

Human Resources Legislative Update

Ontario to Ease Capacity Limits and Lift Proof of Vaccination Requirements

Date: February 14, 2022

With the key public health indicators improving and the Omicron variant beginning to retreat, the [Ontario government has announced](#) that public health measures imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 will be eased, effective February 17 and March 1, 2022.

The province has announced that it intends to lift proof of vaccination requirements and all capacity limits in public indoor settings on March 1 if health indicators continue to improve. With today's announcement, the provincial government is moving to ease COVID restrictions more quickly than anticipated in its [plan released last month](#).

Effective February 17, the government has announced that the following public health measures will be eased:

- capacity limits in the following indoor public settings where proof of vaccination is required will be removed, including in:
 - restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments without dance facilities
 - non-spectator areas of sports and recreational fitness facilities, including gyms
 - cinemas
 - meeting and event spaces, including conference centres or convention centres
 - casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments
 - indoor areas of settings that choose to opt-in to proof of vaccination requirements.
- capacity limits at sports arenas, concert venues and theatres will be permitted at 50% of their usual seating capacity
- social gathering capacity limits will be increased to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors
- organized public event capacity limits will be increased to 50 people indoors, with no limit outdoors
- capacity limits at higher risk settings (e.g. nightclubs) will be increased to 25%.

Specific capacity limits for indoor weddings, funerals or religious services, rites, or ceremonies are removed but persons in attendance must be able to maintain a two metre physical distance. That limit is removed if the location opts-in to use proof of vaccination, or if the function is taking place outdoors.

Patrons in indoor public settings, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, retail and shopping malls, must be able to maintain a two metre physical distance.

If public health indicators continue to improve, the province has also indicated that it intends to lift proof of vaccination requirements for all settings and to remove capacity limits in all indoor settings, effective March 1, 2022. Businesses and other settings may choose to continue to require proof of vaccination. Masking requirements will remain in place for the time being.

At the time of writing, regulatory amendments giving effect to these changes have not yet been published.* We will be reviewing the amendments once they become available and will provide further information as may be necessary.

**Editor's Note: [O. Reg. 75/22](#) amending [O. Reg. 364/20](#), Rules For Areas At Step 3 And At The Roadmap Exit Step, has now been published. This amending regulation gives effect to the February 17 changes. We will review O. Reg. 75/22 and provide further details as may be necessary.*