

## MODIFIED STEP 2 FRAMEWORK – JANUARY 2022

Latest step back to Modified Step 2 scenario is based on the province's health care system capacity, which is currently being stressed by a combination of factors that include a 30% average staff absentee rate due to the need to isolate because of exposure to Covid-19 and unvaccinated Ontarians requiring hospitalization ([Ontario Public Health reports 89.5% of those needing hospitalization are unvaccinated](#)).

Although considered less severe, the Omicron variant is highly transmissible and has resulted in larger numbers of hospital admissions. One-percent of cases end up in hospital. Today's Ontario coronavirus stats report 1,290 people hospitalized with 266 in ICU and 11,352 new cases reported.

To put this into perspective, the number of people being hospitalized now is greater than Spring 2020 (265 per day), when hospitals were under significant strain during the third wave of the pandemic.

### Modified Step 2 Conditions - Wednesday, January 5, 2022 until January 26, 2022

- Social gatherings limited to 5 people indoors and 10 people outdoors.
- Organized public events limited to five people indoors.
- Businesses and organizations to ensure employees work remotely (unless nature of work requires them to be on-site)
- Limited to 50% capacity:
  - Retail (stores and shopping malls)
  - Personal care services
  - Public libraries
  - indoor weddings, funerals, religious services, rites and ceremonies.
  - Outdoor services limited to number of people that can maintain 2-metre physical distance
  - Outdoor event spaces and outdoor sports facilities
- CLOSED: indoor dining at restaurants/bars, indoor meetings and event spaces, indoor concert venues, theatres, cinemas, museums, galleries, zoos, science centres, landmarks, historic sites, botanical gardens, amusement parks, fairs, exhibitions, festivals, indoor sport & rec facilities, gyms
- ALLOWED WITH RESTRICTIONS: outdoor event spaces, outdoor dining,
- ALLOWED: meal/food takeout, drive through and delivery

### Ontario Business Costs Rebate Program expanding

- Applications for rebates available online later this month.
- January 1, 2022: 6-month interest and penalty-free period for businesses to make payments for most provincially administered taxes.
- Businesses required to close or reduce capacity will receive rebate payments for a portion of the property tax and energy costs incurred while subject to these measures.
- Businesses required to reduce capacity to 50 per cent, such as smaller retail stores, will receive a rebate payment equivalent to 50 per cent of their costs,
- Businesses required to close for indoor activities, such as restaurants and gyms, will receive a rebate payment equivalent to 100 per cent of their costs.
- Government exploring options for further supports for businesses and workers impacted by the province's move into a modified Step Two.