

December 21, 2020

## **AMO Policy Update – Lockdown 2.0: Province-Wide Lockdown Starts December 26, Communities Strategy and Enforcement, New School Protocols, Child Care, and Small Business Grant**

### **Province-Wide Lockdown Starts December 26**

Today, the Province [announced](#) an Ontario-wide lockdown starting at 12:01am as of Saturday, December 26, 2020. The current [COVID-19 Response Framework](#) will be paused when the Province-Wide Shutdown comes into effect.

Lockdown 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.

The impacts of these time-limited measures will be evaluated throughout the 14 days in Northern Ontario and 28 days in Southern Ontario to determine if it is safe to lift any

restrictions or if they need to be extended.

Note that the essential business definition has changed based on learning from earlier experience (i.e. regulated health professionals, construction etc.). For more information, call the "[Stop the Spread" business information line](#).

## **High Priority Communities Strategy and Enforcement**

As part of this announcement, the government is providing \$12.5 million to implement a [High Priority Communities Strategy](#) to take a tailored, community-based approach to fund community agencies in 15 priority neighbourhoods in Durham, Peel, Toronto, York, and Ottawa.

Additional funding of \$42 million will also be available to establish isolation centres. The Province will work with local municipal partners to establish new isolation centres to help those who may need to isolate following testing.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development is leading a multi-ministry COVID-19 Safety Team. The team will partner with local authorities to carry out additional enforcement blitzes in sectors where they are needed most.

## **New School Protocols and Child Care**

All publicly funded and private elementary and secondary schools will move to teacher-led remote learning when students return from the winter break on January 4, 2021. [Seven Health Units](#) will resume in-person instruction on January 11, 2021, for both elementary and secondary students.

For schools in all other Public Health Unit regions, elementary school students can return to in-person on January 11, 2021, and secondary school students will continue learning remotely until January 25, 2021, at which point they may resume in-person learning.

During this period child care centres, authorized recreational and skill building programs, and home-based child care services will remain open. From January 4-8, 2021, before and after school programs will be closed and emergency child care for health care and frontline workers will be provided. School boards will be required to make provisions to continued in-person support for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning from whom remote learning is challenging.

## **New Ontario Small Business Support Grant**

Today the government also [announced](#) a new Ontario Small Business Support Grant, which will provide a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 for eligible businesses. Further details, including how to apply will be announced in January 2021. The other supports for businesses during COVID-19, including property tax and energy rebate programs for eligible businesses in Control or Lockdown regions (or previously in modified stage 2 regions), will continue.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to [covid19@amo.on.ca](mailto:covid19@amo.on.ca).