

Guidance for Public Washrooms

Public washrooms are important facilities in our communities. Depending on where they are located, they can be busy. COVID-19 transmission can occur when people are within close proximity to one another through the spread of droplets or through shared contact with surfaces. The COVID-19 virus has also been found in feces. As a result, some changes in the operation and maintenance of public washrooms may be necessary. As one of the most important actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is handwashing, the benefits of accessing a washroom to facilitate this action far outweighs the potential risks. As a result, it is recommended that washrooms be opened where the following protective measures can be put in place:

Support Proper Hand Hygiene

- Post signage on [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) at sinks.
- Ensure that soap and paper towels are always available and are refilled frequently to ensure the public can practice proper hand hygiene.
- Remove or put out-of-service hand dryers. Provide paper towels instead.
- Hands-free sinks and paper towel dispensers are preferred to avoid the use of handles which reduces high touch surfaces in washrooms. If hands-free appliances cannot be installed, more frequent cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is required.
- Hand sanitizer should be made available where possible at the entrance/exit of the washroom.

Support Physical Distancing

- Post [physical distancing signage](#) outside and inside the washroom in case of lineups.
- Floor markers to designate 2 metres (6 feet) spacing are advisable in busier washrooms.
- Post maximum occupancy signs to further enhance physical distancing.
- Some urinals, stalls, and sink basins may need to be decommissioned (taped off) if 2 metre (6 foot) spacing cannot be maintained in the current set up.

Cleaning & Disinfection

- Increase the frequency of cleaning (including garbage removal) and disinfection is required, especially on commonly touched areas/surfaces (e.g., faucets, lights switches, handles). The frequency of the cleaning and disinfection is dependent on the use of the facility.
- Baby change tables may be used and will require frequent cleaning and disinfection.

Other Precautions

- Place signage in each stall instructing users to flush the toilet with the lid down, if applicable.
- Ventilation in the facility should be maximized.
- Limit the use of water fountains for refilling water bottles and not for individuals to drink directly from them.

Portable Toilets

- Post signage on [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) at sinks.
- Post [physical distancing signage](#) outside the portable toilet in case of lineups.
- Increase cleaning protocols and service intervals.
- To ensure physical distancing, the number of portable toilets may need to be increased.
- Operators should ensure hand sanitizer is available and frequently refilled.

Additional Resources

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

[Coronavirus Disease \(Covid-19\) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces](#)

References

[The Hygienic Efficacy of Different Hand-Drying Methods: A Review of the Evidence](#)

Adapted with permission from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit