



## Restrictions

### REOPENING

#### **What is the reopening plan for Nova Scotia? How soon can we get back to normal?**

Nova Scotia is reopening gradually under a five-phase plan. It focuses on allowing Nova Scotians to safely enjoy summer with public health measures in place while we work at getting most of our population fully vaccinated. Once that happens, we should be able to further ease restrictions in the fall and ease in to a new normal of living with COVID-19.

Each phase is based on COVID-19 activity, public health and testing capacity, hospitalizations and vaccination rates. Phases are expected to last between two and four weeks as long as certain criteria are met in these areas. The plan is flexible to respond as the pandemic evolves – a phase may need to last a little longer or the restrictions in a phase may need to change depending on the circumstances. The more people get vaccinated, the more we can reopen the province.

#### **What will happen in each of the five phases?**

Please see the [our reopening plan](#) on the website. Some details are yet to be determined for later phases. More information will be available as the date for each new phase is announced.

#### **When does each phase start?**

Phase 1 started June 2 and phase 2 will start at 8 a.m. June 16. A phase may need to last longer than 2 weeks. However, if all goes well, each phase will last 2 weeks until we reach phase 4 which will remain in effect until September.

#### **Are the restrictions ever going to be lifted completely?**

In Phase 5 (September), we will enter an extended period of living with COVID-19. In this phase, we anticipate being able to further ease our public health measures.

Gathering limits are likely to increase. There may be fewer requirements for businesses. Things like masks and physical distancing are likely to become optional. We anticipate being able to further ease border restrictions and isolation requirements. They are partly dependent on federal regulations and requirements.

More information will be provided closer to when this phase begins.

### GENERAL GATHERING LIMIT

#### **What is the gathering limit?**

In phase 2, the informal indoor limit is 10 without physical distance (ie household members + visitors = 10). This should be your close social group of 10. The informal outdoor limit is 25 without physical distance.

In phase 3, the informal indoor limit is household members plus 10 visitors without physical distance. For example, if you have 5 people in your household, you could have 10 visitors. The outdoor limit remains 25 without physical distance.



In phase 4, the informal gathering limit is 25 indoors and 50 outdoors without physical distance.

In phase 3 and 4 when events are allowed again, any events that are not hosted by a recognized business or organization need to follow these informal gathering limits.

**If I have a household of 10, can I have any visitors?**

For this phase, you would not be able to have visitors if you already have 10 people in your household. We anticipate you will be able to have more in phase 3, which will hopefully two weeks after phase 2.

**What if my household is 10 or more and there's someone who really needs support?**

If there is someone who really needs support, people need to use their common sense about helping others while ensuring their household stays safe.

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

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

**Can I still have my neighbour down the street or family in another community look after my children?**

For unregulated or unlicensed child-care settings, such as neighbours or family who care for children, they can continue to follow regulated ratios for school aged children; eight children or less per caregiver, including their own. For younger age groups, the ratio is six children or less per caregiver, including their own.

**Can child custody agreements continue?**

Child custody agreements can continue within Nova Scotia. The child is considered a member of each parent's household. The only change would be if someone develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, in which case Section 5 of the [child custody protocol](#) must be followed.

**Can kids get together to play?**

Children from different close social groups of 10 should not be getting together indoors. The outdoor limit for phase 2 is 25 people without physical distance.

**Can people carpool?**

People can carpool, 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 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?**

Events are permitted when hosted by a recognized business or organization:

Phase 2 – 25% of capacity to a maximum of 50 indoors or 75 outdoors

Phase 3 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 100 or 150 outdoors

Phase 4 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 150 or 250 outdoors

The recognized business or organization must have a plan. Typically, these types of events are held in public places where masks are required. Physical distance is required.

When the event is not hosted by a recognized business or organization, people must follow the information gathering limits.

### **Will large event venues be able to have larger groups or multiple groups?**

Specific organizational plans will be reviewed for large venues such as Scotiabank Centre, Halifax Exhibition Centre, Halifax Convention Centre, and Speedworlds.

### **Can there be church services or other faith gatherings?**

Informal faith gatherings can be held with 10 people indoors or 15 outdoors plus officiants. If they are hosted by a recognized organization, they can have 25% of capacity to a maximum of 50 indoors or 75 outdoors. Physical distance is required.

Drive-in services are still allowed:

- the service must be conducted over speakers or by remote radio broadcast
- there can be no contact between cars and no transfer of things between cars
- participants remain in their respective vehicle while "attending" the service, unless accessing a washroom facility – with physical distance, masks and informal gathering limits
- vehicles must be at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart from each other
- participants in the same car follow the informal indoor gathering limit

In phase 3, the limit is 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 100 or 150 outdoors. In phase 4, the limit is 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 150 or 250 outdoors.

### **Are weddings and funerals allowed right now?**

Informal weddings, funerals and associated receptions or visitation can be held with 10 people indoors or 25 outdoors plus officiants. If they are hosted by a recognized organization, they can:

Phase 2 – 25% of capacity to a maximum of 50 indoors or 75 outdoors

Phase 3 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 100 or 150 outdoors

Phase 4 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 150 or 250 outdoors



The recognized business or organization must have a plan. Typically, these types of events are held in public places where masks are required. Physical distance is required.

When the event is not hosted by a recognized business or organization, people must follow the information gathering limits.

### **Will there be high school graduations and proms?**

Schools will not be organizing traditional proms. Community groups can engage a recognized business or organization to host an event that follows all public health rules, including gathering limits and the guidance for events.

Schools are starting to plan for individual graduation celebrations. This will be much like the approach used last June. Students and their support group will have an ability to book an appointment. Schools will limit the number of supporters attending with the graduate. These groups will remain small based on public health gathering limits and operational feasibility.

Other transition ceremonies, such as junior high to high school, can happen but will need to follow the Back to School plan public health guidance, including cohorting and no non-essential visitors.

Please ask your child's school for more details.

### **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 to changing epidemiology in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That means the public health measures will continue to evolve as we gradually reopen. 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.

## **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.

### **What's the limit for meetings and training? Is physical distancing required?**

When meetings or training are hosted by a recognized business or organization, including:

- provincial and municipal governments
- private businesses and organizations
- first responder organizations
- mental health and addictions support groups
- organized clubs



They can have:

Phase 2 – 25% of capacity to a maximum of 50 indoors or 75 outdoors

Phase 3 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 100 or 150 outdoors

Phase 4 – 50% of indoor capacity to a maximum of 150 or 250 outdoors

The recognized business or organization hosting the event must have a plan. Typically, these types of events are held in public places where masks are required. Physical distance is required, although emergency first responders are exempt when necessary.

### **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. Masks are also mandatory in private indoor workplaces (such as offices or warehouses) in all common areas, areas 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?**

Through the first four phases of reopening, bars and restaurants can operate at their maximum capacity with physical distance between tables. Masks are required when people are not eating or drinking. They can continue to offer takeout, delivery and drive through service.

In phase 2, restaurants, bars, wineries, distilleries and tap rooms can resume indoor service. They must stop service by 11 p.m. and close by midnight. Live music is permitted with 1 performer wearing a mask and following the [Guidelines for Musicians \(PDF\)](#).

In phase 3, they stop service by midnight and close by 1 a.m. In phase 4, they return to regular hours of operation as per their licensing.

### **Can wineries, distilleries and tap rooms open?**

Wineries, distilleries and tap rooms follow restrictions for restaurants and licensed establishments when serving food and alcohol. They follow restrictions for retail when selling product in retail space or storefront.

### **Can wineries, distilleries and tap rooms offer tastings?**

Wineries, distilleries and tap rooms can offer tastings following their sector plans.

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

Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax and Sydney, VLTs and First can open at 50% in phase 2, then 75% in phase 3, and then maximum capacity possible with physical distancing in phase 4. They follow the same hours of operation and mask requirements as bars and restaurants.

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

Businesses that offer indoor recreation activities can operate at 25% capacity in phase 1. Physical distance is required. Masks required except during physical activity that makes it difficult to wear one, like singing lessons or playing a wind instrument.

There is a wide variety of these types of businesses – some examples dance classes and music lessons, climbing facilities, escape rooms, pottery painting, indoor play places, arcades, shooting ranges, go-carts, and outdoor adventure and more.

**What are the rules for golf courses?**

Golf courses continue to operate with one group at a time at each hole. If they have restaurant or bar patio, it must follow the rules for restaurants and licensed establishments. If the green is licensed, we would consider food or alcohol service on the green to be delivery service. Masks are not required on the green. Lessons are allowed, outdoors, one-on-one, with distancing.

**Can marinas be open?**

Outdoor areas of marinas can be open. If they have restaurant or bar patio, it must follow the rules for restaurants and licensed establishments.

**How are fitness and recreation facilities operating?**

Fitness facilities (like gyms and yoga studios) and recreation facilities (like arenas, tennis courts, and large multipurpose recreation facilities) can operate at 50% capacity in phase 2. Masks continue to be required except during physical activities that make it difficult to wear one. Physical distance is required.

They can offer 1:1 personal training without physical distance but masks are required.

In Phase 3, they can operate at 75% capacity and then move to maximum capacity possible with physical distance in Phase 4.

**Can pools reopen?**

In Phase 2, they can operate at 50% capacity, then move to 75% capacity in phase 3, and then to maximum capacity possible with physical distance in phase 4. Masks continue to be required except while in the pool.

**Can hotel, condo and apartment building gyms and pools be open?**

Hotel gyms and pools can still 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. We will have more information about future phases closer to when they begin.

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.

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

In phase 2, personal services businesses will be able to resume all services, including ones that requiring removing a client's mask. They must still operate by appointment only following their sector plan. In phase 3, they will be able to resume taking drop-ins as well as appointments. They maintain this level of service in phase 4.

**Can retail stores operate?**

In phase 2, they can operate at 50% capacity and there will be no limit on shoppers per household. They move to 75% capacity in phase 3, and then to maximum capacity possible with physical distance in phase 4. Masks continue to be required.



These types of businesses must:

- 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?**

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

### **Can farm farmers and flea markets be open?**

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. They follow the same reopening phases as retail businesses (see above) indoors or outdoors, 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. In phase 2, they can only happen if hosted by a recognized business or organization with 70 people outdoors or 50% of capacity to a maximum of 50 indoors.

### **Can dog grooming, daycares and training businesses operate?**

Dog grooming and daycares services can continue to operate. Owners need to ensure physical distancing and avoid crowds so they should consider staggering appointments and arrival/departure times. The safest approach would be to have owners drop off/pick up their dogs for these services without coming inside.

Dog training/obedience classes would be considered a form of recreation. In phase 2, recreation and leisure businesses can operate at 25%.

### **Can photography studios open?**

Photographers can continue to work outdoors. Their studios follow the same reopening phases as retail



businesses (see above). Clients must follow informal gathering limits and can remove their masks for photos. Physical distance is required between the photographer and clients.

**Can driving schools operate?**

Driving schools and exams can resume in phase 2. Masks are required and physical distance is required in the classroom sessions.

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

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

**Can a landlord show an apartment unit? Can a realtor show a home?**

Realtor's and landlords can show properties, however, landlords must gain the tenants' consent for in-person showings for the purpose of renting or when the property is being sold. If a tenant chooses not to allow in-person viewings, they must allow the landlord, and up to one other person, entry into the premises to film/photograph the property for virtual viewings. The landlord must give notice to the tenant 24 hours before entry. [Learn more](#).

Everyone needs to wear masks and maintain physical distance. High touch surfaces should be cleaned frequently. There is some [further guidance](#) on the website. If tenants are concerned, they could leave an apartment unit while it's being shown.

**ACTIVITIES**

**What are the restrictions for sports?**

In phase 2, there can be 10 people indoors and the outdoor limit increases to 25 for practices and training. Games are still not permitted. Masks are required indoors when physical distancing is not possible, except during activities that are not possible while wearing a mask. Masks are recommended outdoors when possible.

In phase 3 and 4, there can be 25 indoors and 50 outdoors. Games will be allowed again. Masks are recommended when possible (indoors and outdoors).

Starting in phase 2, spectators indoors and outdoors are allowed based on gathering limits for events hosted by a recognized business or organization. If the event is not hosted by a recognized business or organization, informal gathering limits must be followed.

**What are the restrictions for professional arts and culture?**

In phase 2, professional arts and culture rehearsals and virtual performances can have 15 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distance. They must have a plan for their workplace. Masks are required when physical distance cannot be maintained indoors (except during activities that are not possible while wearing a mask). Masks are recommended outdoors.



Starting in phase 2, spectators indoors and outdoors are allowed based on gathering limits for events hosted by a recognized business or organization. If the event is not hosted by a recognized business or organization, spectators must follow the informal gathering limit.

There is no change in their limits in phase 3. In phase 4, their indoor limit is 25 and their outdoor limit is 50. Masks are recommended in these phases.

#### **What are the restrictions for amateur arts and culture?**

In phase 2, amateur arts and culture rehearsals can have 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distance. There can be multiple groups of 10 with physical distance between groups. Masks are recommended when possible. In-person performances are not permitted. There can be virtual performances with a limit of 5 people involved.

Starting in phase 2, spectators indoors and outdoors are allowed based on gathering limits for events hosted by a recognized business or organization. If the event is not hosted by a recognized business or organization, spectators must follow the informal gathering limit.

In phase 3, their indoor limit remains 10 and they can 25 outdoors. In phase 4, their indoor limit is 25 and their outdoor limit is 50. Masks are recommended in these phases.

#### **Why are masks required or recommended in some instances where were not required before?**

The third wave of the pandemic has been driven by variants of the virus that are more contagious. That's why we're making these mask requirements and recommendations for some activities, particularly those involve getting closer than 2 metres.

#### **Can there be drive in movies?**

Drive-in movies are still allowed in phase 2:

- the movie must be conducted over speakers or by remote radio broadcast
- there can be no contact between cars and no transfer of things between cars
- participants remain in their respective vehicle while "attending" the service, unless accessing a washroom facility – with physical distance, masks and informal gathering limits
- vehicles must be at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart from each other
- participants in the same car follow the informal indoor gathering limits

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

At schools that are open, school-based sport and amateur performance arts are following the same rules as non-school sports and amateur performance arts (see above). 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?**

In phase 2, sports practices and training can be 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distance if they are run by a league or official organization. There can be no games, competitions or tournaments.

In phase 3, there can be 25 indoors and 50 outdoors and games will be allowed again. In phase 4, there is no change to the limits for participants



**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 programs can run at schools that are open.

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

In phase 2, both licensed establishments and unlicensed establishments (such as community centres and charities) can resume hosting activities like darts, cards, pool, bowling, or karaoke. Both licensed and unlicensed establishments must follow [guidelines for these activities](#).

**Can bingo resume?**

Bingo operators must follow the same rules as licensed establishments. Their guidelines are in the process of being updated to reflect this.

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

In phase 2, museums, libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia can operate at 25% capacity. They move to 50% capacity in phase 3, and then to maximum capacity possible with physical distance in phase 4. Masks continue to be required.

**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 permitted in phase 1 or 2 of reopening but are planned to start in phase 3 with cohorts of 15 including participants and staff. This does not affect regular camping at campgrounds. It does not affect businesses that offer things like retreats or tours.

**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.

**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. You should primarily stick to your own household when you go to these places.

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, parks, trails and beaches are open but people should not travel into or out of any restricted area to use them.

**Can campgrounds and rental cottages be open?**

[Provincial park campgrounds](#) opened June 2. Private campgrounds can be open for both seasonal and short-term campers effective June 2 with distance between campsites following their sector plan.

**Can people go to their cottage or seasonal campsite?**

Effective June 1, there are no restrictions on travel within Nova Scotia will be lifted. That allows people to go back and forth between their homes and their cottage or seasonal campsite.



**Can people do door-to-door canvassing? Can they do this for the census?**

If this activity can be avoided, it should be, although there are ways to do it safely. The census is an important national process managed by the federal government. Their website says:

Census employees must wear a mask and practise physical distancing, in accordance with guidelines from public health authorities. Statistics Canada will do everything it can to get Canadians to respond to the census without an in-person visit from a census employee. In-person visits will take place only when other options (e.g., online, by phone) are not available. If you have further questions, you should contact Statistics Canada.

**Can there be yard sales?**

People can host yard sales as long as they ensure the numbers remain within the informal gathering limit. People should wear masks because it may be difficult to maintain physical distance.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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?**

In phase 1, outdoor visits can resume at long-term care facilities. Physical distance is required unless the resident is fully vaccinated. Two designated caregivers can help care for a resident of a long-term care facility at the same time. Recreational activities and personal services like hairstyling can resume within the facility for long-term care residents who are fully vaccinated.

In phase 2, all long-term care residents can go for a walk off grounds and use drive-thrus when they go for a drive with a designated care provider. Vaccinated residents can also access outdoor public areas. Recreational activities and personal services like hairstyling can resume for residents who are partially vaccinated or unvaccinated. Residents no longer need to be in the same groups for dining and group activities. Volunteers can resume their activities in long-term care facilities.



In phase 3, indoor visits can resume in designated visitation areas at long-term care facilities if residents are fully vaccinated. Physical distance is no longer required for outdoor visits at long-term care if the resident is not fully vaccinated. Long-term care residents who are not fully vaccinated can access outdoor public areas.

In phase 4, indoor visits can resume in a resident's room at long-term care facilities if the resident is fully vaccinated and in designated visitation areas if the resident is not fully vaccinated. Visits to their family's home, including overnight stays, can resume if residents are fully vaccinated.

**What does reopening look like for adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres?**

Adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres licensed by the Department of Community Services can resume visitation in phase 1. Residents are permitted to leave the facilities for work, therapy, recreation and family visits if they follow public health measures like social distancing and masks.

**Can adult day programs operate?**

Community-based adult day programs for seniors and for people with disabilities can resume in phase 2 and need to follow public health guidelines for their sector.