

COVID-19 Business Reopening Guidebook

Grey County Economic Development
595 9th Ave E, Owen Sound ON N4K 3E3
519-372-0219 ext. 1270
Last updated July 16, 2020



GREY COUNTY SUPPORTS BUSINESSES

Right now, all workplaces are facing challenges.

Grey County has prepared this reopening guidebook to help address the concerns that are common to all businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help you find the resources you need when your concerns are unique.

We want everyone – employers, employees and consumers – to have the information they need to work, shop and interact with confidence. Every business is unique, and every workplace is different.

This book provides a step-by-step list of things you'll need to consider for reopening. It includes links to the resources we rely on when we provide customer service, and links to specific information for your sector. We urge you to implement as many of the following recommendations as possible given the unique attributes of your business, your workplace, your staff and your customers.

The information in this book does not constitute legal advice and does not replace any specific guidelines or instructions issued by [Grey Bruce Public Health](#) or the [Province of Ontario](#).

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We're here for you. Our restructured team from Economic Development, Tourism and Culture has been hard at work developing and providing COVID-19 response programs and will continue to do so through the staged reopening and recovery phase.

Here are some of the services Grey County provides:

- Comprehensive list of resources at grey.ca/covid-19-resources
- Business support line - 519-372-0292 ext.1270
- Details on [financial assistance programs](#)
- [Community and Business Resiliency Map](#)
- Information on where and how to [source personal protective equipment locally](#)
- Ask a [Professional Webinar Series, events, online workshops](#)
- Regular newsletters and social media updates
- And more

STEPS TOWARD REOPENING

Determine if your business sector has been approved to reopen and identify any applicable restrictions.

For additional information on impacts to your business or employment, read the frequently asked questions on the [Government of Ontario website](#), or call the Stop the Spread Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659.



1. Prepare Your Business

- Consult the [Government of Canada's risk assessment guidelines](#) for employees and customers. Learn to identify risk and how to implement risk mitigation strategies. Continue to monitor your risk and updates policies and procedures as necessary.
- Consider potential workforce disruption. Determine how to handle absenteeism, refusal to work and requests for accommodations. Consider issues around “at-risk” groups, accommodations due to logistical and other barriers to returning to the worksite, exceptions and processes for parents/caregivers when schools are closed or other caregivers are unavailable.
- Assess finances. Do you have a plan for maintaining cash flow following reopening?
- Identify whether clients/customers and suppliers have been affected by the pandemic and how this may impact your business.
- Evaluate the demand for your products and services in the short/medium term.
- Assess IT and POS systems and support for evolving work requirements. Try to ensure contactless payment methods are available (debit, credit card, e-transfer).



2. Prepare Your Workforce

- Identify who will return to work, prepare a staff schedule and notify employees.
- Consider assigning employees at higher risk (older adults and those with underlying medical conditions) to duties that allow them to work from home or minimize their contact with clients/customers and other employees (e.g., managing inventory rather than working as a cashier, managing administrative needs through telework).
- Employees should complete a [health screening questionnaire](#) before each work shift. Encourage employees to stay home if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If employees develop symptoms while at work, they should notify their supervisor and return home.
- Identify and implement return to work guidelines so employees know what measures they need to take before returning to work after illness.
- Circulate health and safety information and ensure employees are trained on new business protocols (space reconfigurations, plexiglass shields, etc.) as well as the use and requirements for protective equipment such as non-medical masks and gloves.
- Identify back-up personnel for key business operations in case employees fall ill and/or are unable to perform their responsibilities. Specifically, identify those who can be authorized to make decisions in case of absenteeism.
- Consider developing or modifying flexible and special leave policies for employees during the crisis (e.g., giving advances on future sick leave or allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other) and provide that information to your employees.
- Request that employees identify whether they work at more than one job. This will support case and contact management by public health professionals if necessary.



COVID-19-SYMPTOMS

Symptoms for COVID-19 range from mild to severe. Symptoms can be similar to the flu and other common respiratory infections.

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue (feeling tired)
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Hoarse voice
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

*Information taken from
publichealthgreybruce.on.ca*

3. Prepare Your Workplace

- Place posters at the entrance of the workplace to ensure clients/customers do not enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms. If you provide one-on-one service, consider screening clients/ customers over the phone prior to arrival.
- Ensure appropriate signage is in place to instruct clients/customers and employees on health and safety best practices. Signage is available from municipal partners.
- Install plexiglass shields (see next section), non-touch lined waste disposal receptacles, as well as disinfectant tissues and alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers in multiple, prominent locations around the workplace. This includes at entrances and exits for clients/customers.
- Provide portable hand sanitizer bottles to employees at their workstations if they interact directly with clients/customers.
- Use separate entrances and exits if possible and use stanchions to manage line-ups to avoid overcrowding in the store. Encourage client/customer distancing while in line.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods if you can do so safely.
- Ensure that all equipment, and particularly water systems and features, are safe to use after a prolonged workplace shutdown.



Welcome back! We are now

OPEN

Help us keep everyone safe by wearing a mask and keeping at least two metres apart from customers & staff. If you are feeling sick please do not enter.

2 metres
6 feet

YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. WE'RE COMMITTED TO:

- Maximum people in store at one time. Follow directional markings on floor at all times.
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in high traffic areas regularly.
- Frequent handwashing for employees. Hand sanitizer available.
- Contactless debit / credit when possible.
- Following Provincial and Grey Bruce Health Unit guidelines.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Thanks for dropping by! If we're at capacity try visiting us online or give us a call to arrange pickup or delivery.

VISIT US ONLINE

OR CALL US

PRACTICE PATIENCE AND HELP US KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE!

4. Create a Physical Distance Plan

- Reconfigure gathering and lobby areas and develop guidelines to allow for at least two metres of separation between all employees and between customers. If this is not possible, limit the length of interactions and install a plexiglass shield.
- The use of non-medical masks is recommended for situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain at any time. Identify how non-medical masks will be encouraged, provided and/or enforced with employees and clients/customers (see below).
- Install signage, floor decals, etc. to help ensure adherence to physical distancing guidelines, both inside and outside the store (e.g., place or paint markings on the floor where customers can load items while the cashier is scanning to maintain enough space between customers and staff).
- To help reduce the amount of time customers spend in-store, consider placing frequently purchased goods close to the entrance and checkout lines. Offer pre-packaged bundles of common products so customers can grab and go more quickly.
- Make all aisles one-way with clear waymarks on the ground noting the flow of traffic, and use street traffic signs (e.g., do not enter, yield, one-way) to increase adherence.
- If possible, continue to implement contactless delivery or curbside pick-up.
- Restrict or consider limiting any non-essential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations in the workplace.
- Restrict the number of employees in shared spaces, including kitchens and break rooms, to maintain at least two metres between everyone.



5. Understand Face Coverings and PPE Requirements

The [Medical Officer of Health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit](#) has issued an order to mandate the wearing of cloth masks or other non-medical face coverings in commercial establishments. Public Health Grey Bruce has created a [FAQ for Masks and Face Coverings](#).



Non-Medical Face Coverings: What You Need to Know

Non-medical face masks or face coverings **SHOULD**:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain their shape after washing and drying
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Non-medical face masks or face coverings **SHOULD NOT**:

- be shared with others
- impair vision or interfere with tasks
- be placed on children under the age of 2 years
- be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials
- be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials
- be made exclusively of materials that easily fall apart, such as tissues
- be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing

Taken from publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

See the appendix for additional safety guidelines which include sector-specific PPE requirements.

6. Reduce Touch Points and Increase Cleaning

- Develop a thorough cleaning and disinfection plan for common areas, washrooms, sales areas, staff rooms and employee workstations.
- Establish community safety measures such as public handwashing stations.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment or supplies. Disinfect any shared items between use or customer.
- Ensure frequent and regular cleaning of workspaces, with particular focus on high touch surfaces (doorknobs, photocopiers, AV equipment, etc).
- Limit in-person meetings and replace with video or conference calls.



7. Prepare Your Supply Chain

- Identify core products and services.
- Engage with critical suppliers to confirm availability of inventory and supplies.
- Confirm enough inventory and supplies on-site (including necessary protective equipment).
- Coordinate delivery schedules to reduce the number of possible interactions between suppliers.
- Conduct end-to-end supply chain risk assessments and prioritize critical focus areas.
- Develop contingency plans with a diversified supplier network.



COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

Communicate openly and regularly with clients/customers, employees, suppliers and others. Stay informed and access up-to-date information on the [Public Health Grey Bruce](#), the [Government of Ontario](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#) websites.

Internal Communications

- Maintain up-to-date contact information for all employees, suppliers, service providers and lenders.
- Inform your employees about any changes you are making to your business. Consider using this prevention and response policy template, to help outline general responsibilities of workplace parties.
- Remind employees to take steps to protect fellow employees and clients/customers.

External Communications

- Keep your clients/customers informed that your business is still open, when it will re-open, or if your business hours have changed. Let them know what core services you still offer; this can be through email, business website, social media or mail. If clients/customers don't hear anything from you, they may assume you are closed. Be sure to update any business listings on third party websites.
- Consider developing a survey to solicit feedback from employees and clients/customers on changes to your business as a result of COVID-19. Do these changes meet their needs and expectations for a safe work/shopping experience?
- Exchange ideas and best practices with other local businesses. Communicate with area Business Improvement Associations, Chambers of Commerce, as well as other relevant sector specific organizations that can help inform ongoing recovery efforts and support community resilience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An annex with detailed information and hyperlinks is available to download at grey.ca.

These resources include:

- Federal, provincial, and public health guidelines and resources, including information on Stage 3 Reopening
- Specific guidelines, considerations, and updates for restaurants and food services, construction, retail, arts and culture, festivals and events, manufacturing, office, healthcare providers and personal services, agriculture, outdoor recreation and others.
- Workplace Safety and Prevention Services COVID-19 Resources
- Public Services Health and Safety Association Return to the Workplace Roadmap
- Mental health supports and resources

Sections of this document were adapted from the COVID-19 Business Reopening Toolkit from City of Ottawa Economic Development Services.

