

York joins regions moving to Stage 3 Friday

The Ontario government is allowing seven more regions to enter Stage 3 on Friday, increasing the number of businesses and public spaces that will reopen across the province. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and is based on positive local trends of key public health indicators, including lower or low transmission of COVID-19, ongoing hospital capacity, public health capacity to conduct rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing. York, along with Durham, Haldimand-Norfolk, Halton, Hamilton, Lambton and Niagara will move forward. These regions will join the 24 public health regions that entered into Stage 3 on July 17. For more information on the restrictions that will remain in place during Stage 3, as well as the public health and workplace safety restrictions necessary to keep people safe, visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://ontario.ca/reopen). Peel (nearby Caledon) will remain in Stage 2 at this time. The details were provided Monday afternoon by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance. "We're working with communities across the province to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help more businesses safely and responsibly hang up their 'Open for Business' sign," said Premier Ford. "While we want as many people back to work and taking home a paycheque again as possible, it's important for everyone no matter what stage your community is in to remain on guard and keep following the public health advice. By working together, we can keep new case numbers down and ensure all of Ontario can enter Stage 3 when it's safe to do so." Ontario will continue to assess trends in the public health indicators to determine when these final public health unit regions can progress to Stage 3. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health experts also continue to closely monitor the evolving situation to advise when public health restrictions can be further loosened or if they need to be tightened. "Building on the success of the regional approach in the previous two stages and based on the positive public health trends we are seeing, we are ready to move more regions across the province into Stage 3," said Minister Elliott. "Entering Stage 3 does not mean the fight against COVID-19 is over. We all must remain vigilant and continue following public health advice to ensure the progress we have made so far in stopping the spread will not be undone. Businesses not able to open or resume full activities due to Stage 3 restrictions, or businesses that have ideas to safely amend Stage 3 restrictions or requirements, can visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://ontario.ca/reopen) to submit a reopening proposal. Government and public health officials will review proposals and contact businesses for feedback or clarifications. Proposals may inform the potential loosening of restrictions as Stage 3 progresses. Proposals will receive initial feedback within 10 days of submission. A sector could be allowed to reopen or resume Stage 3 activities based on proposals submitted by businesses. "I'm impressed by how seriously business owners are taking the public health advice and how easy they made it for their customers to take precautions," said Minister Phillips. "By providing plenty of space to physically distance, keeping hand sanitizer by the door, and maintaining records for contact tracing, they're playing a vital role helping fight COVID-19. We're all doing our part and making it easy for others to do the same." As the province carefully reopens, the health and well-being of Ontarians remains a top priority. The government is strongly recommending everyone to continue following public health advice, including practising physical distancing with those outside your household or social circle, wearing a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so, staying home when ill, and washing your hands frequently and thoroughly. These measures are critical as more Ontarians return to work and access more businesses and services. For regions in Stage 3, gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 50 people indoors and a maximum of 100 people outdoors, with physical distancing in place. Gathering limits apply to all social gatherings and events, as well as some higher risk activities and venues. Gathering limits do not apply to settings such as beaches, parks, restaurants and bars, but measures to enable physical distancing may limit capacity at any given time. Some municipalities have implemented additional restrictions or requirements, such as mandatory face coverings in commercial establishments and all indoor public places. Check your local public health unit's or local municipality's website. For questions on restrictions that will remain in place during Stage 3, review the Stage 3 Emergency Order on the emergency information portal or call the Stop the Spread Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659. The province has set up a Workplace PPE Supplier Directory, where employers can find suppliers who sell personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies to support a safe reopening of their workplaces. Testing is available at any of the province's 144 assessment centres currently open. To find your closest assessment centre, please visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).