

Ontario lifts stay-at-home order for 27 regions, Peel not among them

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The provincial government has officially released 27 regions from the lockdown and stay-at-home order and back into a new and improved COVID-19 Response Framework.

The remaining four regions including Toronto, York, North Bay Parry Sound and Peel Region will continue in the shutdown and stay-at-home order and following the necessary health and workplace safety measures until at least February 22.

"The health and safety of Ontarians remains our number one priority. While we are cautiously and gradually transitioning some regions out of shutdown, with the risk of new variants this is not a reopening or a return to normal," said Minister of Health Christine Elliott.

Though these four regions continue to be the hotspots of the province, numbers are continuing to decline.

Ontario has reported fewer than 1,000 cases both Monday and Tuesday this week. Monday's tally reported 964 new cases, followed by 904 cases a day later. Toronto reported 320 new cases, 118 in York and 154 in Peel Region.

Peel Region has reported a total of 58,460 cases with 587 deaths. Caledon has hit over 2,000 cases in total with 11 deaths.

The Provincial government has established that each Public Health Unit will remain in the level they are directed in for two weeks at a time, allowing the government the time to decide if they are to remain, or move to a higher or lower level.

The framework, like before the lockdown, includes five colour-coded tiered levels, beginning with Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control and Grey-Lockdown.

Green-Prevent provides standard health measures focusing on maintain public health and workplace safety measures in place. Yellow-Protect introduces increased measures with targeted enforcement and fines to limit transmission. Immediate measures and restrictions are implemented in the Orange-Restrict level followed by broader restrictions in the Red-Control.

Grey-Lockdown is the most severe level which includes closures in order to stop all transmission.

In following these guidelines, the province has also introduced an "emergency brake" allowing Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. David Williams to immediately move a region into the Grey-Lockdown level if high volumes of transmission occur.

"While the trends in public health indicators are heading in the right direction, we still have work to do," said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Everyone is strongly advised to continue staying at home, avoid social gatherings, only travel between regions for essential purposes, and limit close contacts to your household or those you live with."

Each Public Health Unit was put into a level based on COVID-19 transmission numbers, health system capacity, public health system capacity, local context and condition and testing capacity. Though the stay-at-home order has been lifted for many, the province continues to discourage travelling outside of your region and staying at home as much as possible.

"As we begin to safely re-open more businesses, it's critical that Ontarians remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19 and variants. Wash your hands, wear your mask and avoid non-essential trips," said Premier Doug Ford on social media.

Peel Region will continue to in the shutdown and follow the guidelines for the stay-at-home order until February 22, where further direction will be given.

For further information, visit peelregion.ca or Ontario.ca for provincial updates.