

Continued provincewide restrictions - January 29, 2021

What is changing with public health restrictions?

Effective January 25:

- sports teams can start playing games, but spectators are not permitted and there can be no games or tournaments involving teams that would not regularly play against each other
- non-team sports can also resume competition, but without spectators and only among competitors who would regularly compete against each other
- **effective January 29, the** limit for sports practices, training and games and arts and culture rehearsals and classes is **60**
- arts and culture performances can only be virtual and cannot have in-person spectators
- residents of adult service centres and regional rehabilitation centres can resume community visits for work and volunteering

The remaining restrictions are continuing until at least February 7:

- gathering limit of 10, both in your home and in the community
- restaurants and licensed establishments stop service by 10 p.m. and close by 11 p.m.
- retail businesses and malls operate at 50 per cent capacity
- fitness facilities operate at 50% of capacity and have 3 metres between people for high intensity activities, including indoor and outdoor fitness classes
- faith gatherings, wedding ceremonies and funeral services can have 150 people outdoors or 50 per cent of an indoor venue's capacity, to a maximum of 100
- social events, special events (including wedding receptions and funeral receptions/visitation), festivals, arts/cultural events and sports events are not permitted

Our case numbers are fairly low, why do we still need these restrictions?

While our case numbers are relatively low, we need to keep them that way. There continues to be considerable risk of cases coming into the province from other jurisdictions, including New Brunswick.

GATHERINGS

What is the gathering limit?

Across the province starting December 21, the gathering limit is 10 both indoors and outdoors.

How many people can you have in your home?

You can have 10 people total in your home without physical distancing. If more than 10 people live in your home, that is fine.

What if some of the people are small children or babies, do they count in the total of 10?

Yes. It doesn't matter how old people are, the limit is 10 people at a gathering in your home, including the people who live there.

Can households with 10 or more people have any visitors?

The limit is 10 people. We realize this means that some families may not be able to have many – or any – visitors. However, this restriction is important for their safety and for the safety of others in the community.

Can your entire household go out together?

When your household goes out into the community, no matter how many people there are, you can stay together without physical distance. But whole families should not go into stores together if you can avoid it. Ideally, just one person from your household should go into a store. This helps avoid physical distancing challenges for other customers and staff.

Can groups of 10 still get together?

Across the province, you can have a close social group of up to 10 people without physical distancing. This group is typically the people you live with, and maybe a few more. You should try to keep this group consistent and avoid belonging to multiple groups.

This group is for social purposes – it is not for workplaces. If you're doing things like skating at your local rink, having a meal at a restaurant, walking in a park, or attending a faith gathering, you can go with this group without physical distancing.

A random group of 10 people should not form spontaneously. Businesses or organizations should not seat 10 random people together.

Can a group of 10 kids get together to play?

If your kids are playing with friends, they should be friends who you've chosen to be in your family's close social group. You should keep this group consistent and try not to belong to multiple groups. So you need to think carefully about who to have in your group. A random group of kids should not get together to play.

Can there still be gatherings of 50?

No. Across the province, we are eliminating the general gathering limit of 50 for now. At this time, that is too many people to have together without a recognized business or organization overseeing the event and making sure public health measures are followed.

Are any community events allowed right now?

For now, we are not permitting any social events, festivals and special events, arts/cultural events, or sports events. That means, for example: no wedding receptions, no funeral visitations/receptions, no community meals or fundraising events, no parties, no concerts, no live theatre or movie theatres.

Can there be church services or other faith gatherings?

Yes. Faith gatherings can happen with a maximum of 150 people outdoors or 50% of an indoor venue's capacity to a maximum of 100. Physical distancing is required unless you are with members of your own household or close social group of up to 10.

This gathering limit is for services. It is not for meetings – they have a limit of 10 people.

Are weddings and funerals allowed right now?

We are allowing wedding ceremonies and funeral services that are hosted by a recognized business or organization. There can be a maximum of 150 people outdoors or 50% of an indoor venue's capacity to a maximum of 100. Physical distancing is required unless you are with members of your own household or close social group of up to 10.

While there can be wedding ceremonies and funeral services, there can be no receptions or visitation associated with them. For now, we are considering wedding receptions and funeral receptions/visitation to be special events which are not allowed.

I was planning my own wedding with the gathering limit of 50. What am I supposed to do now?

For the ceremony, you could engage a recognized business or organization to host it or you could reduce the size to 10 people in your home (including the officiant). There can be no reception, unless it's in your home with a total of 10 people. Another option is to postpone the wedding.

What should I do if there's a large gathering 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.

Where can I find more information about safe gatherings?

While the holidays are over, our [holiday guidance](#) still provides relevant information for safe gatherings during the pandemic.

BUSINESSES

Are bars and restaurants allowed to open?

Across the province, restaurants and bars can offer dine-in service but must stop service by 10 a.m. and close by 11 p.m. They can offer takeout, delivery and drive-thru later. This isn't a reflection of how safe bars and restaurants are. It is simply to reduce the opportunity for prolonged social gatherings in close proximity without masks.

Can bars and restaurants have live music?

Yes, as long as the music is part of their regular offerings, such as nightly background music or a live band several nights a week. If it is not a regular part of their offerings, then it would be considered a special event which is not permitted right now.

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

Yes, however, if they are licensed establishments, they must stop service by 10 a.m. and close by 11 p.m.

How are fitness and recreation facilities operating?

Across the province, fitness facilities like gyms and yoga studios can operate at 50% capacity. Outdoor fitness classes can operate at full capacity. Indoors and outdoors, there must be 3 metres distance between participants during high intensity activities, as per the fitness sector's revised its re-opening plan: [https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/prevention-plans/COVID-19 Fitness Industry Guidance Dec 14 2020.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/prevention-plans/COVID-19_Fitness_Industry_Guidance_Dec_14_2020.pdf)

Do the fitness facility rules apply to sport and recreation facilities like rinks, arenas, gymnasiums, golf courses, etc?

Generally, no. However, if the sport and recreation facility has a weight room, a cardio machine area or fitness classes, then the fitness facility rules apply in those areas – 50% capacity and 3 metres between people for high intensity activities.

Can movie theatres open?

No, movies are considered arts and culture events.

What are the restrictions for stores?

Across the province, retail businesses can operate at 50% capacity. Other retail rules include:

- 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.

How many people can be in a retail store?

The number of people who can be in a retail store depends on how much space you have. For this period of time, retail stores cannot have more than 50% of their maximum occupancy on the premises at a time. That includes both staff and customers. They must also ensure physical distancing is maintained.

If I have reached 50% of 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.

How do I know what my retail store's maximum occupancy is?

Every business should already be aware of its maximum occupancy under the building code. If you don't know your occupant load, you can calculate a safe number of occupants using 80 square feet per person. As an example, a retail space that is 4800 square feet can accommodate 60 people. A larger retail space of 12,000 square feet can accommodate 150 people. These numbers would still be dependant on there being enough room 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
- Food court vendors can open with public health measures in place including 2 metre/6 feet between tables

Do farm farmers markets and flea markets have to close?

Farmers markets and flea 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. Market operators need to ensure physical distancing and can only have 50% of the maximum occupancy, including vendors and customers. They need a COVID-19 prevention plan.

If the market is not a regular daily or weekly operation, they are considered special events that cannot happen until after January 24.

Can craft shows and markets still happen?

No, they are considered special events that cannot happen at this time.

Does the limit of 10 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.

What's the limit for a business meeting or training?

At this time, no more than 10 people can gather for a meeting or training, with physical distancing and regardless of room capacity. This includes meetings or training for workers who are otherwise exempt from the gathering limit in order to fulfill their work duties (such as police, firefighters, transit operators, etc).

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.

ACTIVITIES

Are there any restrictions for sports? What about arts and culture rehearsals?

Starting January 25:

- sports teams can start playing games, but spectators are not permitted and there can be no games or tournaments involving teams that would not regularly play against each other
- non-team sports can also resume competition, but without spectators and only among competitors who would regularly compete against each other
- the limit for sports practices, training and games and arts and culture rehearsals and classes will return to 50
- arts and culture performances can only be virtual and cannot have in-person spectators

Can people travel around the province for sports activities?

There can be no games, tournaments or competitions involving teams or individual competitors who would not regularly play against each other. In some cases, this may mean that there is travel within the province and in others, travel may not be necessary.

What is permitted for school-based sports?

School-based sport is following the same rules as non-school sport. Beginning Jan. 25, games and competitions can resume with up to 50 participants without physical distancing.

Competitions are restricted to regions, meaning that games between teams from different regions or provincial championships are not permitted.

Following the provincial Back to School plan, only people who are essential to facilitating competition (players, coaches and officials) may be present. Other non-essential adults, including spectators, continue to not be permitted into schools.

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 restrictions don't close after school programs.

Can a virtual performance be recorded or livestreamed? What about a broadcast of a sports game?

There can be no more than 60 people directly involved in the performance or game. If it's a performance, that includes the performers and any of the direct support people who would normally be needed if it were a regular, non-virtual performance. If it's a sports game, that includes the players, coaches, and officials as part of the field of play who would normally be needed if it were a regular, non-virtual game.

You can engage a recognized business or organization for recording/livestreaming/broadcasting and that production team is limited to 10 people (ie, in addition to the 60 who are directly involved). They must maintain physical distance. If there is a need for more, they can submit a proposal to the Safety Division at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education at LAESafetybranch@novascotia.ca. If you don't want to engage a recognized business or organization, it must be people within the limit of 60 who manage this and they must follow any rules the facility may have in place around this.

Note that facility or venue staff who are required to operate the game or performance safely are not included in either of these limits. That would be people like the Zamboni driver, maintenance staff and security staff.

Why are you allowing even more people for sports/arts and culture but you still aren't allowing any spectators?

This increase of ten people does not substantively change the risk for exposure to COVID-19, while meeting the operational need for some sports. When spectators gather, there is increased risk. We are taking a slow, cautious approach to easing restrictions and we ask Nova Scotians to please be patient.

Can there be Scouts and Brownies meetings?

Gatherings like these are subject to the gathering limit of 10 with physical distancing.

What about Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous?

Support meetings for mental health and addictions can have a maximum of 25 people with physical distancing.

Can businesses like indoor playgrounds, bowling alleys, shooting ranges, golf courses, putting ranges, go-carts, climbing gyms, trampoline facilities, and escape rooms open? What about music and dance lessons?

Recreation and leisure businesses can operate and must follow public health measures such as physical distancing and masks.

Can people get together to play darts, cards, pool and bingo?

People can gather for these activities only if they are hosted by a licensed establishment. The licensed establishment takes on responsibility for ensuring that public health measures are followed and that specific guidance for these activities is followed.

Can there be overnight/sleepover camps such as for Girl Guides or children with disabilities?

We stopped these types of camps early in the pandemic. They are still not be permitted for the time being and we recently updated the public health order to reflect this. This does not affect regular camping at campgrounds.

Can a long-term care resident go to their family's home for a visit? Can family visit a resident in their facility?

Since December 21, each resident can have 2 designated caregivers and facilities can allow a limited number of visitors. Please contact the facility for more information.

Residents can only leave their facilities for medical/dental appointments or to go for a drive with 1 designated caregiver (with no other passengers, no stops or drive-thru). We cannot allow residents to visit their families' homes at this time.

The same is generally true for adult residential centres (ARC) and regional rehabilitation centres (RRC) licensed by the Department of Community Services. However, residents of these facilities can resume community visits for work and volunteering.

Can adult day programs operate?

No, community-based adult day programs cannot operate at this time, unless they provide respite care.

These programs are different from general recreation programs for seniors. Adult day programs offer activities in a professional care setting for older adults who require supervised care during the day, or for those who are isolated and lonely. They enable seniors to socialize and enjoy planned activities in a group setting, while still receiving needed health services.

If these programs offer family caregivers respite from caregiving duties while knowing that their loved one are in a safe place, they can operate.