



What's New in HR Law

Reopening Ontario – Stage 3

July 15, 2020

COVID-19 Update

On July 13, 2020, the Ontario Government announced that, as of July 17, 2020, it will begin implementing the final stage of its three stage process for reopening Ontario's economy. Stage 3 will take a regional approach to restarting the economy by opening most businesses and services and opening all public spaces in the regions with lower rates of COVID-19 transmission. Stage 3 will also see gathering limits loosened, subject to ongoing health and safety measures.

A Framework for Reopening Our Province

On April 27, 2020, the Ontario Government launched [A Framework for Reopening Our Province](#). This Framework set out the support and relief measures being offered by the government and the measures that would be taken to reopen Ontario businesses.

The Framework established three phases in the COVID-19 Action Plan:

1. Phase 1: Protect and Support
2. Phase 2: Restart
3. Phase 3: Recovery

This update is for general discussion purposes and does not constitute legal advice or an opinion.

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The Phase 2: Restart involves a three stage approach to loosening emergency measures and reopening Ontario's economy, with emphasis on safe reopening recognizing the risk to public health.

On May 19, 2020, Ontario entered into Stage 1 of Phase 2 in the Action Plan, which permitted select workplaces across the province to reopen.

On June 12, 2020, Ontario entered into Stage 2 of Phase 2 in the Action Plan, which permitted select workplaces, recreational activities, and public services across the province to reopen. Stage 2 recognized that some regions in Ontario have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic differently, and that only those regions with less risk of community spread could begin easing restrictions and opening additional businesses. The remaining regions in Ontario soon followed into Stage 2.

Now, on July 17, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., select regions in Ontario will be moving to Stage 3 of the reopening plan, which involves nearly all businesses and public spaces being able to gradually reopen with public health and workplace safety restrictions in place. The Ontario government continues to take a regional approach to the three-stage reopening process, with only those regions with a lesser risk of COVID-19 being entitled to enter Stage 3 as of July 17, 2020.

Stage 3 Measures

In Stage 3 of Ontario's reopening plan, nearly all businesses and public spaces will reopen, as long as they follow prevailing public health advice and workplace safety guidance.

While the vast majority of businesses will be entitled to open under Stage 3, certain high-risk places and activities (which involve large crowds congregating, difficulties with physical distancing, or challenges maintaining the proper cleaning and sanitation required to prevent the spread of COVID-19) are not yet entitled to reopen. Such businesses and activities include:

- Amusement parks and water parks
- Buffet-style food services
- Dancing at restaurants and bars, other than by performers hired by the establishment following specific requirements
- Overnight stays at camps for children
- Private karaoke rooms
- Prolonged or deliberate contact while playing sports
- Saunas, steam rooms, bath houses and oxygen bars
- Table games at casinos and gaming establishments

All other businesses and public spaces will be permitted to be open (subject to ongoing compliance with public health measures).

The Ontario government has also outlined further and specific restrictions related to certain types of businesses and activities, such as: live shows, performing arts, movie theatres, and

facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities, among others. Such restrictions can be found in the government's Stage 3 framework [announcement](#).

Regions falling under Stage 3 will also have gathering limits increased, such that indoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 50 people, and outdoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 100 people. People gathering indoors for religious services, rites or ceremonies, and wedding ceremonies or funeral services, can continue to fill up to 30% of the capacity of the particular room, as first implemented under Stage 2.

All Ontarians are still expected to follow public health recommendations, including physical distancing, wearing face masks, and washing hands regularly, among others.

Regions Permitted to Move into Stage 3

The following public health unit regions have been identified by the Chief Medical Officer of Health as being **ready to move into Stage 3** on July 17, 2020 at 12:01 a.m.:

- Algoma Public Health
- Brant County Health Unit
- Chatham-Kent Public Health
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit
- Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Hastings Prince Edward Public Health
- Huron Perth Public Health
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health
- Leeds Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
- Northwestern Health Unit
- Ottawa Public Health
- Peterborough Public Health
- Porcupine Health Unit
- Public Health Sudbury & Districts
- Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit
- Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit
- Southwestern Public Health
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Timiskaming Health Unit
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

The following public health unit regions will **remain in Stage 2** until otherwise instructed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health:

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- Durham Region Health Department
- Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit
- Halton Region Public Health
- Hamilton Public Health Services
- Lambton Public Health
- Niagara Region Public Health
- Peel Public Health
- Toronto Public Health
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
- York Region Public Health

The Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health experts will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation to advise when more regions can enter Stage 3, if public health restrictions can be further loosened, or if they need to be tightened or reapplied.

Future Updates

Our firm continues to closely monitor the developments surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak and Ontario's continuing efforts to reopen the economy. We will continue to provide further updates as new information becomes available.

Need more information?

For more information regarding workplace management amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, contact [Danny Parker](#) at 416-408-5518, or your regular lawyer at the firm.



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