

Peel Region one of only three municipalities yet to move into Stage 3 of reopening

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We've seen this before, and the shock factor is there again, as Toronto, Peel and Windsor-Essex are once again the last three regions held back from moving ahead with the Ontario government's planned provincial reopening.

The Ontario government announced last Monday (July 13), that 24 regions would be allowed to enter Stage 3 of the economic reopening, in which they did effective Friday (July 17).

One week later, seven more regions have been given the go ahead to enter Stage 3 as of this Friday (July 24), including Durham, Halton, Hamilton, York, Lambton, Niagara and Haldimand-Northfolk.

This leaves three regions remaining in Stage 2 - Toronto, Peel and Windsor-Essex.

"We're working with communities across the province to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help more businesses safely and responsibly hang up their 'Open for Business' sign," said Premier Doug Ford. "While we want as many people back to work and taking home a paycheck again as possible, it's important for everyone, no matter what stage your community is in, to remain on guard and keep following the public health advice. By working together, we can keep new case numbers down and ensure all of Ontario can enter Stage 3 when it's safe to do so."

The three regions are planned to remain in Stage 2 for at least another week. While frustrating for residents in Toronto, Peel and Windsor-Essex, the Province is calling on people to remain patient as they assess provincial data to determine a safe time to allow those regions into Stage 3.

"Building on the success of the regional approach in the previous two stages, and based on the positive public health trends we are seeing, we are ready to move more regions across the province into Stage 3," said Minister of Health, Christine Elliott. "Entering Stage 3 does not mean the fight against COVID-19 is over. We all must remain vigilant and continue following public health advice to ensure the progress we have made so far in stopping the spread will not be undone."

Stage 3 allows almost all businesses to reopen, along with nearly all public spaces. Public health safety guidelines will remain in place as more areas and businesses begin their reopening process.

The number of people within indoor and outdoor gatherings will be increased to a limit of 50 individuals indoors and 100 outdoors.

A list of places and activities are still being deemed unsafe to reopen just yet, including amusement and water parks, buffet-style food services, dancing at clubs or bars, overnight camp stays for children, private karaoke rooms, table games at casinos, saunas or steam rooms and any sport where human contact is involved.

"I'm impressed by how seriously business owners are taking the public health advice and how easy they made it for their customers to take precautions," said Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips. "By providing plenty of space to physically distance, keeping hand sanitizer by the door, and maintaining records for contact tracing, they're playing a vital role helping fight COVID-19. We're all doing our part and making it easy for others to do the same."

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