



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
The Lifeguarding Experts

Lifesaving Society Guidance for Aquatic Facilities: A Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage Covid-19 for the Long-Term

Updated October 27, 2021

The Province of Ontario [has released its plan](#) to safely [reopen Ontario](#) and manage Covid-19 for the long-term. The plan will be guided by the ongoing assessment of key public health and health care indicators and supported by local or regional tailored responses to Covid-19.

Effective Monday October 25, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., Ontario lifted capacity limits in the vast majority of settings where proof of vaccination is required. These include, but are not limited to:

- Indoor aquatic facilities, including swimming pools and waterparks
- Indoor sports and recreational fitness facilities, including gyms
- Instructional settings, such as where personal fitness trainers and swimming instructors provide instruction
- Indoor meeting and event spaces, such as meeting rooms in community centres
- Restaurants, bars and other food & drink establishments

Capacity limits were [previously lifted in spectator areas](#) of facilities for sports and recreational fitness. Now, the requirement to limit capacity in all public areas of sports and recreational fitness facilities so that patrons are able to maintain a two-metre physical distance is no longer required.

Additionally, the government will allow other settings to lift capacity limits and physical distancing requirements if they choose to require proof of vaccination, including but not limited to:

- Indoor areas of amusement parks
- Indoor areas of marinas and boating clubs
- Indoor clubhouses at outdoor recreational amenities

The Province is implementing these changes through [amendments](#) to Ontario [Regulation 364/20](#) under the Reopening Ontario Act. Updates to emergency orders are first posted [on this webpage](#).

Other public health measures, such as mask wearing, hand hygiene, active screening, equipment disinfection, and implementing a [workplace safety plan](#), remain in effect.

In the absence of concerning trends, provincial public health and workplace safety measures will be lifted based on the following [proposed milestones](#): November 15, 2021, January 17, 2022, February 7, 2022, and March 28, 2022.

PROOF OF VACCINATION FOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

The Province of Ontario has updated its [guidance](#) and [FAQs](#) for [businesses and organizations](#) implementing proof of vaccination requirements. Operators should review these requirements and understand their responsibilities.

Requirement to be fully vaccinated

Patrons and spectators who are eligible to be vaccinated must be fully vaccinated in order to access identified settings (including those settings that have chosen to opt-in). The province defines “[fully vaccinated](#),” which typically means the person received their final dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior.

Exemptions

The province provides certain exceptions to proof of vaccination requirements, such as:

- for individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to age (e.g., under 12 years old).
- for individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to a [medical reason](#).
- for individuals between 12–17 years old actively participating in an organized sport including training, practices, games and competitions (including swimming lessons)
- for employees or volunteers such as coaches and officials.
- for certain essential services such as day camp, child care, social services, court services, government services.

Municipalities, local public health units, and organizations have implemented more stringent requirements, often closing exemptions or including requirements for rapid antigen testing.

- For example, Toronto Public Health has issued a [Letter of Instruction](#) requiring proof of vaccination for all persons age 12 and older participating or coaching in indoor organized sports.

Operators should consult their local public health unit, municipality or facility policies for further guidance.

Organizational Vaccination Policies

On the recommendations of public health authorities, the Lifesaving Society Ontario has implemented a [Covid-19 vaccination and testing policy](#) for its staff, trainers and volunteers. The policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees, contract trainers and volunteers including members of activity councils, council of officers, board of directors, as well as area chairs, coaches and lifesaving sport officials.

The Lifesaving Society encourages operators and affiliates to develop their own organizational policies in consultation with their local public health unit. Where appropriate, organizations should require proof of vaccination and/or testing for lifeguards, instructors and participants in Lifesaving Society programs. Operators should consider maintaining proof of vaccination requirements when provincial requirements are relaxed, if recommended by local public health authorities.

What can I show as proof of vaccination?

Operators are required to verify – at point of entry – a visitor’s proof of vaccination and personal identification containing their name and date of birth. For most activities, this is done each time they visit the facility.

Ontarians can download their enhanced vaccine certificate containing QR code, from the [provincial website](#). The enhanced vaccine certificate follows the [Canadian Covid-19 proof of vaccination](#) standard. Ontarians can also contact the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 for assistance.

Businesses can use the [Verify Ontario App](#) to check visitors' eligibility to enter based on their Covid-19 vaccination status. The app, operating on Apple or Android devices, provides a tool to verify QR codes from Ontario’s enhanced vaccine certificate and the certificates from several other Canadian jurisdictions.

Individuals who received their vaccinations outside of Ontario are encouraged to register them with their local public health unit. Visitors to Ontario can provide proof of full vaccination from another jurisdiction as well as appropriate personal identification in order to access facilities where proof of vaccination is required.

SAFETY MEASURES FOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

What are the requirements for safety plans for aquatic facilities?

Operators must prepare, update, and make available a [Covid-19 safety plan](#). A copy of the plan must be made available to any person for review upon request, and be posted where it would come to the attention of individuals working in or attending the business.

The safety plan must describe the measures and procedures businesses have implemented or will implement to reduce the transmission risk of Covid-19. This includes, but is not limited to:

- screening
- physical distancing
- masks or face coverings
- cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects
- wearing of personal protective equipment
- preventing and controlling crowding

Operators of aquatic sports leagues and competitions must have a safety plan. National and provincial sport organizations provide helpful guidance outlining best practices for these activities.

What capacity limits and distancing requirements apply to aquatic facilities?

Under provincial regulations for sports and recreational fitness facilities, where proof of vaccination is required:

- Indoor pools, splash pads, spray pads, whirlpools, wading pools and waterslides may open in accordance with [Ontario Regulation 565](#) and with no additional capacity or distancing limits, including:
 - Lane swim and recreational swims
 - Wave pools
 - Saunas & steam rooms
 - Diving boards & platforms
- Community centres and multi-purpose facilities may open with no additional capacity limits.
- Waterparks may open with no additional capacity limits.
- Day camps and overnight camps may operate according to regulatory requirements and guidance from the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Aquatic sports may operate in accordance with their safety plan, with no requirement for capacity limits or distancing.
- Training and instruction:
 - Swimming lessons are permitted with no capacity limits.
 - Aqua fitness classes are permitted with no capacity limits.
 - Lifeguard training and certifications – health and safety training is permitted with no capacity limits.
 - There are no restrictions on contact or requirement to maintain physical distancing.
- Spectators:
 - Spectators are permitted with no capacity limits or requirement to maintain physical distancing

In the absence of regulatory capacity limits or distancing requirements, operators must follow local public health advice and the measures outlined in their safety plan.

What are the rules on mask wearing?

- Mask wearing for patrons and employees is required in indoor areas including spectator areas.
- Masks should be removed when “entering the water,” e.g., when entering the pool or shower.
- Masks may be removed when actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity.
- Masks must be worn in the facility, on the pool deck, and in the changerooms.
- Masks should be worn in queues (line-up) or waiting areas.
- Spectators must wear masks, except when actively eating/drinking.

What are the rules on personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees?

- Masks must be worn in indoor public areas and when breaking 2 m physical distancing if not separated by a physical barrier.
- Masks and protective eyewear must be worn when breaking 2 m physical distancing with an individual who is not masked or is improperly masked.
- The Lifesaving Society recommends personal protective equipment for lifeguards and staff who perform first aid, including wearing a mask, protective eyewear, and gloves. An isolation gown is optional.

What screening and contact tracing requirements are in effect?

- Operators are required to verify – at point of entry – proof of vaccination and personal identification of participants and spectators, as required by provincial regulation or local requirements.
- All businesses and organizations are required [to actively screen](#) employees for Covid-19 before they go to work or start their shift each day, whether or not they have been vaccinated.
- The person responsible for the facility must record the name and contact information of every person who enters the facility and [actively screen individuals](#) who enter the facility for Covid-19, whether or not they have been vaccinated.
- Screening / contact tracing may be conducted by way of interview, questionnaire, app, phone call, etc.

What are the requirements for cleaning and disinfection?

- Operators must follow the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 565](#) in regards to safe water management, and the cleaning and disinfection of the pool deck and facility.
- Operators must ensure that equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers and similar amenities that are accessible to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. Often, this means cleaning and disinfecting equipment between individuals and cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces at least twice per day.

- Operators should ensure that shower facilities, including warm water and soap, are available to bathers, as regulation requires that bathers shower prior to entering the pool deck.
- Operators should ensure hand washing / hand sanitizing stations are readily available within their facilities, for both employees and patrons. Signage should be installed promoting proper hand hygiene practices.

LIFTING PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES FOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

- **January 17, 2022:** The province intends to begin relaxing proof of vaccination requirements for sports and recreational fitness facilities, including aquatic facilities. The Lifesaving Society will continue to monitor the situation. It may be appropriate for operators to maintain proof of vaccination requirements for aquatic settings, based on the local public health situation.
- **March 28, 2022:** The province intends to begin relaxing public health and workplace safety measures including mask wearing requirements. The Lifesaving Society will continue to monitor the situation. It may be appropriate for operators to maintain certain measures for aquatic settings, such as employee mask wearing and hygiene practices, based on the local public health situation.
- **Where proof of vaccination is not required** for entry to aquatic facilities (such as outdoor facilities or when regulatory requirements for indoor facilities are relaxed), additional requirements may be required including but not limited to capacity limits and distancing.

The Lifesaving Society provides these guidelines for aquatic operators based on its review of provincial requirements and best practices. Local municipalities and public health units may implement more stringent requirements. Operators are encouraged to consult their local public health unit or municipality and/or consult independent legal advice, as appropriate.

Please continue to check the Lifesaving Society website frequently for updates.

Lifesaving Society Ontario
400 Consumers Rd., Toronto, Ontario, M2J 1P8
Tel: 416-490-8844 Fax: 416-490-8766
Email: experts@lifeguarding.com
lifesavingsociety.com