

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Yard and Garage Sales

Considerations for sale of second-hand items and/or yard and garage sales

September 21, 2020 Version 3.0

Key Points

- Effective September 19, 2020, private and unmonitored gatherings such as yard sales are subject to a gathering limit of a maximum of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. Physical distancing must be maintained.
 - Position tables and items far apart to allow for physical distancing and consider taping direction arrows for traffic flow.
 - Wear a non-medical face covering if physical distancing is difficult.
 - Have hand sanitizer available for both yourself and customers to use.
 - Customers should sanitize items purchased or quarantine them prior to use.
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New Gathering Limits

Gatherings such as yard sales can result in the spread of COVID-19 if they are not planned and managed carefully. Effective Saturday, September 19, 2020, the Ontario government lowered the limits on unmonitored and private social gatherings across the province. The new limits are:

- 10 people at an indoor event or gathering (the previous limit was 50)
- 25 people at an outdoor event or gathering (the previous limit was 100)

The lowered limitations apply to all unmonitored and private social gatherings such as functions, parties, dinners, gatherings, BBQs and wedding receptions held in private residences, backyards, parks and other recreational areas. As was the case with the previous limits, indoor and outdoor gatherings cannot be combined. Gatherings of 35 people in total (25 outdoors and 10 indoors) are also not permitted. Individuals are required to continue to maintain physical distancing of at least two metres with people from outside their households or social circles.

During this time, some municipalities have prohibited yard/garage sales, by-law officers, or local police may enforce these bans. Check with your local municipality for information on this before organizing a yard/garage sale.

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At this time, large scale, collective street/community sales are not recommended. However, if individuals choose to participate in second-hand item exchanges, individual yard/garage sales, here are some key considerations:

Key considerations for hosting a yard sale

Seller/Host

- Have a plan to reinforce limiting the number of people to adhere to gathering limits. This may include designating a person to monitor the numbers or posting signage at the end of your property asking people to wait if there are 25 people for outdoor sales or 10 people for indoor sales
- Position tables as far apart as possible to allow for physical distancing of 2m (6 feet)
- Identify a specific traffic flow so that customers are moving in one direction by posting signs or taping arrows on the pavement
- Have hand sanitizer available for yourself and customers' use
- For cash exchange, ensure that you wash/sanitize your hands before and after touching the money
- Designate a cash box space for customers to set their money down and retrieve change from rather than directly exchanging money
- If physical distancing is difficult, it is recommended that a non-medical mask/face covering of 2 layers be used
- Limit the handling of items as much as possible once your sale has begun – sanitizing hands before and after adjusting items
- Food should not be sold at yard/garage sales

Customers:

- Do not go out if you have any of the following **symptoms**
- Clean your hands regularly and often (think before, during, after) when you arrive and leave the garage sale
- Stay 2m (6 feet) from others while shopping
- Have only one member of your household do the shopping
- Look for the direction to follow the specific flow of traffic the seller has laid out for the sale
- Consider wearing a non-medical mask/face covering, especially if you cannot maintain 6 feet of distance from others. If you are unable to wear a mask and physical distancing will be challenging to maintain, consider sending a friend/relative to shop for you
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, or mouth
- Limit the handling of items as much as possible – sanitizing hands before and after, post signage to remind people of this

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- Wipe down the inside of your vehicle where the item was stored or take a bag to put the items you purchase in so you can discard or clean upon return home
- For cash exchange ensure that you wash/sanitize your hands before and after touching the money

The virus causing COVID-19 cannot grow on inanimate objects (such as money) or surfaces. However, the virus can survive for hours to days on different surfaces, although the levels will decline over time ^{1,2}. Sanitize any objects you can before bringing them into your home after a sale/purchase (i.e. plastics, metals, wood, washing of fabrics) and objects that cannot be disinfected (i.e. cloth furniture), leave them in a quarantined area for a 48hr timeframe ².

Be kind. Be Patient. These are extraordinary times that we are all going through together. For more information on COVID-19 and how to stay healthy, visit: www.swpublichealth.ca or call the Southwestern Public Health 'COVID-19 Call Centre' for assistance at: 1-800-922-0096 x 9

References:

1. Chin AWH, Chu JTS, Perera MRA, Hui KPY, Yen H-L, Chan MCW. Stability of SARS-CoV-2 in different environmental conditions. *Lancet Microbe*. 2020;1(1):e10. Available from: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-5247\(20\)30003-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-5247(20)30003-3)
2. van Doremalen N, Bushmaker T, Morris DH, Holbrook MG, Gamble A, Williamson BN, et al. Aerosol and surface stability of SARS-CoV-2 as compared with SARS-CoV-1. *N Engl J Med*. 2020;382:1564-7. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>