

Ontario Government and Local Health Authorities Impose Additional Measures to Curb the Spread of COVID-19

November 12, 2020

On **November 7, 2020**, the Government of Ontario implemented a new COVID-19 Response Framework (“Framework”) that imposes differing public health and workplace safety measures on each region in the Province based on the risk category into which the region falls.

Peel Region and the City of Toronto public health officials have imposed or announced additional restrictions in response to the high rates of COVID-19 in these two areas of the Province.

The Framework

The Framework (found [here](#)) is comprised of five risk categories, also referred to as “zones”.

The zone in which a particular region falls is based on the local epidemiology, health system capacity, and public health system capacity. Each indicator will be assessed on a two-week basis. However, movement may occur sooner if there is a rapidly worsening trend:

- **Green Zone - Prevent (Standard Measures)**
 - Focus on education and awareness of public health and workplace safety measures
 - Restrictions reflect the broadest allowance of activities in Stage 3 absent a widely available vaccine or treatment
 - Highest risk settings remain closed
- **Yellow Zone - Protect (Strengthened Measures)**
 - Enhanced, targeted enforcement, fines, and enhanced education to limit further transmission
 - Apply public health measures in high risk settings
- **Orange Zone - Restrict (Intermediate Measures)**
 - Implement enhanced measures, restrictions and enforcement to avoid any closures
- **Red Zone - Control (Stringent Measures)**
 - Implement broader-scale measures and restrictions across multiple sectors, to control transmission (return to a modified Stage 2)
 - Restrictions are the most severe available before widescale business or organizational closure
- **Grey Zone - Lockdown (Maximum Measures)**
 - Implement widescale measures and restrictions, including closures, to halt or interrupt transmission (return to modified Stage 1 or pre-Stage 1).

As of today’s date, the zone applicable to each region in the Province can be found [here](#).

The Framework establishes general public health and workplace safety measures, as well as sector-specific measures in the following areas, based on the assigned risk category or “zone”:

- Restaurants, bars and food or drink establishments
- Sports and recreational fitness

- Meeting and event spaces
- Retail
- Personal care services
- Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments
- Cinemas
- Performing arts facilities

Region- Specific Measures Adopted in Peel and Toronto

Effective **November 9, 2020**, **Peel Region** implemented additional targeted public health and workplace measures. The most recent version of Peel’s restrictions can be found [here](#). Notably, Peel Public Health now requires each operator of a workplace to:

- prohibit non-essential visitors from attending at the facility (a non-essential visitor is a person whose presence is not essential to the functioning of the workplace as a workplace)
- enable, as possible, work from home options for employees

On November 10, 2020, the **City of Toronto** announced it will be imposing additional targeted public health and workplace measures **effective November 14, 2020**, the same date on which the Province has indicated it will move the City of Toronto to the “**Red Zone**” on the Framework.

An overview of the City of Toronto’s impending restrictions can be found [here](#). As with Peel Region, there are certain requirements made of all workplaces that go beyond what is outlined in the Framework. Specifically, each workplace must:

- appoint a compliance officer to ensure implementation of occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control measures
- review HVAC systems to ensure they are in good working order
- promote work from home wherever possible.

Over the coming weeks and months, businesses can expect to see the workplace safety requirements applicable to them evolve based on the local prevalence of COVID-19. For this reason, **it is imperative that every business monitor its region’s status on the Framework, as well as any additional measures imposed by local public health authorities**. Links to each public health authority in the Province can be found [here](#).

For assistance understanding the COVID-19 requirements relevant to your workplace, contact your Sherrard Kuzz lawyer or, if you are not yet a client, contact us at info@sherrardkuzz.com.

