

Restrictions for areas of HRM and Hants County

Why are restrictions only for Halifax? Why not the whole province?

Some of these restrictions are provincewide and all other parts of the province need to continue following the public health measures that were already in place.

However, at the beginning of the pandemic, we shut down the entire province. We are trying to avoid doing that again by taking a targeted approach. The rise in cases we are currently seeing is in urban and some suburban areas of Halifax Regional Municipality, so the added restrictions only apply in the areas outlined above.

When do the restrictions come into effect?

Some restrictions were announced on November 20. They are in place from November 23 to December 21.

Further restrictions were announced November 24. They will come into force at 12:01 a.m. on November 26 and will continue for two weeks until midnight December 9, with a possibility of extension.

Do the restrictions announced on November 24 replace the ones you announced on November 20?

No, these are in addition to changes announced on November 20.

What are the provincewide restrictions?

The following new restrictions apply across the province from November 26 to December 9:

- There will be no visitors except volunteers and designated caregivers to long-term care facilities
- There will be no visitors except volunteers and designated caregivers to adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres licensed by the Department of Community Services
- Sports teams are restricted to local or regional play only
- There will be no extracurricular activities between schools

To further protect our most vulnerable, staff, volunteers and designated caregivers at long-term facilities in HRM will undergo voluntary, bi-weekly testing. It will be phased in starting November 27.

What are the boundaries for HRM and Hants County restrictions?

The restrictions apply to western and central Halifax Regional Municipality (from Hubbards up to and including Porters Lake) and up to and including the communities of Elmsdale and Mount Uniacke in Hants County. The restrictions do not include the Eastern Shore past Porters Lake. Please see a fuller list at novascotia.ca/coronavirus.

What are the new Halifax area restrictions?

In the areas of HRM and Hants County described above, the following restrictions are in place from November 26 to December 9:

- Non-medical masks are mandatory in common areas of multi-unit residential buildings, such as apartment buildings and condos
- Restaurants and licenced establishments are closed for in-person dining but may provide take-out or delivery – hotel restaurants can remain open to serve their guests only
- Retail stores must restrict shoppers and staff to 25% or less of allowable capacity
- Wineries, distilleries and breweries cannot holding tastings or in-person dining, but can operate their storefronts following retail rules and provide delivery and curbside pickup allowed
- Organized sports, recreational, athletic, arts and cultural activities, faith-based activities are paused
- Profit and non-profit fitness and recreational facilities are closed, including outdoor fitness classes
- Libraries and museums are closed, including the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
- The casino and First Nations gaming establishments are closed
- Stronger enforcement of illegal gatherings, including ticketing all attendees (total fine of \$1,000)

Personal services businesses such as hairstylists, estheticians and nail salons can continue to provide services that can be done with both staff and patrons wearing non-medical masks. They are not allowed to do procedures that require removing a patron's mask.

Schools, after-school programs and child care centres remain open.

What restrictions are there for adult day programs?

From November 20 to December 21, community-based adult day programs cannot operate in the areas of HRM and Hants County described above. These programs provide respite for caregivers of seniors who live in the community.

This restriction does not apply to general recreation programs for seniors – although those recreation activities are paused in areas of HRM and Hants County described above from November 26 to December 9.

GATHERING LIMITS

What are the changes to the gathering limits?

From November 23 to December 21 in the areas of HRM and Hants County described above, the following gathering limits are in place – although many activities that they apply to are closed/paused from November 26 to December 9:

- People can have a close social group of 5 without physical distancing (down from 10). This applies to gatherings in your home, groups sitting together at a restaurant or bar and groups sitting/being together at events.
- The general gathering limit is now 25 with physical distancing (down from 50) except among people from the same household or close social group of 5. This applies to community events that are not hosted by a recognized business or organization. An example would be a neighbourhood street party.

- Events hosted by a recognized business or organization can have 150 outdoors (down from 250) and 50% of an indoor venue's capacity to a maximum of 100 (down from 200). Physical distancing is required, except among people from the same household or close social group of 5. An example would be a wedding reception at a hotel.

What happens if you have more than 5 people in your household? Can a family of 7 go out to dinner?

Some households have more than 5 people. These household members can continue to interact without physical distancing at home and when they go out.

If you already have 5 people in your household, does this mean you can't let anyone else come into your house?

Regardless of the number of people in your household, you can have up to 5 visitors at a time. We also recognize you may need to let people into your home for different reasons such as child care, urgent repairs, etc. That is allowed.

Does this mean you can't have family members come for the holidays?

These restrictions are in place for 4 weeks. If all goes well, we may be able to lift them on December 21 before the holidays. Any further changes will be announced publicly.

Will you grandfather people who have booked venues for holiday parties under the larger gathering limits, or do they have to scale back their events?

They will have to scale back their events.

How will businesses survive if they have to lower their numbers and scale back holiday events?

We understand this is challenging for businesses. We've engaged them in discussion before making decisions on these restrictions. We've done our best to balance their business needs with the need to keep people safe.

Does the limit of 5 apply to sports practices/competitions and arts rehearsals/performances?

The limit of 5 does not apply to these activities, however, they are paused from November 26 to December 9.

Does the limit of 5 apply to fitness facilities and classes?

The limit of 5 does not apply to these fitness facilities or classes, however, these facilities are closed from November 26 to December 9.

Does the limit of 5 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.

Does the limit of 5 apply to dining and social gatherings in long-term care facilities?

Yes, the limit of 5 applies to for gatherings in long-term care facilities. This adds to the other measures in place to protect these residents.

LONG-TERM CARE

Can family members still visit long-term care residents?

To protect our most vulnerable, visitors are not allowed to visit residents in long-term care facilities across the province from November 26 to December 9. During this period, only volunteers and designated caregivers allowed.

The same is true for adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres licensed by the Department of Community Services.

What activities are currently allowed in long-term care facilities?

Gatherings

- residents and staff can gather in groups of 5 or less for dining, recreation or socializing without physical distancing
- groups should remain consistent and visitors cannot join

Licensed hair salons

- licensed hair salons that operate within a long-term care home can be open to residents only
- the salon must follow the guidelines set by the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia and submit a safety plan to the facility within which it is located
- a list of every resident who visited the salon, and when, must be maintained
- no procedures that require removing a mask are allowed

Off-site bus/car trips

- facilities can offer bus trips for groups of up to 5 people (including residents, staff and driver)
- the trips must be for sightseeing only – residents and staff cannot disembark the bus
- bus drivers must be screened using the same protocols as visitors to a facility and contact between the driver and residents/staff should be limited
- the bus must be cleaned before and after use
- facilities are expected to group the same residents together each time and maintain consistent staff, where possible
- designated caregivers can take a resident for a drive as long as they wear mask, have nobody else in the car, and make no stops