

# Alcohol and Cannabis Retail Regulations During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted how Canadians live and work. Over the course of the pandemic, provincial and territorial governments have implemented policies determining how businesses operate, and how Canadians access goods and services. The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction has been tracking changes in retail regulations related to alcohol and cannabis during the pandemic. We will be working with partners to analyze this data, especially to look at the relationships between changes in retail policies and changes in sales, consumption, and health and public safety impacts. We are also making the data available for use by researchers, policy makers and other interested parties. The following tables provide a high-level summary of key categories for policies affecting alcohol and cannabis sales. For information about accessing more detailed datasets, including changes over time, please contact [policy@ccsa.ca](mailto:policy@ccsa.ca).

## Method

All data for this project was collected through Internet searches. The primary sources for locating policy information related to COVID-19 were provincial and territorial governmental webpages, government press releases, and announcements and posts made through official government social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Secondary sources were used to support primary source information. Secondary sources consisted primarily of online news articles. When a news article could not be located, non-government social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) posts were used as secondary sources. A sub-sample of the initial data collected in July 2020 was independently verified by two researchers. CCSA has reached out to provincial and territorial regulators to validate the data where possible, but not all jurisdictions have responded to confirm their data. CCSA will continue to update the data tables regularly over the course of the pandemic. Please bring any questions or errors and suggestions to our attention at [policy@ccsa.ca](mailto:policy@ccsa.ca).

**Initial lockdown refers to the period of March and April 2020.**



## Data

Table 1: Off-Premise Retail Sales During Initial Lockdown (e.g., liquor and beer stores)

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU
Liquor Stores Designated Essential	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No: from March 19-25, 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liquor Stores Closed	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes: From March 19-25, 2020	No *	No	No	No
Maximum Daily Hours During Initial Lockdown ** (change +/- from pre-pandemic indicated in brackets)	16 (+2)	16 (0)	19 (0)	18.5 (0)	16 (+2)	16 (0)	***	9 (-8)	15 (0)	17 (0)	17 (0)	7 (-3)	7 (0)
Reduced Days/Hours of Operation for Public Retailers During Initial Lockdown	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes ****	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (did reduce # of public stores)	No	Yes	No



	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU
<b>Curbside Pick Up Offered</b>	No	No	Public: Yes  Private: No	No	Public: Yes	Public: Yes  Private: No	Public: Yes  Private: No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Extended Online/Pick up/Delivery</b>	Public: No  Private: Yes	No	Public: Yes  Private: No	No	Public: No  Private: Yes	Public: Yes  Private: No	No	Public: No  Private: Yes	Public: No  Private: Yes	Public & Private: Yes	No	No	No

\* Public liquor stores were closed for customer shopping, but were open for customers to place and pick-up orders.

\*\* Maximum daily hours information based on policy/guidance and may not reflect actual retail hours.

\*\*\* Government store hours reduced; however, details require verification.

\*\*\*\* Ontario extended daily opening hours, but closed all retail stores on Mondays.



Table 2: On-Premise Sales During Initial Lockdown (e.g., restaurants and bars)

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU
Food Primary Retailers Physically Open During Initial Lockdown	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Liquor Primary Retailers Physically Open During Initial Lockdown	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Extended Pick-up (PU) and Delivery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Pre-COVID hours of PU/Delivery (change +/- hours of PU/Delivery indicated in brackets)	14.5 (-0.5)	0 (+16.5)	0 (+17.5)	0 (+15.5)	0 (+14)	15 (0)	0 (+20)	12 (0)	15 (0)	0 (+17)	17(0)	12(0)	12(0)
Purchasing Conditions or Restrictions	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N.A.	Yes	Yes



**Table 3: Cannabis Sales During Initial Lockdown**

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU*
<b>Cannabis Retail Stores Designated Essential</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	-
<b>Cannabis Stores Closed</b>	No	No	No	No	Yes: From April 4-7, 2020	No	No	No	Yes: From March 19-May 22, 2020	No**	No	No	-
<b>Maximum Daily Hours During Initial Lockdown (change +/- from pre-pandemic indicated in brackets)</b>	8 (-6)	16 (0)	19 (0)	16 (0)	14 (0)	Reduced but hours not defined	7 (-4)	9 (-8)	0 (-13)	17 (0)	17 (0)	7 (-4)	-
<b>Reduced Days/Hours of Operation</b>	Public: Yes Private: No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	-
<b>Extended Pick-up and Delivery</b>	Public: No Private: Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	-

\* Nunavut did not have physical retail stores during the initial lockdown.

\*\*Some physical retail locations closed voluntarily, but those that could enforce physical distancing were not required to close.



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