



Business Toolkit

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Businesses are the backbone of our community and it is critical that we have the supports in place to help you succeed. Together with Councillors Eli El-Chantiry and Laura Dudas and our Economic Partners Task Force, the City is pleased to be helping the recovery efforts by....

Jim Watson, Mayor of Ottawa



INTRODUCTION

As Ontario begins to reopen the economy, Huron County Economic Development is pleased to introduce the *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* business training program.

What is Ready to Re-Open Huron County?

This program was created to help businesses and the public prepare for commerce in “the new normal”; to help both businesses and the general public by helping connect businesses to the most current information and to give customers confidence in shopping in Huron County.

How does a business become recognized as "Ready to Re-Open Huron County"?

1. Register for and participate in a *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* webinar.
2. Read the *Ready to Re-Open Huron Toolkit* and the sector-specific guidance documents on ecdev.huroncounty.ca.
3. After completing steps 2-3, businesses will fill out a *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* pledge form to self-commit to implementing the recommendations from the program, and any new updates provided, to the best of their ability in order to help make it as safe as possible for their staff and clients/customers.
4. Promote your business as a recognized *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* business.

How will the public know a business is recognized as "Ready to Re-Open Huron County"?

After successfully completing the *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* program, businesses will:

- Display a *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* window decal and pledge form in their storefront windows;
- Be identified with a *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* icon on the HC BizMap;
- Be featured in local marketing campaign in print and on social media;
- Have access to the *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* logo to use on their websites and other promotional materials.

Who enforces the rules?

The *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* program is intended to arm businesses with the most up-to-date health and safety guidelines and best practices. It is not an evaluation or enforcement program.

The *Ready to Re-Open Huron County* logo means that the business has:

- Attended online training provided by Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) ([insert other organizations - TBC](#));
- Self-committed to learning the most up-to-date safety guidelines available for their business and implementing where possible; and
- Self-committed to stay up-to-date with guidelines as they change over the course of time.

The *Ready to Re-Open Huron Business Toolkit* has been prepared by Huron County Economic Development, in consultation with Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH). It is intended to provide guidance to businesses to prepare for safe reopening, subject to direction from the Province of Ontario, and should not be construed as legal advice or to replace specific instructions that may be issued by Huron Perth Public Health or the Province.

As COVID-19 evolves, please visit [Huron Perth Public Health](#) for the latest information.



GETTING STARTED

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.



PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

1. Conduct a risk assessment 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.
2. Develop a contingency and business continuity plan (Are you prepared for absenteeism? Do you have a plan for maintaining cash flow following reopening?).
3. Evaluate the demand for your products and services in the short/medium term.
4. Assess IT and POS systems and support for evolving work requirements.
5. Ensure contactless payment methods are available (debit, credit card, e-transfer).



PREPARE YOUR WORKFORCE

1. Identify who will return to work, prepare a staff schedule and notify employees.
2. 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).
3. Encourage employees to not come to work if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Employees should complete a health screening questionnaire before each work shift. See sample screening information here. If employees develop symptoms while at work, they should notify their supervisor and return home. Employees with symptoms should check the Huron Perth Public Health website for the latest guidance on next steps.
4. Identify and implement return to work guidelines so employees know what measures they need to take before returning to work after illness (completion of self-isolation, symptom free period, etc.). Further information on self-isolation expectations is available on the Huron Perth Public Health website.

5. 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 (i.e. cloth masks) and gloves.
6. Identify back-up personnel for key business operations in case employees fall ill and/or are unable to perform their responsibilities. Specifically, identify back-up personnel that can be authorized to make decisions in case of absenteeism.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Help provide mental health supports for your workers. Resources available [here](#).



PREPARE YOUR WORKPLACE

1. Reconfigure gathering and lobby areas to allow for at least two metres of separation between all employees and between customers.
2. 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.
3. Ensure appropriate signage is in place to instruct clients/customers and employees on health and safety best practices.
4. 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.
5. Provide portable hand sanitizer bottles to employees at their workstations if they interact directly with clients/customers.
6. Separate entrances and exits and use stanchions to manage line-ups to avoid overcrowding in the store. Encourage client/customer distancing while in line.
7. Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk to employees and/or clients/customers.
8. Ensure that all equipment, and particularly water systems and features, are safe to use after a prolonged workplace shutdown.



CREATE A PHYSICAL DISTANCE PLAN

1. Develop guidelines for clients/customers and employees to maintain a distance of at least two metres from one another. If this is not possible, limit the length of interactions and install a plexiglass shield. The use of non-medical masks (i.e. cloth masks) is also recommended for situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain at all times.
2. Identify how non-medical masks (i.e. cloth masks) will be encouraged, provided and/or enforced with employees and clients/customers when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
3. Implement alternative work arrangements for employees, including flexible hours, staggered start times and teleworking.
4. Explore delivering services remotely.
5. 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 the customer and the checkout clerk).
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Where possible, continue to implement contactless delivery or curbside pick-up.
9. Restrict or consider limiting any non-essential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations in the workplace.
10. Restrict the number of employees in shared spaces, including kitchens and break rooms, to maintain at least two metres between everyone.



REDUCE TOUCH POINTS & INCREASE CLEANING

1. Develop a thorough cleaning and disinfection plan for common areas, washrooms, sales areas, staff rooms and employee workstations.
2. Establish community safety measures such as public handwashing stations.
3. Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment or supplies. Disinfect any shared items between use or customer.

4. Ensure frequent and regular cleaning of workspaces, with particular focus on high touch surfaces (doorknobs, photocopiers, AV equipment, etc).
5. Limit in-person meetings and replace with video or conference calls.



PREPARE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN

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



COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

1. Stay informed and access up-to-date information on the [County of Huron](#), [Huron Perth Public Health](#), the [Government of Ontario](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#) websites.
2. Maintain up-to-date contact information for all employees, suppliers, service providers and lenders.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Communicate transparently and regularly with clients/customers, employees, suppliers and lenders.
6. Identify whether clients/customers and suppliers have been affected by the pandemic and how this may impact your business.

7. 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?
8. Exchange ideas and best practices with other local businesses. Communicate with area Business Improvement Associations (BIA's), Chamber's of Commerce, the Huron Manufacturing Association, the Huron Federation of Agriculture, as well as other relevant sector specific organizations that can help inform ongoing recovery efforts and support community resilience.
9. Remind employees to take steps to protect fellow employees and clients/customers.



SECTOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For further information on specific guidelines, considerations, and updates for the following sectors:

- Restaurants and food services
- Construction
- Retail
- Arts and culture, festivals and events
- Manufacturing
- Office
- Healthcare providers and personal services
- Agriculture
- Outdoor recreation

Please visit ecdev.huroncounty.ca/readytoreopen.



LOCAL PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) SUPPLIERS

[Click here!](#)



RESOURCES

1. [Post Pandemic Business Playbook](#)
2. [WSPS Safety Road Map](#)
3. [Business Pandemic Preparedness Checklist](#)
4. [Return to the Workplace Roadmap](#)
5. [Business Signage Resources](#)

Other resources?



Add:

- The Infrastructure Health and Safety Association
- Workplace Safety North

*This document was adapted from the "COVID-19 Business Reopening Toolkit"
from City of Ottawa Economic Development Services in collaboration with Ottawa Public Health.*