

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Yard and Garage Sales

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

June 11, 2020

It is important to note that the **emergency order** issued by the Government of Ontario currently prohibits public and social gatherings of more than ten people (June 12, 2020). Anyone hosting or attending an event that would exceed this number of persons at any given time on your property is subject to the penalties set out within this order.

As well, many municipalities have prohibited yard/garage sales, these bans may be enforced by by-law officers or local police. Check with your local Municipality for information on this before organizing a yard/garage sale.

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 number of people to adhere to the Provincial orders. This may include designating a person to monitor the numbers and/or posting signage at the end of your property asking people to wait if there are ten individuals already shopping.
- Position tables as far apart as possible to allow for physical distancing of 2m (6').
- Identify a specific traffic flow so that customers are moving in one direction by posting signs or taping arrows on 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. *New bills are made of plastic so can be sanitized as well as any coins
- 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

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- 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 an item sold at street/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 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 especially if you are unable to maintain 6 feet of distance from others. If you are unable to wear a mask and physical distancing will be difficult 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.
- 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. *New bills are made of plastic so can be sanitized as well as any coins

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 prior to bringing them into your home after a sale/purchase (i.e. plastics, metals, wood, washing of fabrics) and for 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

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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>