

An Updated Look at Provincial Reopening Plans



Provinces have been releasing plans for easing restrictions that were put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Here is what some of the provinces have announced so far:

Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador plans to loosen some public health restrictions in a series of 'alert levels' descending from five. The move to Level 4 on May 11 is to allow some medical procedures to resume as well as low-risk activities, such as golf, hunting and fishing. Low-risk businesses, including garden centres, and professional services such as law firms are to reopen at this level. Alert Level 4 is to remain in place for at least 28 days. At Level 3, private health clinics, such as optometrists and dentists, are to be permitted to open, as well as medium-risk businesses such as clothing stores and hair salons. At Level 2, some small gatherings will be allowed, and businesses with performance spaces and gyms are to reopen. Level 1 would represent 'the new normal.'

On May 5, legislators passed a bill giving peace officers' the power to transport people who fail to respect health directives to departure points from the province. The amendment to the Public Health Protection and Promotion Act comes the day after a travel ban came into effect barring anyone but permanent residents and asymptomatic workers in key sectors from entering the province.

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Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia has eased some public health restrictions, however, directives around physical distancing and social gatherings remain in place. Trails and provincial and municipal parks can now reopen, but playground equipment will continue to be off limits. Garden centres, nurseries and similar businesses can open, and while golf driving ranges can open, courses will remain closed. Sportfishing is permitted and people can attend boating, yacht or sailing clubs

for the purpose of preparing boats for use. Drive-in religious services will be allowed, as long as people stay in their cars, they are parked two metres apart and there are no interactions between people.

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Prince Edward Island

Priority non-urgent surgeries and select health-service providers, including physiotherapists, optometrists and chiropractors, resumed on May 1 under The Renew P.E.I. Together plan. The plan also allows outdoor gatherings and non-contact outdoor recreational activities of no more than five individuals from different households. But screening is to continue at points of entry into the province and all people coming into P.E.I. are required to isolate for 14 days.

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New Brunswick

Premier Blaine Higgs put the first phase of his four-phase reopening plan into action on April 24. It allows limited play on golf courses as well as fishing and hunting. Two families are allowed to interact as part of a so-called 'two-family bubble.' Post-secondary students can return if it's deemed safe by the school, and outdoor church services can be held, if people remain in their vehicles and are two metres apart. The second phase is to see the resumption of elective surgeries and the reopening of daycares, offices, restaurants, ATV trails and seasonal campgrounds. The third phase will allow regular church services, dentistry work and reopened fitness centres. The final phase, which will probably come only after a vaccine is available, will include large gatherings.

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Quebec

Quebec reopened retail stores outside Montreal on May 4 while those in the greater Montreal region are to reopen May 25. For the second time, the province pushed back the reopening of retail stores in the greater Montreal area by another week. Premier Francois Legault said the province will keep close tabs on the situation in the city before deciding whether stores, daycares and elementary schools can reopen later this month. Elsewhere in Quebec, lottery terminals began to reopen May 4 after being shut down on March 20 with sales moving to online only. Legault has set May 11 as reopening day for schools and daycares outside greater Montreal. High schools, junior colleges and universities are to stay closed until September. Quebec's construction industry is to completely start up May 11, while manufacturing companies are to resume operations the same day with initial limits on the total number of employees who can work per shift.

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Ontario

The province announced May 6 it is allowing non-essential retail stores to open for curbside pickup next week. Premier Doug Ford says garden centres and

nurseries will also be allowed to open on May 8, and hardware stores and safety supply stores will be allowed to reopen on May 9. He says those stores will be expected to follow the same public health measures as grocery stores and pharmacies currently do, such as physical distancing, offering contactless payment and sanitizing surfaces. Ontario also extended its emergency orders, which include the continued closure of non-essential businesses. The emergency orders, which were set to expire May 6, have now been extended for another two weeks, to May 19. They also include a prohibition of public gatherings of more than five people, the closure of bars and restaurants except for take-out and delivery, libraries, theatres and concert venues, outdoor amenities such as playgrounds, and child care centres. The province has separately announced that publicly funded schools will be closed until at least May 31. Ontario liquor stores are expanding store hours that were reduced in March, rolling out the earlier opening and later closing times in stages until they apply to all stores in the first week of June.

Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan government's five-phase plan to reopen parts of its economy started May 4 with dentists, optometrists and other health professionals being allowed to resume services. Phase 1 also includes reopened golf courses and campgrounds. Phase 2 will give the green light to retail businesses and salons. Restaurants and gyms could open in Phase 3, but with limited capacity. Phase 4 could see arenas, swimming pools and playgrounds opening. In Phase 5, the province would consider lifting restrictions on the size of public gatherings.

Manitoba

Manitoba allowed May 4 health offices, including dentists, chiropractors and physiotherapists to reopen. Retail businesses are to reopen at half occupancy as long as they can ensure physical spacing. Restaurants can reopen patios and walk-up service. Museums and libraries opened Monday, but occupancy is to be limited to 50%. Playgrounds, golf courses and tennis courts are to reopen as well, along with parks and campgrounds. A second phase is to begin no earlier than June 1. That's when restaurants would be allowed to open indoor dining areas and non-contact children's sports would resume. Mass gatherings such as concerts and major sporting events will not be considered before September.

Alberta

Alberta plans allowed some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries to start May 4. Service provided by dentists, physiotherapists and other medical professionals are also to be permitted. Golf courses reopened May 2, though pro shops and clubhouses remain shuttered. On May 14, retail businesses, such as clothing, furniture and bookstores, are to be allowed to reopen gradually. Cafes and restaurants with no bar service will also be allowed to run at half capacity. The second phase also includes potential kindergarten to Grade 12 classes ' with restrictions ' and the reopening of movie theatres and theatres, again, with restrictions. The third phase would see nightclubs, gyms, pools, recreation

centres and arenas reopen, all with restrictions. There is no timeline for the final two phases.

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British Columbia

The province is phasing in the reopening of its economy with certain health services, retail outlets, restaurants, salons and museums resuming some operations in mid-May. All of the government's reopening plans are contingent on organizations and businesses developing plans that follow provincial guidelines to control the spread of COVID-19. Hotels, resorts and parks will follow in June. A mix of online and classroom post-secondary education is planned for September, along with classes returning for students in kindergarten to Grade 12. Conventions, large concerts, international tourism and professional sports with a live audience will not be allowed to resume until either a vaccine is widely available, community immunity has been reached, or effective treatment can be provided for the disease.