

Reopening FAQs May 29

It seems like everything is opening all at once – why?

Nova Scotia has done things a little differently. We've consulted with a wide range of sectors and regulatory bodies that were required to close to provide guidance and understand what they need to reopen safely. If they are ready, can reopen safely and have approved plans, they can reopen on June 5. We will be keeping a close eye on how things are going to ensure we don't have a spike in virus rates.

What is the new gathering limit?

The gathering limit is now 10. It applies to indoor and outdoor gatherings. There is an exception for outdoor weddings and funeral services, which can have 15 people.

In all gatherings, physical distancing is still required, except among members of the same household or family household bubble.

Are you expanding the family household bubble?

We are not expanding the family household bubble at this time. We are watching the epidemiology and will consider changes to the bubble option as we see how reopening is going.

What do you mean by gathering?

When we say gathering, we mean things like social gatherings on your deck, in your house, or at the park. We mean arts and culture events like dance recitals, theatre performances, and festivals. We mean faith gatherings and special events like weddings. We mean sports, physical activities, and sporting events.

Can sports teams resume?

For sports and physical activity, 10 people can practice on a soccer field, for example, and maintain 2 metres or 6 feet distance between them. But they can't play a game of soccer because that would involve close contact. They also can't have 2 separate groups of 10 on the same field.

What about sports teams using large fitness facilities?

We are treating fitness facilities like businesses, whether they are for profit or not. So the gathering limit of 10 does not apply. Instead, they must have a plan to control numbers and ensure social distancing, among other things. However, if a sports team rents the soccer field or the gymnasium at a fitness facility or the hockey rink, that team is subject to the gathering limit of 10. So an entire team cannot be on the soccer field or in the gymnasium or on one ice surface.

Can theatres reopen? What about concerts and sporting events? What about festivals?

The gathering limit applies festivals, and to businesses whose core function is gatherings. Businesses of this nature are theatres, concerts, sporting events, harbour cruises, and so on. They can only operate with groups of 10 people, and with physical distancing.

Does the limit for weddings and funerals include the officiant? What about a photographer, DJ, or other service providers for weddings?

The officiant is the only extra person beyond the gathering limit. If you want a photographer, for example, that person has to be part of your group of 10 indoors or 15 outdoors.

Can churches reopen?

For faith gatherings, 10 people can gather, keeping 2 metres or 6 feet distance between everybody. We recommend that they look at other safety precautions such as not passing things like a collection plate to each other and not singing because it raises the risk of spreading respiratory droplets.

Drive-in faith services are still allowed with conditions outlined in the public health order.

Why are you allowing so many people in close quarters like a restaurant but so few in wide open spaces like a sports field?

We recognize that this approach not a one-size-fits-all solution for everybody. Different settings and activities have different levels of risk. That's why they are treated differently.

When are day cares opening?

Public Health continues to work with the childcare sector on a plan to reopen safely. June 15 is the goal but the reopening date will be confirmed and shared with Nova Scotians once the plan is fully approved. The primary focus is the safety of children.

When will summer day camps open? What about overnight camps?

Public health is working with day camp organizers to ensure they are able to operate safely. We aim to set a date for reopening soon. Overnight summer camps will remain closed for 2020.

Is self isolation still required when you enter the province?

Yes, anyone entering Nova Scotia must self isolate for 14 days, unless you are in one of the groups that has an exemption from this requirement under the public health order.

What health services are resuming?

The Nova Scotia Health Authority is gradually reopening health care services and procedures. Key areas are outpatient clinics, diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, and surgeries. There is more information on their website: <http://www.nshealth.ca/servicereintroduction>

The following can open if they can follow plans that their sectors develop and Public Health approves:

- Dentistry and other self-regulated health professions such as optometry, chiropractic, and physiotherapy
- Unregulated health professions such as massage therapy, podiatry, and naturopathy

What businesses can reopen and when?

Starting June 5, the following can open if they can follow Workplace COVID-19 Prevention Plans that their sectors develop and Public Health approves:

- Restaurants for dine in as well as takeout and delivery
- Drinking establishments
- Personal services such as hair salons, barber shops, spas, nail salons, and body art establishments
- Fitness facilities
- Private campgrounds
- Veterinarians

Starting June 15, campgrounds in provincial parks will reopen.

What kinds of public health protocols do businesses need to follow in order to reopen?

They must develop and comply with a Workplace COVID-19 Prevention Plan, which addresses:

- physical distancing in the workplace (staff and clients)
- number of clients
- how to work and interact with customers
- cleaning
- equipment
- preparing employees to return to work
- preparing for customers or clients
- monitoring and communicating of plan

How will campgrounds operate safely? What date are provincial parks opening for camping?

On June 5, private campgrounds will be allowed to open for all types of campers. Private campgrounds must follow the protocols in the plan developed by their industry association.

Provincial park campgrounds will open June 15 with new safety measures in place. Nova Scotians can start making reservations for on June 8. No out-of-province bookings will be accepted. Find more information at <https://parks.novascotia.ca/>

Has the burn ban been lifted? Can we have a fire at a private or provincial park campground?

The burn ban will expire Monday, June 1 at 11:59 p.m. After that, Nova Scotians must check burn restrictions each day to see if burning is permitted in their area before they burn brush or start a backyard or campfire. People should also check municipal bylaws as their rules may vary or be more restrictive. Daily burn restrictions do not apply to private campgrounds.

What about businesses that didn't have to close but did anyway, can they reopen?

Yes and many have already started to reopen with modifications. While government doesn't need to approve their plans, every business should have one and be ready to produce it if asked by an inspector, employees, or customers. They also need to make changes to accommodate social distancing, increased

cleaning and other measures. For those who need help with planning, there is information on our website.

Where can I find out what to expect when I go to a business? How do I know what their plan is?

You should contact the business to ask what to expect. Many businesses will be following plans developed by their industry associations. Some will have their own plans.

Why are you letting businesses develop their own plans? They aren't public health experts.

Businesses know their operations better than we do. Their sector associations are taking our guidance, applying it to their individual situations, and submitting their plans for approval. For those that weren't required to close under the public health order, we have information on our website to help them with planning. While government doesn't need to approve those plans, every business should have one and be ready to produce it if asked by an inspector, employees, or customers.

What guidance have you given industries to develop their plans?

Through our consultations, we discussed the different situations in different industries and what steps they might take to respect physical distancing and operate safely. With that guidance, industries are developing their plans and submitting them for approval. They are looking at things like work schedules, shared equipment, crowd control, and protective equipment for employees like masks and plexiglass dividers. In addition, there is guidance information at <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/>

What protocols do restaurants have to follow?

The Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia has an approved plan for reopening. It includes the following requirements in the public health order:

- maintain a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) or a physical barrier between tables, booths and single seats
- keep patrons to a maximum of 50% of the restaurant's capacity
- do not permit any single group within the restaurant to exceed 10 people

What protocols do bars have to follow?

All licensed establishments, including restaurants, bars, private clubs, tasting/tap rooms (wineries, breweries and distilleries) and special premises licenses (hotels) may reopen under the following conditions in the public health order:

- maintain a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) or a physical barrier between tables, booths and single seats
- not exceed 50% of the establishment's capacity do not permit any single group within the establishment to exceed 10 people
- do not permit any single group within the establishment to exceed 10 people
- provide food and alcohol for in-seat service only, delivered to the table by staff, and ensure food and alcohol is kept at the table
- ensure patrons comply with physical distancing requirements
- be closed to customers by 11:00 p.m.

What protocols do personal services businesses have to follow?

Personal services include hair salons, barber shops, spas, nail salons and body art establishments, as well as fitness establishments, including gyms, yoga studios and climbing facilities. They may reopen following plans developed by their industry associations, which include the following conditions in the public health order:

- maintain a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) or a physical barrier
- if physical distancing cannot be maintained, limit the number of customers or clients on its premises (indoor and outdoor) to no more than 10 people at a time

What about businesses that don't have an industry association? Did you consult with them? How will they know how to develop a plan?

We aren't able to consult with individual businesses but we have information at <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/> to help them develop their plans.

I'm trying to reopen a business/workplace/organization. What should I include in my plan?

If you're in an industry that has an association, check with them first to find out if they have a plan for your industry. If not, there is information at <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/> to help you.