



COVID-19 Guidance for Outdoor Ice Surface/Rinks and Outdoor Skating Trails

Overview

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit is providing this guidance document for municipalities and community groups who operate outdoor ice surfaces/ rinks and skating trails in Haliburton County, Northumberland County and the City of Kawartha Lakes. This document provides requirements and recommendations to help stop the spread of COVID-19, while safely operating outdoor ice surfaces/ rinks and outdoor skating trails.

All owners and operators of outdoor ice surfaces/rinks and outdoor skating trails have a responsibility to assess risks associated with their facility and operations and ensure they mitigate these risks for their employees, volunteers, and attendees. Specific to COVID-19, owners and operators are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who participate in their activities (e.g. employees, volunteers, attendees).

Provincial laws and recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are subject to change without notice. Effective November 7, 2020, the Province of Ontario has implemented the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#), which guides public health restrictions based on COVID-19 transmission in the province. The HKPR District Health Unit and local municipalities may also implement local public health directions, bylaws, and policies which can exceed the provincial laws and recommendations. Owners and operators of outdoor ice surfaces/rinks and outdoor skating trails should continue to consult with public health and their local municipality to ensure familiarity with the current laws and recommendations.

It is important for owners and operators to adhere to public health legislation and recommendations on gathering requirements to determine if activities on outdoor ice surfaces, skating rinks and skating trails can operate safely.

Outdoor Ice Surfaces/Rinks and Skating Trail Definitions

SETTING	DEFINITION
Outdoor ice surface/rink or natural ice-skating trail with supporting infrastructure* and employee monitoring <i>**Supporting infrastructure includes, but is not limited to: change rooms, warming centres, washrooms</i>	Outdoor Recreation Facility
Outdoor ice surface/rink or natural ice rink with no supporting infrastructure and unsupervised	Playground
Outdoor natural skating rink with no supporting infrastructure and unsupervised	Outdoor walking trail



Protecting Members of the Public, Employees and Volunteers

Operators shall identify possible work-related exposure and health risks to employee, volunteers and attendees and plan how to reduce these risks. Further, operators should develop a contingency and business plan for the potential of a COVID-19 positive employee, volunteer or attendee. Individuals testing positive for COVID-19 will be directed by the HKPR District Health Unit to self-isolate. Individuals who have had close contact (e.g. spent prolonged time within a 2-metre or 6-foot radius) with an employee, volunteer or attendee will be contacted by the local Health Unit if they need to take additional precautions.

Communicate Public Health Recommendations to Attendees and Volunteers Before Coming to the Outdoor Ice Surface/Rink or Skating Trail

- Encourage attendees and volunteers to conduct an online [COVID-19 Self Assessment](#) before attending an outdoor ice surface/rink or skating trail. Remind them to stay home if they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and to [self-isolate](#) and seek [testing](#).
- At the outdoor ice surface/rink or trail, encourage attendees and volunteers to maintain a 2 metre (6 feet) distance from anyone they don't live with, when possible, and to [wear a mask or face covering](#) outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained. [Post signs](#) to reinforce these messages.
- Encourage attendees and volunteers to [wash their hands](#) frequently with soap and water and/ or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. They should also be encouraged to practise [proper cough/respiratory etiquette](#).
- Remind attendees and community volunteers that it is [mandatory to wear a mask or a face covering in all indoor public spaces](#).
- Limit the volume of music to be no louder than the volume of a normal conversation.
- Inform attendees that physical contact on the ice while playing a game of hockey is not allowed.

Limit Attendance and Ensure Physical Distancing

- [Physical distancing](#) means keeping at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart from anyone you don't live with off the ice, and 3 metres (9 feet) while exercising at outdoor ice surfaces/ rinks and skating trails. Plan and modify the layout of all ice surfaces/rinks and skating trails to ensure enough space is provided for employees, volunteers and attendees to maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Information about gathering limits will be as per the requirements in [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#), under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020.
- Capacity limits for the outdoor ice surface/rink and skating trail will need to be determined and posted for users.
- Calculate and post occupancy limits within each space, including washrooms, locker rooms, etc.
- Signage should be provided to encourage physical distancing.



- Place visual/textural markers spaced 2 metres (6 feet) apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and guide users throughout the space.
- For outdoor rinks designated as a recreational facility:
 - Consider a registration process with assigned time slots and set duration periods for using the facility.
 - Stagger arrivals and departures, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
 - Increase floor markings and signage.
 - Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas and places where people may gather.
 - Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies, washrooms, and use staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.

Use of Masks and Face Coverings

- Every person within an indoor space shall **wear a mask or face covering** in a manner that covers their mouth, nose, and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area. This is subject to exceptions set out in the Regulation. Persons not engaged in athletic or fitness activity must wear a mask or face covering. More information on mask requirements is available on the HKPR District Health Unit website (www.hkpr.on.ca).
- In most circumstances, masks or cloth face coverings are not deemed necessary in outdoor recreational spaces when physical distancing is possible and can be predictably maintained. However, use of a mask or face covering is recommended if physical distancing is not possible or is unpredictable. In some outdoor activities, wearing a mask or face covering may not be practical or tolerable. In those instances, physical distancing remains an important personal protective practice. Masks or face coverings should not be placed on young children under two years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The employer must determine what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required and ensure that it is worn by employees and volunteers.
- Educate staff and volunteers on the proper use and disposal of masks and PPE.

Hand Hygiene

- Post handwashing and hand sanitizing **posters** in employee areas and all entrances to any supporting infrastructure.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol content in dispensers outside all entrances to supporting infrastructure, particularly near high-touch surfaces.
- Employees should wash their hands with soap and water frequently or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Employees should use gloves if they expect to handle bodily fluids, broken skin, mucous membranes, contaminated equipment, and high-touch surfaces.



Cleaning and Disinfecting

Rental Equipment and Fixed Structures

- Encourage customers to bring their own gear for personal use, when practical and possible (e.g. helmet, skating aids, water bottle).
- As per Ontario Regulation 364/20, any equipment that is rented to, provided to, or provided for the use of users of the facility must be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Do not provide rental equipment or fixed structures that cannot be cleaned between each use.
- Frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, railings and barriers must be cleaned and disinfected frequently and when visibly dirty.
- Ensure routine and frequent [cleaning and disinfection](#) occurs throughout the day in workspaces and ensure that any [washrooms open for public use](#) are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.
- Further disinfection recommendations are outlined in Ontario's [Guidance for Facilities for Sports and Recreational Activities During COVID-19](#) (see section entitled 'Recommendations for Health and Safety').
- Provide adequate supplies and garbage bins for disposing used materials.
- Refer to Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings Fact Sheet](#).
- Refer to Health Canada's [List of Disinfectants with Evidence for Use Against COVID-19](#).

Screening and Record-Keeping

Employees, volunteers and attendees shall conduct self-screening for symptoms of COVID-19, prior to attending the outdoor ice surface/rink and outdoor skating trails. Anyone with symptoms should stay home.

Outdoor Recreational Facilities

- Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities are required to conduct active daily screening on all persons who attend their facility (including attendees and employees) and keep these records for a period of 30 days (See 'Screening' section of Ontario's [Guidance for Facilities for Sports and Recreational Activities During COVID-19](#)). Screening applies to members of the public, staff and volunteers who only attend outdoor settings even if they do not go inside a building.
- Encourage online or telephone sales and registration processes.
- Use a contactless process to log attendance (e.g. scanner), if necessary.



Playground Facilities and Outdoor Trails

- It is **not** mandatory to keep records of all persons who are in attendance, although it is encouraged.

Drinking Water Systems

- With many buildings either closed or experiencing lower occupancy due to COVID-19, many properties have used less water and increased the amount of water stagnation in plumbing systems. It is important to flush both cold and hot water lines, and to drain hot water tanks, to remove stagnant water from the building's plumbing system. For additional instruction, refer to the [Guide for Maintaining Building Plumbing After an Extended Vacancy](#) from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- Private drinking water supplies must be sampled ahead of opening, with samples sent to a private licensed laboratory. Operators must continue to sample throughout the operating season in accordance with drinking water regulations.
- Small Drinking Water System (SDWS) operators must provide specific information to the local Health Unit's Medical Officer of Health in writing before reopening after a 60-day closure, or alter the construction, installation, alteration, or extension of the SDWS. To comply with these requirements, owners/operators must complete and submit the necessary SDWS notice and designation forms. For more information on SDWS, call the Health Unit at 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5006.
- Limit the use of water fountains to be used only to re-fill water bottles, not for individuals to drink directly from.

For more information, call the Health Unit at 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5020, or visit www.hkpr.on.ca.

References

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2020) Risk Mitigation Tool for Outdoor Recreation Spaces and Activities Operating During the COVID-19 pandemic. Retrieved from:

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirusinfection/guidance-documents/risk-mitigation-tool-outdoor-recreation-spaces-activities-operating-covid-19.html

Adapted with permission from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit