



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Niagara-on-the-Lake Responds to Increased Provincial COVID-19 Restrictions

The Town is adhering to guidelines from the Province, following a modified version of [Step Two of Ontario's Roadmap to Reopen](#).

**For Immediate Release**

**January 3, 2022**

During a press conference this morning, Ontario Premier Doug Ford [announced](#) that effective Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at 12:01 a.m., the Province will temporarily move to modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen in order to preserve hospital capacity limits and accelerate the COVID-19 vaccine booster dose rollout program.

The announcement included the application of additional public health and workplace safety measures to curb the transmission of the Omicron variant. The Premier advised that these measures would remain in effect for at least 21 days (until January 26, 2022), subject to positive trends in public health and health system indicators.

“Although this is not how anybody would like to start the new year, these measures to protect our communities are necessary so our hospitals do not become overloaded and have to stop essential healthcare,” stated Lord Mayor Betty Disero. “Thank you to everyone who continues doing their part by monitoring for symptoms, staying home when they are ill and wearing their mask diligently.”

“Omicron has been proven by medical experts to spread faster than other COVID-19 variants,” stated CAO Marnie Cluckie. “While enhanced restrictions feel like a setback in the progress we have made, they are in place for public and workplace safety. Town Staff is continuing to work hard to accommodate residents’ needs during these difficult times.”

The additional public health and workplace safety measures, as outlined in the [news release](#) issued by the Ontario Government, include:



- Reducing social gathering limits to five (5) people indoors and ten (10) people outdoors.
- Limiting capacity at organized public events to five people indoors.
- Requiring businesses and organizations to ensure employees work remotely unless the nature of their work requires them to be on-site.
- Limiting capacity at indoor weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites and ceremonies to 50 per cent capacity of the particular room. Outdoor services are limited to the number of people that can maintain 2 metres of physical distance. Social gatherings associated with these services must adhere to the social gathering limits.
- Retail settings, including shopping malls, permitted at 50 per cent capacity. For shopping malls, physical distancing will be required in line-ups, loitering will not be permitted, and food courts will be required to close.
- Personal care services permitted at 50 per cent capacity and other restrictions. Saunas, steam rooms, and oxygen bars closed.
- Closing indoor meeting and event spaces with limited exceptions but permitting outdoor spaces to remain open with restrictions.
- Public libraries limited to 50 per cent capacity.
- Closing indoor dining at restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments.
- Outdoor dining with restrictions, takeout, drive-through and delivery is permitted.
- Restricting the sale of alcohol after 10 p.m. and the consumption of alcohol on-premise in businesses or settings after 11 p.m. with delivery and takeout, grocery/convenience stores and other liquor stores exempted.
- Closing indoor concert venues, theatres, cinemas, rehearsals, and recorded performances permitted with restrictions.
- Closing museums, galleries, zoos, science centres, landmarks, historic sites, botanical gardens and similar attractions, amusement parks and waterparks, tour and guide services and fairs, rural exhibitions, and festivals. Outdoor establishments permitted to open with restrictions and with spectator occupancy, where applicable, limited to 50 per cent capacity.
- Closing indoor horse racing tracks, car racing tracks and other similar venues. Outdoor establishments permitted to open with restrictions and with spectator occupancy limited to 50 per cent capacity. Boat tours permitted at 50 per cent capacity.
- Closing indoor sport and recreational fitness facilities including gyms, except for athletes training for the Olympics and Paralympics and select professional and elite amateur sport leagues. Outdoor facilities are permitted to operate but with



the number of spectators not to exceed 50 per cent occupancy and other requirements.

- All publicly funded and private schools will move to remote learning starting January 5 until at least January 17, subject to public health trends and operational considerations.
- School buildings would be permitted to open for childcare operations, including emergency child care, to provide in-person instruction for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated remotely and for staff who are unable to deliver quality instruction from home.
- During this period of remote learning, free emergency child care will be provided for school-aged children of health care and other eligible frontline workers.

While the Province has advised that the risks for severe illness are lower with Omicron than previous variants, it has noted that its high transmissibility has resulted in a larger number of hospital admissions placing increased demands on our health system. Due to Omicron infection and exposure, staff absenteeism is also expected to rise and affect operations and workplaces across Ontario. Therefore, the Province is issuing these additional restrictive measures to curb the spread of this variant.

The Province has yet to release the revised Regulation. However, the Town will provide further communications as more information becomes available from the Province and Niagara Region Public Health.

Visit [covid-19.ontario.ca](https://covid-19.ontario.ca) for the most up-to-date information from the Provincial Government.

For the most accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 related measures being taken by Niagara-on-the-Lake, please visit [notl.com/COVID-19](https://notl.com/COVID-19), or call 905-468-3266.

Community members looking to report contraventions of Emergency Orders are asked to email [covidcomplaints@notl.com](mailto:covidcomplaints@notl.com). Urgent issues can be reported by calling the Niagara Regional Police Service's non-emergency line at 905-688-4111.

*For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.*

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