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# Media Release



## **Timiskaming Health Unit moves to Red - Control zone in provincial COVID-19 response framework**

**March 26, 2021** - For immediate release

Last night, the Government of Ontario placed Timiskaming Health Unit in the Red - Control category of the provincial COVID-19 response framework.

“We have seen a rapid change in our district driven by the presence of variants of concern, and I support moving to the Red – Control level of the framework,” said Dr. Glenn Corneil, Acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO for the Timiskaming Health Unit. “The concern with these variants is that they are highly contagious, which means they spread more easily. It is extremely important that everyone follow public health measures, especially regarding gathering limits.”

Public health measures in our district have changed, effective today, March 26, 2021, 12:01 a.m. In red, gathering limits are reduced. Some settings such as cinemas, performing arts facilities, and higher-risk personal care settings are closed; and capacity limits are reduced in other sectors. Active screening requirements are in place in most sectors. The hours of restaurant opening and liquor sales are reduced. For team sports, games and scrimmages are prohibited and only training is permitted.

To become familiar with the new measures, owners and operators of businesses and organizations are required to read the [framework](#) and its accompanying [regulation](#) in order to determine what actions they must take to remain open. Changes include but are not limited to:

### **Stay home**

Work remotely, where possible. Trips outside of the home should only be for essential reasons. Families should not visit any other household or allow visitors in their homes. Everyone should avoid social gatherings.

### **Gathering limits**

Gathering limits are reduced in the Red – Control zone. During gatherings, limit close contact to people you live with and stay at least 2 metres apart from everyone else. You should wear a mask in all indoor public spaces, indoor workplaces, and whenever physical distancing may be a challenge. Limits for all social gatherings and organized public events are 5 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. For weddings, funerals, and religious services (excluding services held at private dwellings), 30% of the room capacity is permitted indoors and 100 people maximum outdoors.

### **Screening**

Some businesses must actively screen patrons by asking screening questions. The businesses that must conduct active screening are: indoor malls; restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments (not required for take-out, drive-thru, and delivery); sports and recreational fitness facilities; meeting and event spaces; personal care services; and casinos, bingo halls, and gaming establishments. You can use the [COVID-19 customer screening](#) to help meet the active screening requirement. For more information, please see the province’s [Screening Tool](#).

### **Safety plans and capacity signage**

A safety plan is mandatory for all businesses and employers. More information about developing a safety plan is available [here](#). Retail businesses and food and drink establishments must post signage listing their capacity.

### **Bars and restaurants**

Indoors, capacity limits are the lesser of approximately 50% of indoor dining area or 50 people. Outdoors, capacity is limited to allow physical distancing of 2 metres. For indoor dining, patrons may only be seated with members of their same households, with limited exceptions for caregivers and people who live alone. Contact information is required for all seated patrons. All establishments must be closed between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Liquor may only be sold between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Dancing, singing, and live performance of music are prohibited. Personal protective equipment **including eye protection** is required when is a worker must come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering.

### **Sport and fitness facilities**

Facilities are accessible by reservation only, and screening of patrons is required. Contact information must be collected for everyone who enters the facility. Spacing between patrons must be 3 meters. Maximum 10 people indoors in classes or in areas with weights or exercise equipment; maximum 25 people outdoors in classes. No team sports except for training (no games or scrimmage). Activities that are likely to result in individuals coming within 2 m of each other are not permitted. No spectators are permitted; however, each person under 18 may be accompanied by one parent or guardian.

### **Retail**

Capacity limits are 75% for supermarkets and other stores that primarily sell groceries, convenience stores, pharmacies; and 50% for all other retail, including discount and big box retailers, liquor stores, cannabis stores, hardware stores and garden centres.

### **Personal care settings**

Services requiring removal of face coverings are prohibited. Some settings, including bath houses and adult venues, are closed.

### **Cinemas and performing arts facilities**

Closed, except for: drive-in cinemas; rehearsal or performing a recorded or broadcasted event.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [Timiskaming Health Unit's website](#), the [Ontario Coronavirus website](#), and the [Ontario COVID-19 response framework page](#).

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