

Restrictions (highlights are new effective April 28)

What areas do the extra restrictions apply to? How long are they in effect?

Effective April 28 at 8 a.m., there are the same restrictions provincewide until at least May 12.

What are the restrictions?

Gatherings, schools and daycare

- Nova Scotians can only gather indoors or outdoors with their household bubble, which is the people they live with
- households of 1-2 people can socialize with 1-2 others but they must be the same people for this 2-week period
- no unnecessary travel between communities (ie the municipality where you live or as close to home as possible when accessing essential or necessary services or products)
- all public and private schools are closed
- day cares will remain open, with the focus on providing service to those providing essential services or have no other child-care option; essential workers who need help to access childcare supports can contact ECDSERVICES@Novascotia.ca or call 1-877-223-9555

Masking

- mandatory masking for staff, visitors and children over two years old in indoor child-care settings
- mandatory masking outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including playgrounds and parks
- in private indoor workplaces such as offices or warehouses, masks are mandatory in all common areas, places where there is interaction with the public, areas with poor ventilation, and areas where distance cannot be maintained

Retail and business

- retail stores are closed for in-person service unless those stores provide products or services essential to the life, health or personal safety of individuals and animals. These stores can remain open at 25% capacity and include those that provide:
 - food
 - pharmaceutical products, medicine and medical devices
 - personal hygiene products
 - cleaning products
 - baby and child products
 - gas stations and garages
 - computer and cellphone service and repair
 - electronic and office supplies
 - hardware supplies
 - pet and animal supplies
- restaurants and licensed establishments are closed for dine-in service but contactless take-out or delivery is allowed



- Nova Scotia Liquor Commission stores can remain open at 25% capacity
- personal services such as hair salons, barber shops and spas are closed
- regulated and unregulated health professions can remain open with an approved COVID-19 plan
- Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax and Sydney and First Nations gaming establishments and VLTs must close

Events, recreation, arts and culture

- wedding and funeral ceremonies can have 5 people, plus officiants
- no social events, special events, festivals, arts/cultural events, sports events, faith gatherings, wedding receptions, or funeral visitation or receptions
- no meetings or training except mental health and addictions support groups, which can have 10 people with physical distancing and masks
- virtual gatherings and performances can be held with a maximum of 5 people in one location
- all fitness, recreational and sports facilities are closed
- licensed and unlicensed establishments cannot host activities such as darts, cards, pool and bowling
- businesses and organizations offering a wide variety of indoor recreation activities are closed, such as indoor play areas, arcades, climbing facilities, dance classes and music lessons
- outdoor recreation activities, including individual sports, are allowed and encouraged
- outdoor fitness and recreation businesses and organized clubs can operate with 5 people and physical distancing
- museums, libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia are closed, but libraries can offer pick-up and drop-off of books and other materials

Long-term care/special care

- there will be no visitors or volunteers allowed inside long-term care facilities except for designated care providers and no visits to the community
- all adult day programs for seniors closed
- all homes licensed by the Department of Community Service under the Homes for Special Care Act cannot have visitors and residents cannot have community access
- all adult day programs for persons with disabilities funded by the Department of Community Services will be closed except for scheduled vaccine clinics at three of these programs

TRAVEL WITHIN NOVA SCOTIA

Can I travel within Nova Scotia? What is necessary travel? What is my community?

People can travel outside their community only when it is absolutely necessary. People need to use common sense about what is necessary and what is their community.

Examples of necessary travel include school, work that cannot be done at home, healthcare, childcare, child custody, legal requirements, securing essential items (such as food, gas, medications), and family visitation under the purview of the Department of Community Services.

You should consider your community to be no further away from your home than necessary to access essential products and services. For example, if there are several grocery stores or gas stations you could choose from, use the ones that are closest to your home.



Can I leave my community for a covid test or for a vaccination appointment?

If you are making an appointment now, you should make it for the location that is closest to your home. If you already have an appointment, you should keep it.

I am moving within Nova Scotia. Can I travel to do this?

Yes, you can move within Nova Scotia.

My work means traveling to many communities. Can I still do this?

We are asking people to only travel if it is absolutely necessary. You need to consider whether this work is absolutely necessary at this time or could it be postponed for 2 weeks.

Can people go to a campground or to their cottage?

If there is a campground within your community or if your cottage is in your community, you can go. However, most people's cottages are not in the same community where they live.

SCHOOLS AND DAY CARES

What is happening with schools?

All public and private schools across the province are closed effective April 28.

Where can I get more information about what's happening in schools?

All public and private schools across the province are closed effective April 28. Any questions should be directed to your school or regional centre for education.

Are day cares allowed to be open? Why are they open when schools are closed?

Day cares are allowed to stay open because it's important for people who cannot work from home to have child care. **NOTE: more information to come via EECD news release.**

Does the general gathering limit apply to day cares, day camps or before and after school programs?

No, the limit of 15 without physical distancing remains in place for these settings. However, with all schools doing at-home learning at this time, there would be no day camps or after school programs running.

What are the masking rules for indoor child-care settings? What about schools?

Masks are mandatory for staff, visitors and children who are 2 and older in indoor child-care settings. There is an exemption if a caregiver cannot get a child age 2-4 to wear a mask.

While all schools are currently closed, masking is now required for all grades in public schools, including pre-primary.

GENERAL GATHERING LIMIT

What is the gathering limit/ how many people can you have in your home?

The gathering limit indoors and outdoors is limited to the people you live with.

Smaller households with 1-2 people can socialize with 1-2 additional people, but they must be the same 1-2 people all the time.

What if some of the people are small children or babies, do they count toward the total number of people?

Yes. It doesn't matter how old they are, each person counts.

Can a household of 1-2 people plus their additional 1-2 people get together outside the home?

Yes. For example, they could go for a walk together or support each other to get essentials.

Can kids get together to play?

The gathering limit indoors and outdoors is limited to the people you live with. Smaller households with 1-2 people or less can socialize with 1-2 additional people, but they must be the same two people all the time. For many families, this means children can't get together with their friends for this two-week period.

Can people carpool?

Yes, although you should try to only carpool with your household bubble. If you have no other way to get to work, then you can carpool with other people but you need to keep the group consistent and wear masks.

What can you do to keep your household bubble safe?

- Follow basic public health measures:
 - If you are unwell, stay home
 - Practice good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette
 - Wear a mask when required and anytime physical distancing is a challenge
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth without washing hands first
 - Test tested for COVID-19 regularly
- Understand who is at high-risk/vulnerable and continue to protect them
- Understand your own risk/vulnerability and consider who you are joining a group with
- Maintain physical distancing with anyone outside of your household
- Consider using non-medical masks even when you're not in a place that requires them if there are people in your group who are at higher risk

GATHERING LIMIT FOR EVENTS

Are any community events allowed right now?

Provincewide, we are not permitting events of any kind. That means, for example, no wedding receptions, no funeral visitations/receptions, no community meals or fundraising events, no parties, no sports, no festivals, no special events, no concerts.

Can there be church services or other faith gatherings?

Provincewide, there can be no faith gatherings.

Are weddings and funerals allowed right now?

Provincewide, wedding and funeral ceremonies are limited to 5, plus the officiant. This is the limit no matter where it is held and no matter who hosts it. There can be no receptions or visitations associated with weddings and funerals at this time.

Can there still be gatherings of 50?

No. Across the province, we are eliminating the general gathering limit of 50 for now. At this time, that is too many people to have together without a recognized business or organization overseeing the event and making sure public health measures are followed.

What's the limit for a business meeting or training? Is physical distancing required?

Provincewide, there can be no meetings or training except for mental health and addictions support groups which can have 10 people with physical distance and masks.

BUSINESSES**Does the gathering limit apply to my retail business/office workplace, etc?**

Gathering limits do not apply to businesses. Businesses and workplaces need to ensure employees and customers can maintain 2 metres/6 feet physical distance. So the number of people in the space will vary from business to business. If your space is too small for physical distancing, then you can have no more than 5 clients or customers on the premises at a time.

In what parts of a workplace do people have to wear masks?

Masks are mandatory in most [indoor public places](#) – many of which are also workplaces such as bars, restaurants, stores, gyms and more.

As of April 27, masks are mandatory in private indoor workplaces provincewide such as offices or warehouses in all common areas. They are mandatory in parts of these workplaces where there is interaction with the public, areas with poor ventilation, and areas where distance cannot be maintained.

Are bars and restaurants allowed to open?

Provincewide, restaurants and bars can offer takeout, delivery and drive through service only.

Hotel restaurants can be open for seated service for hotel guests only. Guests who are in quarantine can not go to the hotel restaurant but can get room service.

Are the casino, VLTs and First Nations gaming centres allowed to operate?

Provincewide, Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax and Sydney, VLTs and First Nations gaming centres are closed.

How are fitness and recreation facilities operating?

Provincewide, indoor fitness facilities (like gyms and yoga studios) and recreation facilities (like pools, arenas, tennis courts, and large multipurpose recreation facilities) are closed.

Outdoor fitness and recreation businesses and organized clubs can operate with a maximum of five people and physical distancing. This may not be feasible for all of these types of businesses.

Hotel gyms and pools can only be open to guests who are not in quarantine. Use is by appointment only for one person at a time or people from a single room.

Gyms and pools in apartment and condo buildings can be open only to people who live there. These are common areas so masks are required except while in the pool or doing exercise that makes wearing a



mask difficult. Building managers should consider setting up an appointment system for using these facilities similar to our requirement for hotels.

What are the restrictions for recreation and leisure businesses? What are some examples?

Provincewide, businesses that offer indoor recreation activities are closed. Some examples include make your own pottery café, rage room, escape room, trampoline facilities, indoor rock climbing, places to play board games, children's play places, dance classes, and music lessons.

What about outdoor recreation and leisure businesses like fitness classes, shooting ranges, golf courses, putting ranges, go-carts, and outdoor adventure?

Outdoor fitness and recreation businesses and organized clubs can operate with a maximum of five people and physical distancing. This may not be feasible for all these types of businesses.

Can personal services businesses be open, like hair salons, barbers and spas?

Provincewide, personal services businesses are closed.

What are the restrictions for stores?

Provincewide, retail stores are closed for in-person service unless they provide services essential to the life, health or personal safety of people and animals. Businesses that provide the following products and services can remain open at 25% capacity:

- food
- pharmaceutical products, medicine and medical devices
- personal hygiene products
- cleaning products
- baby and child products
- gas stations and garages
- computer and cellphone service and repair
- electronic and office supplies
- hardware supplies
- pet and animal supplies.

For retail businesses that are permitted to be open, other rules include:

- Ensure customers and staff can maintain physical distance (2 metres/6 feet apart)
- Customers must maintain physical distance and wear non-medical masks when lined up to enter a retail business – both indoors and outdoors
- The business cannot play music louder than 50 decibels so that normal conversation is possible

What's the definition of a retail business?

A retail business is one that engages in the retail sale or rental of items to the public on ongoing basis at a fixed location.

If I have reached my store's maximum occupancy, there isn't enough room for everyone to stay 2 metres/6 feet apart. What should I do?

In this case, you set a lower limit on the number of people who are on the premises at a time to ensure physical distancing.

Are there rules for shopping malls?

Malls can be open for retail businesses that are allowed to be open at 25% as well as for any businesses that want to provide curbside (ie at their entrance inside the mall) pickup service. In addition to the retail rules outlined above, the following is also required for malls:

- No more than 10 people at a time can line up at a retail business inside the mall and they must maintain physical distance
- People are not permitted to loiter in any area of the mall
- Directional markings are provided to manage the flow of people within the mall
- Furniture in common areas of the mall is removed or inaccessible
- Non-retail public areas in the mall must be closed, other than public washrooms, breastfeeding stations, and hallways that give access to stores
- The mall cannot play music louder than 50 decibels so that normal conversation is possible

Do farm farmers markets and flea markets have to close?

These markets are considered retail operations if they have regular hours every day or week, the majority of their vendors are always the same, and the market serves as their retail outlet. If they provide essential products and services (see above), they can operate at 25% capacity, including vendors and customers. They need a COVID-19 prevention plan. Physical distancing and masks are required.

If the market is not a regular daily or weekly operation, they are considered special events which are not permitted until at this time.

Can things like pet grooming and banks still operate?

Yes, service-based businesses can operate (other than personal services such as hair salons, barber shops and spas which are closed). Pet services, banks, lawyers, and accountants are some examples.

Can car dealerships sell cars in a normal way?

Motor vehicles would not be considered an essential product. Therefore, dealerships cannot have people come to their show rooms or their lots looking at cars and they cannot offer test drives. However, if they can show cars to potential customers in a virtual way and arrange for contactless, curbside pickup for sales, that is acceptable.

Can you have a cleaner come into your home? What about a nanny? What about a plumber, electrician or other service provider?

These types of service providers can enter your home if necessary. People should wear masks, maintain physical distance where possible, and clean high touch surfaces frequently.

Can doctors and dentists offices be open? What about other health professions?

Yes. Both regulated and unregulated health professions can remain open, following their sector's covid prevention plan.

Is NSLC the only place to buy alcohol?

NSLC and its agency stores can operate at 25%. Private wine stores, breweries and distilleries can sell via delivery or curbside service.

ACTIVITIES

What are the restrictions for sports and for arts and culture?

Provincewide, there can be no sports practices, training, games, competitions or tournaments and no arts and culture rehearsals or performances.

Can there be spectators for sports and for arts and culture performances?

Provincewide, there are no activities for spectators to attend in-person. There can be virtual gatherings and performances with a limit of 5 people involved. Masks and physical distancing are required.

Since in-person performances are not permitted, can I do them virtually?

Virtual gatherings and performances can be held with a maximum of five people in one location. Masks and physical distancing are required.

What are the restrictions for school-based sports and performance arts?

Provincewide, school-based sport and performance arts are following the same rules as non-school sports and performance arts. There can be no sports practices, training, games, competitions or tournaments and no arts and culture rehearsals or performances.

School gyms are closed for community use. Field trips have stopped. All school-organized activities that bring students from different schools together, such as sports and music, have been stopped.

What is the limit for beer leagues and pick-up games and practices?

Provincewide, there can be no sports practices, training, games, competitions or tournaments and no arts and culture rehearsals or performances.

Can after school programs still happen? What's considered an after school program?

After school programs offer care for children from Primary to Grade 6, five days a week for the entire school year. See more in the [Before and After School Programs Guidelines](#). These restrictions don't close after school programs. However, with schools provincewide doing at-home learning, there is no need for after school programs at this time.

Can people get together to play darts, cards, pool, bowling, bingo or karaoke?

Provincewide, licensed establishments and unlicensed establishments (such as community centres and charities) cannot host these activities at this time.

Can libraries, museums or the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia be open?

Provincewide, museums, libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia are closed, but libraries can offer pick-up and drop-off of books and other materials.

Can there be overnight/sleepover camps such as for Girl Guides or children with disabilities?

We stopped these types of overnight summer camps for youth early in the pandemic. They are still not be permitted for the time being and we recently updated the public health order to reflect this. This does not affect regular camping at campgrounds. It does not affect businesses that offer things like retreats or tours.

PARKS / PLAYGROUNDS

How many people can be at a playground? Can 10 kids be in close contact at a playground?

The gathering limits do not apply to people going to parks, beaches, trails, playgrounds, etc for recreation. If a gathering is planned in these spaces, the gathering is limited to the people you live with.

Children at a playground should not spontaneously form a group.

Masks are now mandatory outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including playgrounds and parks.

Are parks, trails and beaches open?

Yes but you should only go to parks, trails or beaches in your community.

COMPLIANCE

What should I do if there's a large informal gathering like a house party or other rules being broken?

If you have a concern about a particular instance of public health measures not being followed, you can call your local non-emergency police number. Each person at an illegal event can be fined \$2000.

What should I do if rules aren't being followed at a business?

If you have concerns about how a business is operating, you could speak with the manager. If you feel it's necessary, you could contact the Safety Division at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education at 1-800-952-2687 or LAESafetybranch@novascotia.ca.

What should I do if I'm concerned about my employment rights in relation to the pandemic?

You can contact the Labour Standards division at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education at 1-888-315-0110 or LabourStandards@novascotia.ca.

CONTINUING CARE

Can a long-term care resident go to their family's home for a visit? Can family visit a resident in their facility?

There can be no visitors in long-term care facilities except for designated care providers. Long-term care residents cannot have visits to the community.

All adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres licensed by the Department of Community Services cannot have visitors and residents cannot have community access.

Across the province, each long-term care resident can have 2 designated caregivers and facilities. Residents can only leave their facilities for medical/dental appointments.

Across the province, the same is generally true for adult residential centres (ARC) and regional rehabilitation centres (RRC) licensed by the Department of Community Services.

Why can't there be any visitors? Why are designated caregivers allowed and not visitors?

We understand it's hard for residents when they can't have visits with their families. However, we need to keep COVID-19 out of long-term care facilities. We have seen what can happen if we don't.



Designated caregivers are actually providing necessary care to residents. They are not just visiting. That is why they are allowed to continue spending time with residents.

Can adult day programs operate?

Community-based adult day programs for seniors cannot operate at this time.

Adult day programs for people with disabilities funded by the Department of Community Services are also closed, except for 3 of these programs that have scheduled vaccine clinics.

EVENTS ARE NOT CURRENTLY PERMITTED. The following answers give an indication of what MIGHT be allowed once restrictions are lifted.

Can there be graduation ceremonies?

Schools will be able to host in-person graduation ceremonies this year. Students, staff and families will be able to gather in small groups, in schools, to recognize student achievement and success. They will have guidelines to ensure gathering limits and public health protocols will be followed. More information is being shared with schools. Any questions about these ceremonies should be directed to the school.

Can there be proms and other end of year celebrations?

Schools will not be hosting any proms or dances. If parents or community members want to do this, they have to ensure they follow all public health guidelines, including gathering limits. They can choose to engage a recognized business or organization to host an event with 50% of an indoor venue's capacity to a maximum of 100 or 150 maximum outdoors. There will be no exceptions for larger gatherings.

If the event is hosted by a recognized business or organization at a place like a church, hotel, rental hall or other facility that hosts events as part of its operations, there are [event guidelines](#) and [guidelines for venues and facilities](#) that should be followed.

If the event is at a person's private property (such as at home), the [guidelines for events at private properties](#) must be followed.

Without a recognized business or organization hosting the event, the informal gathering limit applies. You should follow our [guidance for holidays and celebrations](#).

Because things can evolve quickly in a pandemic, please check for updates to guidelines and other public health measures in the coming weeks and months leading up to your event and be prepared to adapt as necessary.

Can people have backyard weddings and other events at home?

When private, invitation only events that are hosted by a recognized business or organization at a private property (such as a home, cottage, AirB&B), they must follow the [guidelines for events at private properties](#).

Without a recognized business or organization hosting the event, the informal gathering limit applies. That includes the officiant. You should follow our [guidance for holidays and celebrations](#).



Because things can evolve quickly in a pandemic, please check for updates to guidelines and other public health measures in the coming weeks and months leading up to your event and be prepared to adapt as necessary.

Can someone call themselves a wedding planner just for one family wedding in order to have the bigger limit?

They could if they want to take on full responsibility for ensuring that everyone at the event follows all the public health. They would also have to follow business and tax laws.

If I rent a space for an event like a wedding but I do all the work myself, how many people can attend?

If you are renting a space from a recognized business or organization, then that business/organization takes on responsibility for ensuring that everyone at the event follows all the public health measures.

Given that they are taking on this responsibility, you can have 150 outdoors or 50% of capacity to a maximum of 100 indoors. The business/organization should be aware of its responsibilities and ensure it has a solid contract with the renters.

If the owner of the space does not want to take on this responsibility, they should not rent the space. The owner of the space or a wedding planner cannot ask clients to sign a waiver absolving them of this responsibility.

How can a person plan a wedding or other event if the rules keep changing?

We understand it is challenging to plan an event. However, we are in the middle of a pandemic. This situation demands that we respond quickly to changing epidemiology in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That means the public health measures will continue to change to keep people safe and even save lives. If it is possible to postpone your event until after the pandemic, that will give you more certainty to make plans. If you choose to keep planning your event during the pandemic, there will be a risk of the rules disrupting your plans.

Does an event venue have to follow the sector plans for restaurants and bars?

If the venue holds a permanent food establishment permit, it must follow the RANS reopening plan. For licensed events serving alcohol, the protocols for licensed establishments must be followed, as outlined in the public health order. Events must stop any food or alcohol service by 11 p.m. and end by midnight.

Does the gathering limit include the workers at an event?

Generally, no, they are in their workplace which is not subject to the gathering limit unless the event is held at a [private property](#). However, if the space is too small for physical distancing, such as a kitchen in a firehall, then there can be no more than 10 workers in the space at a time and they must practice physical distancing as much as possible. Service providers are included in the gathering limits when the event is a private property like a person's home.

My business rents a room for weddings and parties and our maximum capacity is 150. Since the indoor limit is 100, can I have 100 guests in that room?

No, the order allows gatherings of 50% of capacity up to a maximum of 100 people with physical distancing. So 50% of your capacity is 75 people.



My business rents a room for weddings and parties and our maximum is 300. Since the limit is 50% of capacity, can I have 150 guests in that room?

No, the order allows gatherings of 50% of capacity up to a maximum of 100 people with physical distancing. While 50% of your capacity is 150 people, you can only have a maximum of 100.

If bars and restaurants host events (like a concert or a wedding reception) do they follow the gathering limit of 50% of capacity to a maximum of 100 people?

No, when hosting events, bars and restaurants continue to follow the rules and plans for their sectors.

How can major sports events have spectators if the indoor limit is 100?

Several large facilities in the province have previously approved plans for hosting events with multiple groups that are kept separate. These facilities can resume operating with a limit of 150 people per group outdoors or 50% of capacity to a maximum of 100 indoors. Each group has their own entrance/exit, washroom and concessions. We're currently giving Centre 200 a limit of 150 per group indoors.

What happens if a game goes into overtime?

A sport event hosted by a business or organization can continue beyond midnight if the natural course of events leads to extended time of play such as overtime, but food and alcohol service must still stop at 11 p.m.

How do people know what is considered a recognized business or organization?

People have to use common sense. For example, a hotel is a recognized business that can host events like fundraisers or weddings in its ballrooms. A church is a recognized organization that can host faith gatherings of various types, as well as weddings and funerals. A theatre is a recognized business that can host performances.

Could organizers of a concert or church service or any other type of gathering set up seating in groups of 10 since physical distancing with that size group isn't required?

Businesses and organizations should not set up seating for groups of 10 and randomly seat people together. If you're hosting a concert or a church service or any other type of gathering, you should accommodate people who have formed a group of 10, but you also need to accommodate people who are not in a group of 10 or who are in a smaller group.

Where can I find more information about safe gatherings?

Here are some useful resources for gatherings and events:

- [Guidance for holidays and celebrations](#)
- [Event guidelines](#)
- [Guidelines for venues and facilities](#)
- [Guidelines for events at private properties](#)