

# Ontario Strengthens Enforcement of Stay-at-Home Order

Implementing Stronger Enforcement, Travel Restrictions, Public Health Measures to Stop the Spread of COVID-19 and Save Lives

April 16, 2021

[Office of the Premier](#)

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TORONTO — The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, is strengthening enforcement of the province's Stay-at-Home order while imposing new travel restrictions and further strengthening public health measures. These urgent actions are targeted at stopping the rapid growth in COVID-19 case rates and relieving mounting pressures on the province's health care system.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones, Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development and Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health.

"As the latest modelling confirms, without taking immediate and decisive action COVID-19 cases will spiral out of control and our hospitals will be overwhelmed," said Premier Ford. "That's why we are making difficult, but necessary decisions to reduce mobility and keep people in the safety of their own homes. We need to contain the spread of this deadly virus, while getting vaccines in as many arms as quickly as possible."

To increase public compliance with the Stay-at-Home order and stop the spread of COVID-19, amendments to an emergency order (O.Reg 8/21 Enforcement of COVID-19 Measures) have been made that will provide police officers and other provincial offences officers enhanced authority to support the enforcement of Ontario's Stay-at-Home order.

Effective Saturday, April 17, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., police officers and other provincial offences officers will have the authority to require any individual to provide their home address and purpose for not being at their residence. In addition, police officers, special constables and First Nation Constables will have the authority to stop vehicles to inquire about an individual's reasons for leaving their home. This additional enforcement tool will only be in effect during the Stay-at-Home order and exclusively to enforce the Stay-at-Home order.

"With our hospital system under significant pressure and the continued increase of COVID-19 variants, we are stepping up enforcement to ensure that people adhere to the Stay-at-Home order and follow public health measures," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "This is a critical moment in Ontario's response to this deadly virus, that's why we are doing whatever it takes to stop the spread and protect our communities."

Both the provincial declaration of emergency and the Stay-at-Home order (O.Reg 265/21) have been extended for an additional two weeks to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The Stay-at-Home order currently in effect requires everyone to remain at home except for specified purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services (including getting vaccinated), for outdoor exercise, or for work that cannot be done remotely.

"Now, more than ever before, businesses need to take all measures possible to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Minister McNaughton. "We're in workplaces every day to enforce safety requirements and we won't hesitate to stop unsafe work and ticket offenders. Today, we launched an enhanced, targeted provincewide inspection campaign of construction sites, dispatching 200 workplace inspectors, supported by provincial offences officers, to visit 1,300 construction sites to enforce COVID-19 safety requirements. In addition, provincial offences officers will also be visiting over 500 workplaces this weekend in the COVID-19 hotspots of Ottawa, Toronto and York Region. Their visits will include big-box stores, food processors, manufacturers and warehouses."

In order to limit the transmission of the variants of concern, the government is also restricting travel into Ontario from the provinces of Manitoba and Quebec with the exception of purposes such as work, health care services, transportation and delivery of goods and services or exercising Aboriginal or treaty rights.

"The rising spread of variants means we must take stronger measures to limit transmission and prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "As we continue to work to vaccinate those in the areas with the highest rates of transmission, everyone must adhere to public health measures and stay at home as much as possible to protect capacity in our health system and the health of thousands of Ontarians."

The government also intends to implement the following public health and workplace safety measures effective Saturday, April 17, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.:

- Prohibit all outdoor social gatherings and organized public events, except for with members of the same household or one other person from outside that household who lives alone or a caregiver for any member of the household;
- Close all non-essential workplaces in the construction sector;
- Reduce capacity limits to 25 per cent in all retail settings where in-store shopping is permitted. This includes supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, indoor farmers' markets, other stores that primarily sell food and pharmacies; and,
- Close all outdoor recreational amenities, such as golf courses, basketball courts, soccer fields, and playgrounds with limited exceptions.

In addition, effective Monday, April 19, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., the government is limiting the capacity of weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites or ceremonies to 10 people indoors or outdoors. Social gatherings associated with these services such as receptions are prohibited, except for with members of the same household or one other person from outside that household who lives alone. Drive-in services will be permitted.

All other public health and workplace safety measures for non-essential retail under the [provincewide emergency brake](#) (i.e., curbside pick-up and delivery only), will continue to apply.

To further support "hot spot" communities where COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted certain neighbourhoods, as part of Phase Two of the government's COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, the government is committed to dedicating 25 per cent of future vaccine allocations to the 13 public health regions with historic and ongoing high rates of death, hospitalization and COVID-19 transmission.

"As we see the trends in key health indicators deteriorate to levels far exceeding anything we have seen before, it is necessary to follow public health and workplace safety measures given this continued and rapid case growth," said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "By staying at home and limiting travel for essential purposes only, such as getting groceries or going to a medical appointment or to get vaccinated, we can reduce mobility and help interrupt transmission of this virus."

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## Quick Facts

- Emergency [orders currently in force](#) under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act have been extended until May 5, 2021, as the province continues to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. In addition, orders currently in force under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, with the exception of O.Reg. 241/20 (Special Rules Re Temporary Pandemic Pay), have been extended until May 20, 2021.
- Effective Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., the government issued a [provincewide Stay-At-Home order](#) that requires everyone to remain at home except for specified purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services (including getting vaccinated), for outdoor exercise, or for work that cannot be done remotely.
- Based on the [latest modelling data](#), COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and ICU occupancy are continuing to increase rapidly and are now at their highest levels since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. The number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in the province have increased by 29.2 per cent between the period of April 7 and 13, 2021. In addition, between April 8 and 14, 2021, Ontario has seen the number of patients in intensive care due to COVID related critical illness increase from 552 to 659, and admissions are projected to rise to over 1,000 patients by the end of the month. Over the past week, the positivity rate in the province is at 7.2 per cent, well above the high-alert threshold of 2.5 per cent.
- Today the government also confirmed that, as announced in the Budget, second payments of the Ontario Small Business Support Grant would start to be made early next week.
- Get tested if you have COVID-19 symptoms, or if you have been advised of exposure by your local public health unit or through the COVID Alert App. Visit [Ontario.ca/covidtest](#) to find the nearest testing location.

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## Additional Resources

- [Ontario Declares Provincial Emergency and Makes Stay-at-Home Order](#)
  - [Ontario Supporting Health System Response During Third Wave of COVID-19](#)
  - [2021 Budget - Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy](#)
  - Visit Ontario's [COVID-19 vaccine web page](#) to view the latest provincial data and information on COVID-19 vaccines.
  - Visit Ontario's COVID-19 information [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect the people of Ontario from the virus.
  - For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOLine at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only).
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