

FAQs to support changes to the Public Health Protection Act Order and lifting some restrictions

May 1, 2020

1. What restrictions are being lifted? And when?

We are now in a position where we can take some small steps toward lifting some of the restrictions in place. We need to do this safely by continuing to follow public health directives, including social distancing (staying 2 metres or 6 feet apart) and essential gatherings only, with no more than 5 people, and practicing good hygiene including washing your hands or using hand sanitizer often, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, and avoiding touching your face. People can also consider using non-medical masks when they are out in public and physical distancing is challenging or cannot be consistently maintained, such as when you are in a grocery store.

Effective May 1, the initial steps are:

- Provincial and municipal parks can reopen, but playground equipment will continue to be off-limits
- Trails are allowed to open
- People are allowed to use and visit community gardens
- Garden centres, nurseries and similar businesses can open
- Sportfishing is permitted from shore or boat, but fishing derbies or the like are not allowed
- People can attend boating, yacht or sailing clubs for the purpose of preparing boats for use
- Golf driving ranges can open, including those at golf clubs but the course must remain closed; golf clubs can perform necessary maintenance and preparations for opening
- People can use their cottages. Use is restricted to one household unit at a time, travel must be directly to the cottage and back, and travelling back and forth frequently from cottage and primary residence is discouraged
- Provincial and private campgrounds remain closed, but they can perform necessary maintenance and preparations for opening. An exception is recreational vehicles parked year-round at private campgrounds, which can be used but must follow the same rules as cottages
- Drive-in religious services will be allowed, as long as people stay in their cars, they are parked two metres apart, and there are no interactions between cars or between cars and others

For now, beaches, playgrounds, golf courses and campsites will remain closed.

2. Why are these restrictions being lifted and not others?

It is critically important we take a measured approach to lifting restrictions, so we don't undo all the progress made. This will be a slow, deliberate process, and these are the initial steps in the recovery plan. Government is developing the overall plan, which includes consulting with

stakeholders to help them open safely and get up and running. More will be shared with Nova Scotians soon.

3. Are all municipal parks and trails now open?

As of May 1, provincial and municipal parks can re-open, and any trails that were closed can re-open. People should enjoy what is available in their local community, and, if they must drive, they are asked not to drive far.

4. If provincial parks are opening, are campgrounds and beaches in these parks opening too?

Beaches and provincial campgrounds will stay closed for now. Provincial campgrounds can start maintenance work to prepare to open to the public in the coming weeks. Provincial parks are open for people to enjoy activities like walks, hikes and bike-riding.

5. What about community gardens? Are they open now too?

All community gardens in Nova Scotia can open. However, physical distancing of at least 2 metres or 6 feet must still be maintained. These gardens are important in supporting and addressing food security in communities throughout our province.

6. Can I drive to go hiking, ATVing or fishing? What length of drive is acceptable?

Nova Scotians are asked to enjoy parks and trails in their local community. If you do need to drive to do these activities, you are asked to drive to parks, trails and locations within your community. If parking lots and roadsides are crowded, please do not stop. Either find somewhere else less busy to go or return home.

7. Can I meet my friends to walk on a trail, go ATVing or fish together if we maintain social (physical) distance from each other?

Nova Scotians should continue to do outdoor activities alone or with people they are living with (i.e. in their household). If you come across another person outside your household while you are on the trail or when fishing, you must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres or 6 feet from them. ATV riders should refrain from using shelters as a gathering place.

8. What should I do if I encounter people while out hiking on a trail?

When enjoying the outdoors in parks and on trails, it is important to remember that existing public health directives around social distancing and social gatherings remain in place. People must ensure they keep at least 2 metres or 6 feet apart from others, and essential social gatherings must be limited to no more than 5 people. A lot of trails only have enough space for people to move single file, so be sure to step off the trail to let others pass by, leaving at least 2 metres or 6 feet distance between yourself and the person passing.

You should also practice good hygiene including washing your hands or using hand sanitizer often, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, and avoiding touching your face. People can also consider using non-medical masks when they are out in public.

9. Private campgrounds can open for maintenance purposes. Does this mean only work by employees or can long-term campers open their trailers?

Private campgrounds can begin maintenance to prepare to open to the public for short-term, temporary camping in the coming weeks. Private campgrounds can open for seasonal campers in fixed RV campsites, which are RVs that are used as cottages. Short-term camping is still closed.

10. Can people who use campgrounds as their summer/Nova Scotia residence live in their campers on private campgrounds?

Private campgrounds can open for seasonal campers in fixed RV campsites, i.e. RVs that are used as cottages. Short-term camping is still closed.

11. When will campgrounds and golf courses open?

We hope to be able to re-open them soon. Driving ranges at golf courses can open on May 1. Campgrounds and golf courses can open on May 1 for maintenance so operators can prepare to open in the coming weeks, depending on how we do with the adjustments currently being made. Government is working on the recovery plan, including consultation with a range of stakeholders to help them get up and running again. More will be shared soon with Nova Scotians.

12. Why is a driving range allowed to be open but not the golf course?

We are taking a measured approach, and these are the first small steps. We'll monitor and see how we do. Going to a driving range is generally an activity that people do on their own as opposed to a round of golf which people do in groups. Also, at driving ranges, there is space between people, and everyone is facing the same direction, with limited interaction.

Driving ranges can open but must manage and limit the people there at one time. Physical distancing of at least 2 metres or 6 feet must be maintained. Operators must ensure proper cleaning of balls, buckets, clubs and other items that participants touch. We also recommend driving ranges book designated times for golfers so they can limit the number of people there at one time. There must be places available for people to wash their hands, with soap and water, and/or hand sanitizer.

13. Where can I go fishing? Can I fish from a boat?

As of May 1, sportfishing season is open. You can fish from shore or a boat. However, you need to maintain physical distance of at least 2 metres or 6 feet from others, when you're on shore and at the boat launch. If you're fishing from a boat, you can only be with people who live in the same house as you do. No derbies or festival events are allowed at this time.

14. I already bought my licence. Can I get a refund since I haven't been able to use it yet?

If you have already purchased a 2020 fishing licence, it is valid until March 31, 2021. No refunds will be issued.

15. Do I need a licence to fish? If so, how can I get it?

Anyone 16 years old or older who wants to fish for any species of fish in provincial waters in Nova Scotia needs a fishing licence. Please see the [Nova Scotia Angler's Handbook](#) for more information.

Nova Scotians can get their general fishing licence from a private vendor. A list of vendors is available here: <https://novascotia.ca/fish/sportfishing/licensing-permits/>

Lands and Forestry offices still offer licensing for physical disabilities. Anyone requesting this type of licence should call their nearest Lands and Forestry office for assistance. We're taking this step to limit public visits to our offices and to protect the public and our employees from the spread of COVID-19.

16. What are the rules for drive-in religious services?

Drive-in religious services are allowed if people stay in their cars, cars are parked 2 metres or 6 feet apart and there are no exchanges between cars. Activities that exchange materials, such as a collection or communion, are not permitted. Only members from a single household group should be together in a car for these services.

17. Since drive-in religious services are allowed, does that mean I can meet up with my friends/family in the parking lot as long as we all stay in our own car?

Religious services are allowed as long as there are no exchanges between cars. As long as your friends or family stay in their own car, it's parked at least 2 metres or 6 feet from yours and there are no exchanges between your cars, with no exceptions, then it is fine for you to see them there.

18. Since use of personal cottages is permitted, where should I get my supplies?

You should continue to get your supplies in the same way you have been. Designate one person in the household as the person that gets the supplies, limit the number of trips you make, maintain social distancing of 2 metres/6 feet at all times and continue good hygiene practices (wash your hands well and often, sneeze or cough into your sleeve, or a tissue and throw it away, and avoid touching your face). People can also consider using non-medical masks when they are out in public.

19. Can I go boating and use the beach at my cottage?

Boating is allowed at this time, but the only people in your boat should be from your household. Now isn't the time to invite friends and neighbours to join you. Also, we are not allowing people from other provinces to tow boats into Nova Scotia at this time.

For now, beaches will remain closed. We hope to be able to reopen them soon. Most of us don't have one in our community and would have to drive a fair distance to get to one. Individuals should not be driving long distances if they don't need to.

20. If I can use my boat at a cottage, does this mean I can use my boat at a marina?

Yes. Boating is allowed at this time, but the only people in your boat should be from your household. Now isn't the time to invite friends and neighbours to join you. Sailing and boating clubs can open to allow people to prepare their boats for the season on their docks. However, clubhouses/marinas cannot open, except for take-out food. Remember to maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet or 2 metres from those not in your household.

21. What about basketball courts?

Basketball courts are open but only to use by yourself or with members of your household.

22. Are school sports fields open?

Yes, they are. If you encounter people outside of your household group, physical distance of at least 2 metres or six feet must be maintained. Remember to practice good hygiene including washing your hands or using hand sanitizer often, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, and avoiding touching your face. People can also consider using non-medical masks when they are out in public and physical distancing is challenging or cannot be consistently maintained, such as when you are in a grocery store.