

# Gathering Limits Information

## Disclaimer:

This is Huron Perth Public Health's understanding of the intention of Ontario Regulation 364/20 and guidance from the Province on the new gathering limits for unmonitored and private social gatherings and events. However, you are advised to seek legal counsel for issues specific to your business/organization.

Information compiled for this document is based on available content to date, and is subject to change at any time. When new information is received it will be communicated to you. Every situation/scenario will not be identified in this document and as such, will be subject to public health assessment. Clarification will be sought out where required. Information has been compiled from the following sources:

- [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Schedule 3](#)
- [Reopening Ontario in Stages: What can open in Stage 3 – Gathering Limits](#)
- [Ontario Newsroom: Ontario Limits the Size of Unmonitored and Private Social Gatherings](#) (and associated media releases)

## Definitions

The definitions below have been developed by Huron Perth Public Health and are not meant to supersede any such definitions found in alternative sources and/or legislation.

### Unmonitored

- Not observed, kept track of, or checked<sup>1</sup>
- An event/social gathering that has not been communicated, has no specific organizer, occurs on public or private property (e.g. family picnic in a park, wedding shower at someone's private residence)

### Monitored

- To watch, keep track of, or check usually for a special purpose<sup>2</sup>
- An event/social gathering that has been approved to take place in a space owned and/or operated by a business/organization that is permitted to be open and operate under O. Reg. 364/20.
- Event/social gathering occurs in a space rented from a business or organization

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Unmonitored. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unmonitored>

<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Monitored. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/monitored>

- Business/organization has provided information to the renter of their space and encouraged them to reach out to public health for guidance on how their event can run safely during the COVID-19 pandemic

#### **Private event**

- Generally occurs on privately owned property
- Not open to the public
- Tickets are not sold
- For the organizer and their personally invited guests

#### **Public event**

- Open to the general public to attend
- May or may not occur on private property, generally occurs on public lands owned or leased by a municipality, organization, business
- Tickets may or not be sold

#### **Social gathering**

- Social gatherings can be made up of any group of people from outside a household or social circle, but physical distancing of at least two metres must be maintained or a face covering must be worn when physical distancing is a challenge or required.
- People having a social gathering can't hug or touch each other.

#### **Social circle**

- Limited to 10 individuals (friends or family) who you can interact with without physical distancing
- People who become part of your daily and weekly routines
- Everyone who lives in the same household is in a social circle
- For more information see "[Create a social circle during COVID-19](#)"

## Events and Social Gatherings

Despite gathering limits, all planners, organizers, operators of events and/ or social gatherings, regardless of their purpose and size, have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with their event/gathering, and their ability to mitigate these risks. They are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who participate in their activities (e.g. staff, performers, volunteers, attendees). This includes management of lines or crowds at entrance and exit points and around the perimeter of the event space.

### Limits to [unmonitored](#) organized **private** events/social gatherings

#### **Limits for unmonitored private social gathering/event:**

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (previous limit of 50); or
- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (previous limit of 100).
- **NOTE: Numbers cannot be combined and indoor capacity limits apply to events and gatherings that are partially or fully outdoors.**

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## Limits to unmonitored organized public events/social gatherings

### Limits for unmonitored public social gathering/event:

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (previous limit of 50); or
- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (previous limit of 100).
- **NOTE: Numbers cannot be combined and indoor capacity limits apply to events and gatherings that are partially or fully outdoors.**

## Who do the new gathering limits apply to?

New gathering limits apply to social gatherings/events in private residences, backyards, parks and other recreational areas. This includes but is not limited to:

- functions
- parties
- dinners
- gatherings
- barbecues
- wedding receptions

## Businesses and Places: Meeting or Event Space

Those responsible for a business or space that is permitted to be open and operator under O. Reg. 364/20 may only rent out a space if the total number persons does not exceed:

- 50 – if meeting/event is indoors\*
- 100 – if the meeting/event is outdoors\*

\*Public health and physical distancing measures must continue to be in place for the duration of the event.

*Exemption: If the meeting event space is being used for the purposes of a wedding ceremony, funeral, religious service or rite, the gathering numbers cannot exceed 30% of the capacity of the room being used. Gathering limits also do not apply to a rental/meeting space that is in compliance with a plan approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.*

## Recreational, Sporting or Performing Arts Events

The new gathering limits do not apply to recreational, sporting or performance arts events that are held in staffed businesses and facilities. Existing rules, including public health and workplace safety measures for these businesses continue to be in effect.

## Exemptions

The new limits do not apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities because they must already follow specific public health and safety guidelines to minimize risk and limit the spread of COVID-19. The new limits will not apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities permitted to be open and operating under O. Reg. 364/20:

- bars
- restaurants
- cinemas
- convention centres or banquet halls
- gyms
- recreational sporting or performing art events
- places of worship
  - Note: Religious services, rites or ceremonies remain subject to the gathering limits prescribed in Schedule 3 of O. Reg 364/20

Existing rules, including public health and workplace safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 continue to be in effect. Staff, workers and hired performers do not count towards gathering limits.

## Enforcement

To support better compliance with public health guidelines, amendments to the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act would, if passed, establish:

- A new offence regarding hosting or organizing a gathering in residential premises or other prescribed premises that exceeds limits under an order.
- A minimum fine of \$10,000 for organizers of these gatherings.
- Authority for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe additional types of premises for the purpose of the new offence.
- Authority for a police officer, special constable or First Nations constable to order the temporary closure of a premises where there are reasonable grounds to believe that any gathering exceeding the number of people allowed is taking place and require individuals to leave the premises.

## Summary Chart:

Where is the Event/Gathering being held?		Type of Event/Social Gathering			
		Organized Monitored Public Event/Social Gathering	Unmonitored Private Event/Social Gathering	Wedding & Funeral Ceremonies Religious Services and rites	Social Gatherings associated with Wedding & Funeral Ceremonies Religious Services and rites
Business or Organization	Indoors	50 persons	Encouraged to seek legal opinion	30% capacity of the room used*	50 persons
	Outdoors	100 persons	Encouraged to seek legal opinion	100 persons	100 persons
Private Property	Indoors	10 persons	10	30% capacity of the room used*	10 persons
	Outdoors	25 persons	25	100 persons	25 persons

*\*30% capacity only applies to the ceremony/rite/service*

**Organized Public Event/Social Gathering:** Events open to the general public. May include fall fairs, community fundraisers, auctions

**Unmonitored Private Event and Social Gatherings:** These would be considered unmonitored and would be subject to new gathering limits (10 indoors, 25 outdoors). This may include, but not limited to: BBQs, parties, social get-togethers etc.