



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.

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, and has subsequently been collected by a single member of the research team following a consistent protocol. 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.

Data reflect policy changes effective March 1, 2021.



Data

Table 1: Off-Premise Retail Sales as of March 1, 2021 (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	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liquor Stores Closed	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes *	No	No	No
Maximum Daily Hours ** (change +/- from pre-pandemic indicated in brackets)	16 (+2)	17 (+1)	19 (0)	18.5 (0)	16 (+2)	16 (0)	***	9 (-8)	15 (0)	17 (0)	17 (0)	11 (+1)	7 (0)
Reduced Days/Hours of Operation for Public Retailers	No	No	No	No	Yes ****	No *****	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Curbside Pick Up Offered	No	No	Public: Yes Private: No	No	Public: Yes	Public: Yes Private: No	Public: Yes Private: No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No



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

* Liquor stores remained open except for those in affected lockdown zone.

** 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.

***** Regional curfew requirements varied, potentially impacting store hours in affected areas.



Table 2: On-Premise Sales as of March 1, 2021 (e.g., restaurants and bars)

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU
Food Primary Retailers Physically Open	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liquor Primary Retailers Physically Open	Yes and No*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extended Pick-up (PU) and Delivery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	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)	0	12(0)	12(0)
Purchasing Conditions or Restrictions	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N.A.	Yes	Yes

*Bars permitted to open; however, nightclubs required to remain closed.



Table 3: Cannabis Sales as of March 1, 2021

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NU*
Cannabis Retail Stores Designated Essential	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	-
Cannabis Stores Closed	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	-
Maximum Daily Hours (change +/- from pre-pandemic indicated in brackets)	8 (-6)	16 (0)	19 (0)	16 (0)	14 (0)	12 (+1)	11 (0)	12 (-5)	8 (-5)	17 (0)	17 (0)	7 (-4)	-
Reduced Days/Hours of Operation	Public: Yes Private: No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	-
Extended Pick-up and Delivery	Public: No Private: Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	-

* Nunavut does not have physical retail stores at this time.



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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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