

Public health restrictions coming to York Region on Monday

York Region will be moved into Ontario's Red (?control?) zone in response to rising numbers of COVID-19, the Province announced Friday afternoon.

The changes will take effect this Monday, November 16, at 12.01 a.m. and individuals living in Red (?control?) zones are encouraged to work at home, avoid visiting other households, and limit trips outside the home apart from the essentials of work, school, getting groceries, keeping medical appointments, and exercising.

Additionally, under the Red (?control?) measures, gatherings for all organized public events and social gatherings will be limited to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors; face coverings will be required in all indoor public spaces and workspaces with few exceptions; and religious services, including weddings and funerals, will be limited to 30 per cent capacity indoors and 100 people outdoors.

Restaurants and bars will see the maximum number of patrons permitted to be seated indoors at 10 (a limit of four per table) with a minimum of two metres between tables, and such premises will have to close by 10 p.m.

?Based on current projections, intensive care units could be overwhelmed in six weeks,? said Premier Doug Ford in Friday's update. ?The impact on our hospitals would be absolutely devastating. As Premier, I can't accept that and I won't accept that. We must do whatever it takes to slow the spread of this virus. We must do whatever it takes to stop our hospitals from being overrun. So, we're here today to take action. We're here today to protect the health of Ontarians.?

The updated COVID-19 framework sets new thresholds and offers new guidelines for people in Red (?control?) zones like York Region. In addition to limiting trips from home with exceptions for the above-mentioned essentials, further measures could be introduced next week, the Premier noted.

?I know this will be difficult,? he continued. ?You have already sacrificed so much, but we need to be clear about what is at stake: We're staring down the barrel of another lockdown and I will not hesitate for a second if we have to go further because our number-one priority now is getting these numbers down. But here's the good news: we can change the course, we can bend the curve and get this virus under control.

?Each of us have a role to play. Every one of us has a role to play in preventing a lockdown. We need to continue following public health advice. We can't become complacent. We need to fight and continue fighting. Please don't lose hope. Never in our lifetimes, in a generation, has so much depended on our collective action. Never has so much depended on us coming together as a people, as a Province. Together, we can and we will get through this.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter