



NEWS

No COVID-19 curfews planned for Ontario, government source says

By [Rob Ferguson](#) Queen's Park Bureau

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Ontario is not planning curfews to curb the stubbornly rapid spread of [COVID-19](#), a senior government source said as Premier Doug Ford and his cabinet debated other new restrictions to be announced Tuesday following new computer modelling on the pandemic's trajectory.

"A curfew is not being recommended by our health officials at this time," a government source said Monday, a day that saw pandemic deaths top 5,000 in the province with 29 more fatalities.

The province reported 3,338 new cases of the virus Monday, bringing the weekend tally to more than 10,000 and the seven-day moving average of daily new infections to a record 3,555 — a stunning increase of 90 per cent in the last four weeks.

A sombre Ford emerged from his office Monday morning to say officials “worked all weekend” on next steps to curb the virus after he warned “we’re going to see some real turbulent waters over the next couple of months.”

“Our health-care system is on the brink of being overwhelmed and we must take every precaution to keep our most vulnerable safe,” he said, encouraging Ontarians to follow pandemic guidelines. “Other people’s lives are in your hands.”

There are now 409 COVID patients in hospital intensive care units, almost double the level of a month ago, with 275 on ventilators to breathe. There were 35 new ICU admissions Sunday, a level that, if sustained, could soon swamp the province’s 1,756 intensive care beds.

“At this rate, we will run out of ICU beds in February,” Dr. Ian Preyra, an emergency physician and chief of staff Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington, said on Twitter.

“If you or a loved one get COVID now, there may not be a bed for you.”

Ontario’s chief medical officer Dr. David Williams has warned computer modelling — which will be updated in a briefing Tuesday — suggests the province could see 6,000 to 10,000 cases daily within two weeks “if everything all goes wild.”

Associate chief medical officer Dr. Barbara Yaffe said a more severe lockdown such as the one first imposed last March may be necessary. It closed most non-essential workplaces, industries and stores, resulting in near-empty streets.

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In the current lockdown, major industries such as construction and manufacturing are still operating and non-essential stores are open for curbside pickup.

“In the first wave, we collectively attacked the virus to snuff it out and we succeeded,” said Anthony Dale, chief executive of the Ontario Hospital Association, referring to the steady drop in cases to fewer than 100 a day by mid-August, aided by warm summer weather.

The latest figures show workplaces are the second-largest source of COVID-19 outbreaks behind long-term-care homes.

Ford has previously rejected travel restrictions within the province, saying they are difficult to enforce.

There are concerns the U.K. variant of the novel coronavirus is circulating more widely even though the province had identified just six cases as of Thursday.

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