

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR USE OF PUBLIC WASHROOMS

Last revised: May 31, 2021

Public washrooms are important facilities in our communities as spaces that are used by the public. Depending on where they are located, they can be visited by many people and contaminated by visitors. To minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19 and other infectious diseases when using public washrooms, preventative measures are needed for these facilities.

COVID-19 can spread when people are within close proximity to one another (less than 2 metres or 6 feet) through the spread of respiratory droplets and aerosols or through contact with frequently touched surfaces. Since our hands serve as the vehicles for spreading COVID-19 through touching contaminated surfaces or items, handwashing is one of the most important actions one can take to reduce the virus' spread. The benefits of accessing a public washroom to wash hands far outweigh the potential risks of these facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that public washrooms be open where the following preventative measures can be implemented:

PHYSICAL DISTANCE

- Post **physical distancing** signs outside and inside the washroom in case of lineups.
- Persons waiting in line or congregating outside (e.g. to enter/exit the washroom, wash hands etc.) must maintain 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person **and** wear a mask or face covering.
- Install floor markers to designate 2 metres (6 feet) spacing where a line-up may occur to maintain physical distancing.
- Post maximum occupancy signs to further enhance **physical distancing**.
- Some urinals and sink basins may need to be decommissioned (taped off) if 2 metres (6 feet) spacing cannot be maintained in the current setup.

USE OF MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

- Every person indoors must wear a mask or **face covering** unless **exemptions** apply as per **The Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act** and associated regulations.
- Post **signs** outside of public washrooms that remind people to wear a mask or face covering.
- Masks or face coverings are recommended outdoors when physical distancing is a challenge and are required when waiting in line or congregating outside (e.g. to enter/exit the washroom, wash hands etc.).
- Please see the **letter of instruction** for businesses and organizations posted to Durham's website for more information.

HAND HYGIENE

- Post **handwashing** and **hand sanitizing** signs at sinks.
- Ensure that **alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing 60-90% alcohol content is made readily available at the entrance/exit of the washroom.
- Ensure that soap and paper towels are always available and are refilled frequently to ensure the public can practise proper hand hygiene.
- Paper towels are preferred in public washrooms during COVID-19.
- Hands-free sinks and paper towel dispensers are preferred to avoid the use of handles, which reduces high touched surfaces in washrooms. If hands-free appliances cannot be installed, more frequent cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is required.



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/health



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

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CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Frequent cleaning and disinfection should occur, especially in commonly touched areas and surfaces. The frequency of the cleaning and disinfection will depend on the use of the facility; however, it should happen at least twice per day (preferably at midday and at the end of the day).
- Refer to Health Canada's lists of disinfectants for use against COVID-19. Ensure users closely follow the manufacturer's instructions for disinfectant usage.
- Baby change tables may be used, and will require to be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty

ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

- Place signage in each stall instructing users to flush the toilet with the lid down, if applicable.
- Ventilation in the facility should be maximized either by having the windows open or equipping the facility with a proper ventilation system.

GUIDANCE FOR PORTABLE TOILETS

- Post signage on handwashing and hand sanitizing at sinks.
- Post physical distancing signage outside the portable toilet in case of lineups.
- Post signs outside portable toilets that remind people to wear a face covering when when waiting in line outside
- Increase service intervals.
- To ensure physical distancing, the number of portable toilets may need to be increased.
- Operators should ensure a supply of alcohol- based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol content is available and frequently refilled.

Please contact the Durham Region Health Department, if you have any questions at 1-800-841-2729 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

RESOURCES

[COVID-19 and outdoor safety: Considerations for use of outdoor recreational spaces](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces during COVID-19](#)



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