Any large gathering increases the risk of transmission. Evidence suggests that outdoor events have a lower risk of transmission, provided other public health guidance is followed. Alberta Health will continue to monitor case numbers and adjust as necessary.

**June 28, 2020** - Starting June 29, eligible small- and medium-sized businesses, co-ops and non-profits can apply for funding so they can open their doors and get Albertans back to work. The [Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant](#) offers financial assistance to Alberta businesses, cooperatives, and non-profit organizations that faced restrictions or closures from public health orders and experienced a revenue loss of at least 50 per cent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible job creators can apply for up to \$5,000 through this program. This relief for businesses and non-profits can be used to offset the costs they are facing as they reopen their doors. This includes the costs of implementing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as physical barriers, PPE and cleaning supplies, as well as rent, employee wages, replacing inventory and more. To be eligible, small- and medium-sized businesses, cooperatives and non-profits must have 500 or fewer employees.

**June 25, 2020** - Alberta will offer asymptomatic COVID-19 testing at community pharmacies, making it easier for Albertans to access testing and help stop the spread. A limited number of community

pharmacies will begin to offer testing to Albertans without symptoms and no known exposure to COVID-19. This is in addition to the robust COVID-19 testing already offered by Alberta Health Services. Alberta remains among the world leaders in COVID-19 testing per capita. More than 415,000 tests have been completed across the province.

**June 19, 2020** – The Government of Alberta has awarded \$200 million in grants to municipalities across the province to upgrade local bridges, roads and community airports and make improvements to water supply and treatment facilities.

**June 9, 2020** - Strong testing data shows active COVID-19 cases in Alberta are lower than expected, meaning stage two of the relaunch strategy can safely begin on **June 12**, a week sooner than expected.

### What can open with restrictions

- K-12 schools, for requested diploma exams and summer school, following guidance
- Libraries
- More surgeries
- Wellness services such as massage, acupuncture and reflexology
- Personal services (esthetics, cosmetic skin and body treatments, manicures, pedicures, waxing, facial treatment, artificial tanning)
- Indoor recreation, fitness, and sports, including gyms and arenas
- Movie theatres and theatres
- Community halls
- Team sports
- Pools for leisure swimming
- VLTs in restaurants and bars
- Casinos and bingo halls (but not table games)
- Instrumental concerts

The 50 per cent capacity limit for provincial campgrounds is also being lifted. Over the coming days, the online reservation system will be updated and sites will come online in phases. By July 1, all camping sites will be open for reservations. First-come, first-served sites may open sooner. Information on additional sites will be added to [alberta.parks.ca](http://alberta.parks.ca) when they become available.

### Events and gatherings can be larger in stage two

- Maximum 50 people: Indoor social gatherings – including wedding and funeral receptions, and birthday parties
- Maximum 100 people: Outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events – including wedding and funeral ceremonies
- No cap on the number of people (with public health measures and physical distancing in place):
  - Worship gatherings
  - Restaurants, cafés, lounges and bars
  - Casinos
  - Bingo halls
- There is more flexibility for ‘cohort’ groups – small groups of people whose members do not always keep two metres apart:
  - A household can increase its close interactions with other households to a maximum of 15 people
  - Performers can have a cohort of up to 50 people (cast members or performers)
  - Sports teams can play in region-only cohorts of up to 50 players (mini leagues)

- People could be part of a sports/performing and household cohort

Everyone is encouraged to follow public health guidelines and notify others in the cohort(s) if they have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19. If they do test positive or have symptoms, mandatory isolation is required.

## Still not approved in stage two

- Social gatherings that exceed above listed maximums
- Regular in-school classes for kindergarten to Grade 12. Classes will resume September 2020
- Vocal concerts (as singing carries a higher risk of transmission)
- Major festivals and concerts, large conferences, trade shows and events (as these are non-seated social events and/or vocal concerts)
- Nightclubs
- Amusement parks
- Hookah lounges (permitted for food and drink only)
- Major sporting events and tournaments
- Non-essential travel outside the province is not recommended. This recommendation will not be lifted until stage three of the relaunch strategy.

The success of stage two will determine when Alberta progresses to stage three. Factors are active cases, health-care system capacity, hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) cases, and infection rates.

**June 8, 2020** - Effective immediately, new billing codes for “virtual” patient visits via telephone and video calls introduced for the pandemic will become permanent. Virtual care has been an important part of the COVID-19 response, protecting patients, doctors, and clinic staff by providing an alternative to office visits that avoids the risk of contact with the virus. These visits have proved their value, so we’re making them permanent, to allow physicians and patients to keep using them as appropriate while being fairly compensated.

**June 5, 2020** - To help ease the economic pinch, government is planning further measures including legislation to ensure commercial tenants will not face rent increases or be evicted for non-payment of rent due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The new measures will help address shortfalls in the current Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program, and will give eligible business owners piece of mind as they reopen and help with the provincial economic recovery.

**May 29, 2020** – The AB Government’s relaunch strategy includes providing free non-medical masks to Albertans who need them. A&W, McDonald’s Restaurants of Canada Ltd. and Tim Hortons are partnering with the Alberta government to distribute non-medical masks at no cost through their drive-thru locations across the province, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Distribution will start in early June. Government is also working with municipalities, First Nations communities, Metis Settlements and local agencies to distribute the non-medical masks to those who need them, such as people who depend on public transit.

The mask distribution program is intended to supplement an individual’s efforts to acquire non-medical masks. Albertans who wish to use non-medical masks are encouraged to purchase their own supply from local retailers in addition to using those provided by government.

**May 22, 2020** - A significant decline in the number of active cases of COVID-19 in Calgary and Brooks means both cities can reopen more businesses starting May 25. Starting May 25, hairstyling and

barbershops will be permitted to reopen in Calgary and Brooks, and cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars can reopen for table service at 50 per cent capacity. This is in addition to the reopening of limited businesses and activities in these cities on May 14.

Stage one of Alberta's relaunch strategy puts safety first as restrictions are gradually lifted. Calgary and Brooks saw a more gradual reopening because of higher case numbers in these two communities. The delay was made to balance public safety with the need to get businesses open and services restored for Albertans.

**May 20, 2020** – The Alberta government is enacting public health measures for international travellers to prevent the spread of travel-related COVID-19 cases. During the first phase, travellers arriving at the Calgary and Edmonton international airports from outside Canada will be required to pass through a provincial checkpoint where they will need to complete an Alberta isolation plan. Travellers will also undergo a thermal scan, as elevated body temperature is a potential symptom of COVID-19. As part of their isolation plan, travellers must detail if they have an appropriate place to isolate for the required 14 days, how they will travel to their isolation location, and their plans for getting essentials like food and medications. If required, provincial officials will help travellers access support to meet isolation requirements. Government officials will follow up with travellers within three days to ensure they are following public health orders and have the information and support they need.

**May 14, 2020** - Stage one of Alberta's [relaunch strategy](#) puts safety first as restrictions are gradually lifted and Albertans begin to get back to work. All workplaces are expected to develop and implement policies and procedures to address COVID-19, including a plan to reduce the risk of transmission among staff and customers. The completed plan must be posted in places of business or online within seven days of the public being able to attend the business. Information and the plan template is available at [alberta.ca/BizConnect](http://alberta.ca/BizConnect).

**May 13, 2020** – Alberta is moving into Stage of its re-launch plan. With increased infection prevention and control measures to minimize the risk of increased transmission of infections, some businesses and facilities can start to resume operations on May 14 in all areas except the cities of Calgary and Brooks:

- Retail businesses, such as clothing, furniture and bookstores. All vendors at farmers markets will also be able to operate.
- Museums and art galleries.
- Daycares and out-of-school care with limits on occupancy.
- Hairstyling and barbershops.
- Cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars will be permitted to reopen for table service only at 50 per cent capacity.
- Day camps, including summer school, will be permitted with limits on occupancy.
- Post-secondary institutions will continue to deliver courses; however, there will be more flexibility to include in-person delivery once the existing health order prohibiting in-person classes is lifted.
- Places of worship and funeral services, if they follow specific guidance already [online](#).
- The resumption of some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries will continue gradually.
- Regulated health professions are permitted to offer services as long as they continue to follow approved guidelines set by their professional colleges.

In Calgary and Brooks, the relaunch will be gradual over 18 days due to higher COVID-19 case numbers in these communities. To be clear, activities still not permitted in stage one are:

- Gatherings of more than 15 people unless otherwise identified in [public health orders](#) or [guidance](#).
- Gatherings of 15 people or fewer must follow personal distancing and other public health guidelines.
- Arts and culture festivals, major sporting events and concerts, all of which involve close physical contact.
- Movie theatres, theatres, pools, recreation centres, arenas, spas, gyms and nightclubs will remain closed.
- Services offered by allied health disciplines like acupuncture and massage therapy.
- Visitors to patients at health-care facilities will continue to be limited; however, outdoor visits are allowed with a designated essential visitor and one other person (a group of up to three people, including the resident), where space permits. However, physical distancing must be practised and all visitors must wear a mask or some other form of face covering.
- In-school classes for kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

**May 11, 2020** - To support businesses reopening during stage one of Alberta's phased relaunch, government is launching a new resource to help them keep their staff and customers safer. The new [alberta.ca/bizconnect](http://alberta.ca/bizconnect) webpage will provide business owners with information on health and safety guidelines for general workplaces and sector-specific guidelines for those able to open in stage one of relaunch to ensure businesses can reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**May 1, 2020** - As part of its relaunch strategy, the Government of Alberta has launched a voluntary, secure mobile contact tracing application to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Contact tracing is currently performed by interviewing patients who have tested positive for COVID-19, which is resource intensive and has limitations on its effectiveness as it relies on the patient's memory. Through wireless Bluetooth technology, mobile contact tracing will complement the work of health-care workers and drastically speed up the current manual tracing process. This means Albertans will be contacted more quickly if they are at risk. The application is part of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy to safely begin to remove public health restrictions and reopen our economy. Existing public health measures remain in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. For more information, visit [alberta.ca/covid-19](http://alberta.ca/covid-19).

**April 30, 2020** – Alberta announced a phased to gradually reopen closed businesses and services and get people back to work. The plan to move forward requires careful and ongoing monitoring and respecting all guidelines outlined by the chief medical officer of health:

- Alberta Health Services will resume some [scheduled, non-urgent surgeries](#) as soon as **May 4**.
- [Dental and other health-care workers](#), such as physiotherapists, speech language pathologists, respiratory therapists, audiologists, social workers, occupational therapists, dieticians and more, will be allowed to resume services starting **May 4**, as long as they are following approved guidelines set by their professional colleges.

Recognizing the role that access to the outdoors and recreation in the outdoors plays to Albertans' sense of well-being, access to provincial parks and public lands will be re-opened using a phased approach, beginning with:

- [Vehicle access to parking lots](#) and staging areas in parks and on public lands opening **May 1**.
- Opening a number of [boat launches](#) in provincial parks on **May 1** and working to have them all open by May 14. Check [albertaparks.ca](http://albertaparks.ca) for the status of boat launches.

- Government is working hard to make campsites available as soon as possible, with the goal to have as many open as possible by June 1 so Albertans can enjoy our parks while adhering to current health orders. At this time, sites are open to Albertans only. Check [albertaparks.ca](http://albertaparks.ca) for updates.
- Group and comfort camping will not be offered. Campground facility access restrictions to areas such as showers, picnic and cooking shelters will also be posted to [albertaparks.ca](http://albertaparks.ca).
- Alberta Parks' online reservation system will be available May 14 to book site visits beginning June 1. Out-of-province bookings will not be processed.
- No washrooms or garbage pickup will be available within provincial parks at this time. These services will be available as soon as Alberta Environment and Parks brings staff back. These seasonal positions represent an important opportunity for Albertans to secure employment during challenging economic times.
- Fire bans in parks, protected areas and the Forest Protection Area remain in place.
- No off-highway vehicle restrictions are currently in place. Local restrictions may be required if the risk for wildfires increases.
- Private and municipal campgrounds and parks can open with physical distancing restrictions, under their own local authority.
- Golf courses can open **May 2**, with restrictions including keeping clubhouses and pro shops closed. On-site shops and restaurants can open in stage one, consistent with other businesses and retailers.

Additional restrictions will be lifted in stages when safe. Before moving to stage one, several safeguards will be put in place:

- Enhancing nation-leading COVID-19 testing capacity at the highest level in Canada.
- Robust and comprehensive contact tracing, aided by technology, to quickly notify people who may have been exposed.
- Support for those who test positive for COVID-19, to enable isolation and effectively contain the spread.
- Stronger international border controls and airport screening, especially for international travellers.
- Rules and guidance for the use of masks in crowded spaces, especially on mass transit.
- Maintaining strong protections for the most vulnerable, including those in long-term care, continuing care and seniors lodges.

A rapid response plan is in place in the event of possible outbreaks of COVID-19. This includes outbreak protocols to quickly identify close contacts in order to stop spread, making testing widely available including testing those without symptoms in outbreak settings, and providing temporary housing for isolation and other necessary supports for anyone at risk.

Physical distancing requirements of two metres will remain in place through all stages of relaunch and hygiene practices will continue to be required of businesses and individuals, along with instructions for Albertans to stay home when exhibiting symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat.

Progress to Stage 1 will occur once health measures are achieved to the satisfaction of the government based on the advice of the chief medical officer of health, as early as **May 14**. Further details of each stage can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=70217037B8E9C-C319-32CC-240D33487895E4F7>



**April 24, 2020** - Alberta has joined other provinces, the territories and federal government in a program to help small businesses pay rent. The new Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program will give certainty to small businesses by providing 50 per cent of monthly commercial rental costs. Eligible landlords and tenants would each be responsible for 25 per cent of the remaining costs. About the CECRA:

- CECRA will provide a loan retroactive to April 1 to qualified commercial property owners supporting 50 per cent of rent for April, May, and June of this year.
- The loan will be forgivable if the property owner and tenant come to a rent forgiveness agreement that lowers the eligible small business's rent by 75 per cent for the three months and includes a moratorium on eviction.
- The program is anticipated to be running by mid-May and will be administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).
- Qualifying small businesses will be required to:
  - pay less than \$50,000 in rent
  - have been asked to close, or near-close their operations due to COVID-19
  - be experiencing at least a 70 per cent decrease in revenues
- CECRA will also be available to non-profit and charitable organizations.
- The province expects to commit up to \$67 million, with the remaining and majority of costs being covered by the federal government.

Further details on CECRA will be shared by CMHC in the coming weeks when final terms and conditions are available. Until that time, property owners are encouraged to provide flexibility to tenants facing hardship in this uncertain time.

**April 14, 2020** – The government is moving forward with tender packages for the design and construction of four K-9 and one K-4 school projects that will be located throughout the province.

**April 9, 2020** – Doubled capital maintenance and renewal (CMR) funding in 2020-21 from \$937 million to \$1.9 billion by accelerating the capital plan, getting thousands of Albertans back to work resurfacing roads, repairing bridges, restoring schools, fixing potholes and more.

**April 6, 2020** – Confirmation of temporary rules in place to provide job protection for workers and flexibility for employers during this pandemic. The changes take effect immediately and will be in place as long as government determines it is needed and the public health emergency order remains.

Changes for employees

- Employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures or ill or self-isolated family members due to COVID-19 will have access to unpaid job-protected leave. The 90-day employment requirement is waived and leave length is flexible.

Changes for employees and employers

- Increasing the maximum time for a temporary layoff from 60 days to 120 days to ensure temporarily laid off employees stay attached to a job longer. This change is retroactive for any temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17.

Changes for employers

- Improving scheduling flexibility by removing the 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes, and the two weeks' notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement.
- Removing the requirement to provide the group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are being terminated.

- Streamlining the process for approvals related to modifying employment standards so employers and workers can respond quicker to changing conditions at the workplace due to the public health emergency.

**March 27, 2020** – To protect the health and safety of Albertans, mass gatherings will be limited to 15 people. Alberta has also announced its list of essential services. Workplaces that have not been ordered to close can continue to have more than 15 workers on a worksite as long as those business maintain public health measures, including two metre social distancing, hygiene enforcement and processes that ensure that any person who is ill does not attend these spaces. List of essential services can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/essential-services.aspx>

**March 25, 2020** – Public health orders will now be enforced by law to protect the health and safety of Albertans. Fines for violating an order have increased to a prescribed fine of \$1,000 per occurrence. Courts will also have increased powers to administer fines of up to \$100,000 for a first offence and up to \$500,000 for a subsequent offence for more serious violations.

- Public health orders will include mandatory self-isolation for travellers returning from outside of Canada for 14 days, plus an additional 10 days from the onset of any symptoms should they occur, whichever is longer.
- This legal requirement also applies to close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, as well as to any individual with COVID-19 symptoms, which consist of a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat.
- Orders regarding restrictions around mass gatherings, public recreational facilities, private entertainment facilities, and visitations to long-term care and other continuing care facilities are also enforceable, along with any future public health orders.

**March 23, 2020** – Additional Financial Support for Albertans and employers:

- Effective immediately, the government will defer education property tax for businesses for six months.
- Private sector employers will have immediate financial relief by deferring WCB premiums until early 2021, effectively for one year.
- For small and medium businesses, the government will cover 50 per cent of the premium when it is due.

**March 20, 2020** - Job Protection Measures announced to allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are required to self-isolate, and/or they are caring for a child or dependent adult that is required to self-isolate. This legislation is retroactive to March 5, 2020. At this time, this new job-protected leave is meant to cover the 14-day self-isolation period recommended by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer. The duration of this leave could be extended as the virus continues to unfold and medical recommendations are adjusted accordingly. Where this leave is not appropriate or insufficient for the employee's particular circumstances, employees can request to use their vacation pay or banked overtime, but employers are not required to grant the request. Similarly, employers may request that employees voluntarily take vacation leave and/or use their vacation pay or banked overtime, however, the employer cannot unilaterally enforce this on employees under provincial employment standards.

**March 19, 2020** - To ease pressure on businesses in Alberta, corporate income tax balances and instalment payments will be deferred until August 31, 2020. This measure provides an estimated \$1.5 billion in available access to cash to enable employers to focus on continuing to pay employees, address debts, and sustain operations during this pandemic period. Employees may also benefit from a six-month interest free moratorium on student loans and mortgage payments beginning March 30, 2020. Individuals will not need to apply for the repayment pause.

**March 18, 2020** – As a supplement to the Federal government’s EI measures, the Alberta government will launch an Emergency Isolation Support program meant to bridge employees until the federal Emergency Benefit Care payments are available in early to mid-April. The Emergency Isolation Report is budgeted to provide \$1,146 as a one-time payment to employees in self-isolation, who are also not eligible for, and not receiving EI benefits during this time. The \$1,146 one-time payment matches two normal maximum EI payments, equivalent to approximately \$573 each.

**March 16, 2020** - Premier Kenney announced the Government of Alberta’s intention to introduce paid (through EI) leave during the 14 day isolation period recommended by Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer (CMO), as a means of managing, in part, the effect of the pandemic on employers, their employees, and their workplaces. This 14 days of paid job-protected leave for any employees who are required to self-isolate, or those who are sick or caring for a loved one with COVID-19, will be implemented under the *Alberta Employment Standards Code* (the “Code”). Employees will not be required to produce a medical note, nor do they need to have worked for their employer for more than 90 days to be eligible for the new leave.

## British Columbia:

**January 8, 2021** - The Province is fine-tuning compliance and enforcement provisions for orders on face coverings, gatherings and events, and food and liquor serving premises. The intent of the orders remains unchanged and will continue to allow violation tickets to be issued to non-compliant persons, owners and operators, and hosts to ensure public safety and alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes include:

- more clarity around the specific prohibitions found in public health orders for gatherings and events and for food and liquor serving premises; and
- an amended face coverings order, with an additional exemption for persons who need to remove a face covering to communicate with a person who is hearing impaired. No other substantive policy changes have been made.

British Columbians are reminded under current public health orders, police and provincial enforcement officers can issue:

- \$2,300 tickets to hosts/organizers who do not comply with the provincial health officer's (PHO) orders;
- \$230 tickets to patrons/attendees who do not comply with the PHO orders;
- \$230 tickets for contravening the face coverings order; and
- \$230 tickets for abusive or belligerent behaviour and/or for refusing to comply with the direction of enforcement officers.

In addition, courts can impose penalties of up to \$10,000 and/or up to one-year imprisonment for egregious offences.

**January 7, 2021** - The current provincial health officer's orders on all gatherings and events have been extended through to Feb. 5, 2021, at midnight. The same restriction, including on social gatherings in people's homes and in public venues, and all events and sports activities continue to apply. In addition to these orders, the province also strongly recommend everyone limit their travel between communities and outside of the province unless it is absolutely essential for work or medical care.

**December 9, 2020** - The first limited round of approximately 4,000 vaccines will be administered to Lower Mainland health-care workers who work in long-term care homes and front-line health-care workers essential to the COVID-19 response. Vaccines will continue arriving each week in B.C. in increasing quantities, with targeted deployment for people in priority groups. Expected timelines will depend on vaccine approval and availability. A registration and record system is in development, including a process to register for vaccine access and receive a formal record of immunization.

**December 7, 2020** – In the speech from the throne, a new Recovery Benefit was announced. Families with a combined household income of less than \$125,000 per year will be eligible to receive \$1,000; families earning above that, up to \$170,000, will receive payments on a sliding scale. Individuals earning less than \$62,000 a year will be eligible for \$500, with those earning up to \$87,000 eligible for a payment on a sliding scale. The BC Recovery Benefit will give people some financial help during a hard time, while benefiting the local economy. Government will also take significant steps to assist small- and medium-sized businesses in weathering the economic storm caused by COVID-19. New tax measures will reward businesses for hiring, and help them grow and become more productive by making it easier for them to invest in equipment and machinery.

**November 19, 2020** – Today, the previously issued regional orders were expanded across the province. As was the case for the previous regional orders, the new provincewide orders focus on three areas: social gatherings, workplaces and group physical activities.

- **Social gatherings** - All indoor or outdoor events as defined in our Gathering and Events order are prohibited. This includes religious, cultural or community events, with the exception of baptisms, funerals and weddings. These may proceed with up to 10 people including an officiant if a COVID-19 safety plan is in place. There are to be no associated receptions of any kind in any venue. There are to be no social gatherings at residences with anyone other than those who reside there. People who live alone must host no gatherings but can continue to see one or two of the same members of their core pandemic bubble at home.
- **Group physical activities** - Businesses, recreation centres or other venues that organize or operate indoor group spin classes, hot yoga and high-intensity interval training will stop for the fall and winter. Guidance on other physical activities done with a group indoors will need to follow updated guidance that is being developed. Sports activities can continue, but there is to be no travel outside of communities for games or competitions, and no spectators are allowed. League organizers should continue planning for 2021 with today's modifications in mind.
- **Workplace safety** - All businesses and worksites must conduct active daily screening of all on-site workers using their COVID-19 safety plans. Workers and customers must wear masks in indoor public and retail spaces (except when eating or drinking), and in workplace common areas, including elevators, hallways, group or break rooms, kitchens and customer counters. Office-based employers should temporarily suspend their efforts to safely get employees back to their workplace and support work-from-home options wherever possible.
- **Travel** - All non-essential travel outside of one's community is strongly discouraged. People travelling to stay with immediate family members should ensure they do not host or participate in any social gatherings.

**November 7, 2020** - Today, new provincial health officer orders have been put in place for all individuals, places of work and businesses across the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health regions, with the exception of the central coast and the Bella Coola Valley. The orders are in effect starting today, Saturday, Nov. 7 at 10 p.m. through to Monday, Nov. 23, 2020, at 12 p.m.

Right now, it is very important that everyone in these regions significantly reduces their social interactions. The orders focus on three areas: social gatherings, group physical activities and workplaces, and are outlined in the following link - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/lower-mainland>

In support of this new order, active inspections are being increased and businesses that do not comply will be subject to fines, and/or ordered to close, until a refreshed safety plan and commitment to comply are established.

They are strongly recommending travel into and out of these regions be limited to essential travel only and people within the regions stay within their local community, as much as possible.

**November 6, 2020** - The BCCDC has implemented a texting service for new cases of COVID-19. People in B.C. can now sign up to receive text notification of both positive or negative test results, in addition to test results being available through Health Gateway and other online portals. For more information, go to: [www.bccdc.ca/results](http://www.bccdc.ca/results)

**October 26, 2020** – A new provincial health officer order was put into place today limiting gatherings in private homes to no more than your immediate household, plus six others. This is a provincewide order that applies to all homes for all occasions. Enforcement will be stepped up to ensure people are following this new order, with the immediate focus on the Fraser Health region, where the increase in new cases is most notable.

In addition to this new order and in light of the increased risks with respiratory season, the expectation is that people will wear masks in all indoor public spaces. As part of this, businesses are asked to review their COVID-19 safety plans with this in mind. If you are in a high-traffic area or among many people outside of your household while at work, a mask will help to protect you and those around you.

**September 28, 2020** - Public health contact tracing in BC has shown the primary source of COVID-19 transmission continues to be through socializing with others – whether in your home or less controlled settings. They are urging residents to take a step back from our social interactions, see fewer people and travel less right now.

**September 17, 2020** – Premier John Horgan and Carole James, Minister of Finance, have released Stronger BC for Everyone: BC's Economic Recovery Plan. The plan outlines the latest steps the Government of British Columbia is taking to help people, businesses and communities recover and come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared. B.C.'s total provincial response to the COVID-19 pandemic exceeds \$8.25 billion. The next steps in B.C.'s recovery plan will help build a stronger, more resilient economy for everyone.

- **Making health care better** by hiring 7,000 new front-line health-care workers.
- **Creating jobs and opportunities** by investing in targeted and short-term training in the skills people need to get work in high-demand fields, including for those who want to move into new, front-line health, child care and human-service positions
- **Helping businesses grow and rehire** with a 15% refundable tax credit based on eligible new payroll. It will also introduce a small- and medium-sized business recovery grant to support approximately 15,000 hard-hit businesses, while protecting as many as 200,000 jobs.
- **Supporting strong communities** by investing over \$400 million to revitalize community infrastructure and support local governments to provide the valuable services people depend on.

Today, a new made-in-B.C. sample collection program has been launched for all K-12 students across the province. One of the first of its kind worldwide. For school-aged children four to 19, a mouth-rinse gargle is now available at COVID-19 collection centres around the province. Unlike the nasopharyngeal swab method, this new saline method doesn't require a health-care professional to collect the sample. Not only is the new method more comfortable for younger people, a B.C. company will provide the collection tube, reducing the province's dependency on the global supply chain for this sample method.

**September 9, 2020** - The Province is investing \$1.6 billion in a fall and winter preparedness plan that will significantly build upon and strengthen measures that respond to the health-care requirements of COVID-19. The plan will provide new support to seniors in long-term care homes and assisted-living facilities, by ensuring more British Columbians than ever before can get a flu shot, and by reducing the chance for transmission of COVID-19 in B.C. hospitals.

The Government is dedicating \$44.1 million to launch the [Health Career Access Program](#) and recruit an estimated 7,000 health-care workers in long-term care homes and assisted-living facilities throughout the province. The program will provide a path for approximately 3,000 applicants who may not previously have had health-care experience to receive on-the-job training. New hires in the program will start in a health-care support worker position and receive paid training that leads to full qualification as a health-care assistant.

To further protect vulnerable British Columbians, the Province is providing \$374 million to bolster public health measures, including significantly building out the fall [flu immunization campaign](#). As part of this, 45,000 Fluzone-High Dose immunizations will be made available to all long-term care and assisted living residents. Fluzone-High Dose is a higher dose vaccine designed specifically to protect people over 65 from influenza. An additional 450,000 influenza vaccine doses will be made available in the 2020-21 influenza season, for a total of approximately two million doses.

The Government is also dedicating \$42.3 million to ease the pressures off B.C. hospitals and reduce the chance of COVID-19 transmission in the hospitals. [Hospital at Home](#), an innovative program that has succeeded in Canada and around the world, allows patients who meet the criteria to be offered 24/7 care at home rather than being admitted to hospital. Through in-person and virtual visits, patients will receive safe, effective care from nurses and physicians experienced in hospital medicine and acute care. Hospital at Home will launch through the Victoria General Hospital, then through additional hospitals over the coming months.

**September 8, 2020** - The provincial health officer's order on bars, nightclubs and banquet halls has been amended. Effective today, all nightclubs and stand-alone banquet halls are ordered closed until further notice. Liquor sales in all bars, pubs and restaurants must cease at 10 p.m. and they must close at 11 p.m., unless providing a full meal service, in which case they may stay open, but may not serve liquor until 11 a.m. the following day. Music or other background sounds, such as from televisions in bars, lounges, pubs and restaurants, must be no louder than the volume of normal conversation.

**September 2, 2020** - The Province is boosting funds immediately for school-based wellness programs and supports by \$2 million, topping up the \$8.8-million investment over three years that was announced last September. This means that for the 2020-21 school year, school districts and independent school authorities will receive a total of \$3.75 million to promote mental wellness and provide additional supports for students, families and educators as they work together to get through this challenging time. As families, teachers and staff prepare for a school year that looks very different, help is available if worries begin to feel unmanageable. Free and low-cost counselling services are available online, by video and phone through programs such as BounceBack, Living Life to the Full, Here2Talk, Foundry's virtual services and more, for anyone who needs someone to talk to.

**August 26, 2020** - Back to school plans for K-12 families are now posted for all 60 school districts, so parents and families can prepare to support their children for a safe return to the classroom. Families should visit their school district website to view their local school's plans. The Ministry of Education has also given school districts the flexibility and certainty to find options that work for families. This includes the authority for all school boards to offer remote options to students within their districts, as well as the tools they need to increase their existing programs to meet demand. Parents will find detailed back to school plans on their district website. In addition to health and safety measures, the plans include:

- how learning groups will be organized;
- when masks are required;
- daily schedules for classes, lunch and recess;

- daily health assessment requirements;
- pick-up and drop off times;
- protocols for common areas;
- hand washing directions; and
- orientation information.

Every day, school districts are prepared to welcome all students to elementary and middle schools. For secondary schools, timetables have been modified to adhere to the health and safety requirements and ensure that all students can attend most days, with much of their instruction occurring in-class. The majority of school districts (68%) are moving to a quarterly semester system in some or all of their secondary schools.

**August 24, 2020** - Athletes throughout British Columbia will be able to engage in more organized sport activities and some competitive play as the Province moves to Phase 3 of the Return to Sport Guidelines. The guidelines contain recommendations for how different types of sports now can progressively add activities back again while continuing to adhere to current public health recommendations. This new guidance addresses contact activities, cohorts, competitions, high-performance training environments and travel.

**August 21, 2020** - Police and other provincial enforcement officers have been given the ability to issue \$2,000 violation tickets for owners or organizers contravening the provincial health officer's (PHO) order on gatherings and events. They will also be able to issue \$200 violation tickets to individuals not following the direction of police or enforcement staff at events or who refuse to comply with requests to follow PHO orders or safe operating procedures, or respond with abusive behaviour.

The enforcement focus will be on \$2,000 fines to owners, operators and organizers for contraventions of the provincial health officer's order on gatherings and events. This includes hosting a private party or public event in excess of 50 people, failing to provide appropriate hand sanitation and washroom facilities, failing to provide sufficient space in the venue for physical distancing, failing to obtain a list of names and contacts at large event or having more than five guests gathered in a vacation accommodation.

**August 17, 2020** - School districts have received updated operational guidelines to help ensure a consistent provincewide approach to keep schools safe for all students, teachers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the updated health and safety guidelines, masks will be required for staff, middle and secondary students in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. Other health and safety guidelines include:

- increased cleaning of high-contact surfaces like doorknobs, keyboards, desks and chairs;
- increased hand hygiene with all students, staff and visitors being required to clean their hands before boarding school buses and entering school buildings, before and after eating, using the washroom and using playground equipment; and
- school districts may also install transparent barriers for people who have more contact with others, such as front-desk staff, bus drivers or food services staff, where appropriate.

More information on learning groups, including examples can be found

online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>



**April 7, 2020** - There continue to be community exposure events throughout the province and on flights into and out of British Columbia. Alerts are posted on the BC Centre for Disease Control's website, as well as on health authorities' websites, providing details on where the potential exposure occurred and what actions you need to take – whether you need to immediately self-isolate, or monitor for symptoms.

**June 24, 2020** – British Columbia has entered “Stage 3” of its Re-Start Plan, which is a staged approach to increasing travel throughout the Province, and otherwise re-opening businesses and services in British Columbia in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Province also announced it is extending the state of emergency another two weeks, until July 7<sup>th</sup>. The following changes will be implemented as a result of B.C. entering Stage 3, which will affect some businesses operating in the Province. Those affected will be permitted to operate subject to their ability to comply with existing social distancing protocols and guidance:

### *Travel within BC*

The Premier is now encouraging travel within the Province, and requests visitors respect the communities they visit and continue to observe social distancing measures. British Columbia is now welcoming visitors from elsewhere in Canada, particularly the bordering provinces of Alberta and Yukon, so long as social distancing measures are observed. While inter-provincial travel was never formally restricted in BC, previously the Premier had requested it be limited to only essential purposes.

### *Hotels, motels, RV parks, cabins, resorts, hostels, lodges, and backcountry operators*

Although the accommodation industry was never formally ordered to be closed in B.C., many operators closed voluntarily given the lack of travel within the Province, and the recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer. The accommodation industry is expected to operate consistent with the protocols set by WorkSafeBC as Stage 3 commences. BC Parks overnight campgrounds are also now open and accepting reservations.

### *Motion picture and television production*

It is expected that motion picture and television production in B.C. will resume during Stage 3. Employers in this industry must ensure they are compliant with WorkSafeBC protocols, and all relevant orders and guidance from the Provincial Health Officer.

### *K-12 School (In person)*

K-12 schools have gradually re-opened in B.C., on a voluntary and part-time basis. As part of Stage 3, it is anticipated that a return to full-time in class learning will resume in September 2020, if it is safe to do so.

**June 19, 2020** - In early April, the Province introduced COVID-19 border screening measures, unprecedented in Canada, to help ensure British Columbians returning home from international destinations had the support they need to manage self-isolation plans and keep B.C. communities safe. Following the current transition period with the federal government, B.C. will end provincially led border check points on Saturday, June 20, 2020. Federal screening measures currently in place will continue. Service BC will also continue compliance and wellness checks to ensure travellers can effectively maintain their 14-day self-isolation.

**June 2, 2020** - The Government of British Columbia reopened in-class instruction to all students on Monday, June 1, 2020, with about 30% of expected enrolment in attendance. As part of Stage 3 of B.C.'s

return to schools, all families have been given the option to have their children back in classrooms for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. Families who choose not to send their children to school are still being supported by teachers remotely. Schools are designating specific time for teachers to focus on remote education.

**June 1, 2020** - B.C. businesses eligible for rent support from the federal government will be protected from evictions as the B.C. government issues a new order under the Emergency Program Act (EPA). Eligible businesses whose landlords choose not to apply for the federal CECRA program will be protected from evictions due to unpaid rent payments through to the end of June 2020, as determined by the federal program timelines. The EPA order restricts the termination of lease agreements and the repossession of goods and property.

**May 22, 2020** - While Phase 2 is now underway, the provincial health officer order restricting mass gatherings to no more than 50 individuals remains in place. Further, the order has been amended to also include no more than 50 vehicles for outdoor drive-in events, with a restriction on the sale of refreshments. Anyone attending these events must stay in their cars unless they have to go to washrooms, which must be serviced with running water for proper hand hygiene.

Government has taken action to support the province's hospitality sector by temporarily authorizing the expansion of service areas, such as patios, to support physical distancing requirements and industry recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**May 15, 2020** - As British Columbia prepares to enter Phase 2 of its economic restart plan, the Province welcomes the release of the initial set of WorkSafeBC guidelines that will help businesses and organizations develop their plans to reopen safely in the coming days and weeks. Industry-specific guidance and resources are available online: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation>

Parents will have the choice of bringing their children back to class on a part-time basis this school year as part of BC's Restart Plan, with the goal of returning to full-time classes in September 2020, provided it is safe to do so.

**May 13, 2020** – BC is extending the provincial state of emergency until May 26, 2020 to support continued co-ordination of the pandemic response.

**May 6, 2020** - BC will move forward with safely restarting their province beginning in mid-May, according to a plan announced by Premier John Horgan. Restarting economic activity will look different in B.C. than in other jurisdictions, because only a small number of sectors in the province were closed by public health order. Many other provinces are just now reaching the level of safe operations B.C. has been able to maintain throughout the pandemic. B.C. is currently in Phase 1 of the restart plan. Phase 2, which will begin in mid-May, includes:

- small social gatherings;
- a resumption of elective surgeries and regulated health services like physiotherapy, dentistry, chiropractors and in-person counselling;
- provincial parks open for day use;
- opening more non-essential businesses in keeping with safe operations plans;
- recalling the provincial legislature for regular sittings.

Essential businesses that have remained open during the pandemic have done so safely with the support of WorkSafeBC. Government will build on this successful experience by supporting all businesses as they take steps toward a successful reopening.

The target date for the start of Phase 3, which will include opening up of additional businesses and services, is between June and September 2020, if transmission rates remain low or in decline. Phase 4 will only be achieved when the threat of COVID-19 has been significantly diminished through widespread vaccination, broad successful treatments, evidence of community immunity, or the equivalent.

**May 4, 2020** - To ease financial hardship on businesses and to keep employees connected with their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, government has extended the temporary layoff period to 16 weeks for COVID-19 related reasons. This change to the Employment Standards Act aligns B.C.'s temporary layoff provisions with the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit period. The federal period provides 16 weeks of financial support, allowing employees to take full advantage of those benefits. It also allows employees to keep their job, even if they are not working, for 16 weeks of temporary layoff. Employers will be able to quickly resume operations should the public health emergency end within that time.

**May 1, 2020** - British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected because of the COVID-19 pandemic and are receiving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) can now apply for the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers (BCEBW) online. The BCEBW is a one-time, tax-free payment of \$1,000 for eligible British Columbians. To be eligible for the BCEBW, people must:

- have been a resident of B.C. on March 15, 2020;
- meet the eligibility requirements for the CERB;
- have been approved for the CERB, even if a federal benefit payment has not yet been received;
- be at least 15 years old on the date of application;
- have filed, or agree to file, a 2019 B.C. income tax return; and
- not be receiving provincial income assistance or disability assistance.

Applying online is the fastest, easiest way to receive the benefit. To apply, British Columbians with their social insurance number and direct deposit information can go to: [www.gov.bc.ca/workerbenefit](http://www.gov.bc.ca/workerbenefit) On Monday, May 4, 2020, agents will be available by phone to assist people who need help applying, including those who do not have internet access.

**April 29, 2020** – the provincial state of emergency is being extended for the third time, to support the extraordinary measures taken by the Province under the Emergency Program Act to keep people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each extension is for an additional 14 days. The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials.

**April 24, 2020** - British Columbia has partnered with the federal government on the CECRA, a welcome next step that will help thousands of commercial property owners and tenants in British Columbia. Launching in mid-May 2020, the CECRA will see B.C. small businesses receive a total of over \$300 million in federal-provincial relief, with B.C. contributing an estimated \$80 million. The 75% reduction in monthly rent for small businesses affected by COVID-19 will be achieved by providing forgivable loans to cover 50% of the rent payments for eligible small business tenants for April, May and June. The loans will be forgiven if the landlord reduces the tenant's monthly rent by at least 75%. The commercial tenant would be responsible for covering 25%, the property owner 25%, while the federal and provincial governments share the remaining 50%.

**April 19, 2020** - Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, has given police and other enforcement officers the ability to issue \$2,000 violation tickets for price gouging and the reselling of medical supplies and other essential goods during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If required, police and other enforcement officers will also be able to actively enforce and ticket those who:

- exceed the quantity limits on the sale of specified items; and
- do not comply with the requirement for hotel and other lodging operators to provide accommodation at the request of the Province to serve as self-isolation facilities or to support essential workers.

**April 16, 2020** - The Province is providing enhanced relief for businesses by reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%, along with new measures to support local governments facing temporary revenue shortfalls as a result of COVID-19.

A new B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service will serve as a single point of contact for businesses throughout the province looking for information on resources available during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020JEDC0008-000700>

**April 8, 2020** – Effective immediately, international travellers (including from the United States) coming to the province are required to provide a self-isolation plan before or upon arrival to B.C., regardless of their point of entry to Canada. This document, which can be submitted online or completed in person on arrival, must show that returning travellers have supports in place to safely self-isolate for 14 days. Beginning Friday, April 10, 2020, provincial officials will be on hand at the Vancouver International Airport and major land border crossings to make sure self-isolation plans are complete and to assist those who need it. Upon border arrival, self-isolation plans will be reviewed by officials, and travellers will be supported as follows:

- If a self-isolation plan is submitted and approved, travellers will receive a confirmation. This confirmation can be shown on arrival. Travellers with approved plans will proceed to their home residence (or another identified accommodation) to self-isolate.
- If an airline traveller arrives and an adequate self-isolation plan is proposed but needs additional support to execute safely (e.g., enlist volunteers to deliver groceries or fill prescriptions once at home), travellers may be taken or directed to an accommodation site provided in collaboration with the provincial and federal governments to begin self-isolation, while outstanding details of their plan are put in place. With an approved self-isolation plan, they may return home. Without an approved plan, they will remain at an accommodation site for 14 days.
- If a traveller arrives at a major land border crossing and needs additional supports to execute a self-isolation plan, they will be sent directly home to start self-isolating and will be followed up with by officials for additional support.
- If a traveller does not have a self-isolation plan or is unable to safely carry one out as determined by officials, they may be transported or sent to an accommodation provided by government where they can safely complete their 14-day self-isolation.

Emergency Management BC, through a network of community supports and volunteer organizations, will help travellers with necessary food deliveries, prescription drugs and other supplies so people can safely self-isolate for 14 days.

The Province, through Service BC, will follow up with travellers in self-isolation with telephone calls and text messages to make sure people have the support they need to complete their mandatory self-isolation. If required, the Province will work with travellers to modify self-isolation plans to ensure public safety.

BC Parks is immediately closing all provincial parks in response to the widespread call for increased action to address COVID-19. The closure responds to both the federal and provincial directives that people should stay close to home to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk. This temporary measure means people should not be going to provincial parks until further notice.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is establishing an Emergency Relief Support Fund for children and youth with special needs and their families. The fund will provide a direct payment of \$225 per month to eligible families over the next three months (to June 30, 2020).

Using a needs-based approach, the emergency funding will support 50% more of the eligible families that are currently awaiting services. This payment can be used to purchase supports that help alleviate stress. These could include:

- meal preparation and grocery shopping assistance;
- homemaking services
- caregiver relief support (e.g., funded support to allow a family member to provide temporary care for a child or youth);
- counselling services, online or by phone; and
- and other services that support family functioning.

**April 2, 2020** - Government is taking steps to protect those providing essential services by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities. The order is being introduced because a number of essential service business owners identified challenges with their insurance as a result of the pandemic. The changes government is implementing are intended to assist with some of these concerns. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AG0029-000616>

**April 1, 2020** - BC Hydro will offer new, targeted bill relief to provide immediate help to those most in need. Residential customers who have lost their jobs or are unable to work as a result of COVID-19 will receive a credit to help cover the cost of their electricity bills. The credit will be three times their average monthly bill over the past year at their home and does not have to be repaid.

Small businesses that have been forced to close due to COVID-19 will have their power bills forgiven for three months. BC Hydro is waiving bills for these customers from April to June 2020.

Major industries, like pulp and paper mills and mines, will have the opportunity to defer 50% of their bill payments for three months.

**March 27, 2020** - Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, strongly discourage any in-person gathering of any size at this time, but rather encourage using the many online options we have available today to stay connected to friends, family, customers and clients.

New guidelines for school leaders and a new website are being introduced to support B.C.'s K-12 students while in-class education is suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Every student in K-12 will receive a final mark for the 2019-20 school year, and all students who are on track to move to the next grade will do so in the fall. Every student eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this school year will also graduate. On average, about 45,000 students graduate every year. The Ministry of Education is also

working across government to ensure all students graduating high school will have a smooth transition to post-secondary education.

**March 26, 2020** – BC announced its list of essential services. Currently, any business or service that has not been ordered to close by provincial order, and is not on this list, may stay open if it can adapt its services and workplace to the orders and recommendations of Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. The list of essential services can be found here:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PSSG0020-000568>

**March 24, 2020** – BC announced its COVID-19 Action Plan to include:

- A one-time, tax-free B.C. Emergency Benefit of \$1,000 will be available for workers whose ability to work has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. This payment will be available to individuals who are eligible for federal Employment Insurance as a result of the impact of COVID-19, including the new federal Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit. This means workers that are typically not EI-eligible, such as self-employed workers, will be able to access the B.C. Emergency Benefit, which is expected to become available by May 2020.
- The Province will also provide a “top-up” to the B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit in July 2020. This payment will go to 86% of individuals and families, in amounts of up to \$218 for adults and \$64 per child.
- \$2.2 billion dedicated to providing relief to businesses in BC and help them recover following the COVID-19 pandemic. Details as to the exact allocation of that money are presently not clear.
- Targeted tax relief will be offered as well, including deferrals of tax filing and payment deadlines.

Further details are available here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0013-000545>

**March 23, 2020** - BC government introduced amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*, creating two new unpaid statutory leaves:

**COVID-19-related Leave** - Employees meeting the following criteria are entitled to an unpaid leave of absence:

- Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 and acting in accordance with advice from a medical health officer, or a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse;
- Employees in quarantine or self-isolation in accordance with an order of the provincial health officer, an order made under the *Quarantine Act*, or the guidelines imposed by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, or the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada;
- Where an employer has directed an employee not to work due to concerns of exposure to others;
- Employees providing care to their child, or other persons (over the age of 19) unable to obtain the necessities of life for whom the employee is a parent or former guardian; or
- Employees outside of the province and unable to return due to travel or border restrictions.

The length of the COVID-19 protected leave will be for so long as the circumstance which causes the need for the leave exists. Employers are also prohibited from requiring medical notes associated with these circumstances, although other forms of proof may be requested. The new leave period does not prevent employers from laying off employees for business-related reasons, including loss of business related to COVID-19 or business closures/shutdowns.

**Illness or Injury Leave** - Employees are entitled to three days of unpaid statutory leave where they are suffering from personal illness or injury. If requested by an employer, the employee must

provide reasonably sufficient proof of their personal illness or injury. This amendment and new leave is not specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**March 18, 2020** - BC Declares Public Health Emergency. This declaration provides Dr. Bonnie Henry, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer, with the power to issue verbal orders which have immediate effect and can be enforced by the police. Dr. Henry can also amend the *Public Health Act* without the legislature's consent. All bars and clubs have now been ordered to close, and restaurants and cafes that cannot maintain appropriate social distancing measures must either close or immediately move to takeout or delivery services.