

Ministry of Health

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May 19, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Health Chairs
Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health
President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Chief Administrative Officers and Clerks of Ontario's 444 Municipalities

RE: Amendments to permit the opening of some outdoor recreational amenities

Earlier today, the government announced that it amended Ontario Regulation 104/20 made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* - Closure of Outdoor Recreational Amenities. These amendments will come into effect on May 19, 2020 and will allow the opening of the following amenities:

- Outdoor sports facilities and multi-use fields (including baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and frisbee golf locations, tennis, platform tennis, table tennis and pickleball courts, basketball courts, BMX parks, and skate parks);
- Off-leash dog areas; and
- Outdoor picnic sites, benches and shelters in park and recreational areas.

Any person who uses the above amenities must maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from any other person using the amenity (unless they are part of the same household).

Refer to <https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-amend-104-20.pdf> for details.

With these changes, the existing emergency order will maintain the closure of all outdoor playgrounds, play structures and equipment and portions of park and recreational areas containing outdoor fitness equipment. It will also include the continued closure of outdoor swimming pools and other similar amenities, such as pools, whirlpools and spas, splash pads, spray pads, wading pools, and water slides and all communal facilities intended to be used by persons using outdoor sports amenities (unless they are permitted to be used under [O. Reg. 82/20 made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*- Closure of Places of Non-Essential Businesses](#)).

The COVID-19 Public Health Measures Table has been consulted on these changes and are supportive of the opening of these amenities at this time.

We recognize that owners of amenities, including municipalities, may need additional time to prepare for their opening and may choose to restrict access until they deem appropriate. Amenities should not be made available for public use until it is safe to do so.

I have attached a set of Qs and As that provides additional information for local public health units and municipalities to support the safe implementation of these changes.

Please continue to communicate the importance of public health measures such as physical distancing, handwashing, and staying home when ill. They will be critical for keeping Ontarians safe as we continue to respond to this pandemic in Ontario.

If you have any questions please contact Chris Harold, A/Manager, Integrated Strategy and Policy Coordination, at chris.harold@ontario.ca, or Colleen Kiel, Director, Strategy and Planning at colleen.kiel@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your continued efforts.

Yours truly,



David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health

cc: Dr. David McKeown, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Alison Blair, ADM, Emergency Health Services and Public Health Modernization Lead