


A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue surgical mask and a white ribbed sweater with a brown apron, is handing a stack of cardboard boxes to a customer. The customer's hands, wearing blue gloves, are visible in the foreground. The background is a kitchen with white tiled walls and wooden shelves holding various bottles and jars. The image is framed by blue and brown geometric shapes.

Helping Business Recover, Rebuild and Prosper

*2020 Burden
Reduction Report*

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of the government's continuing mission to move more services online, update regulations and cut outdated and redundant red tape. Read about how the Ontario government is working for you by helping the health care sector, small businesses and communities across Ontario overcome the unique challenge of this global crisis.



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A message from the Premier

The past several months have been a challenge unlike anything we've ever seen here at home.

Businesses in small towns and big cities across Ontario have been hit hard by COVID-19, and we're working with them to overcome challenges they've never faced before. We're showing these champions the flexibility they need to help get them through this crisis and adjust to a dramatically different environment.

We've made temporary changes to rules and regulations to help the health care sector, small businesses and key industries to weather the storm. For example, we've allowed people ordering food for takeout or delivery from a bar or licensed restaurant to include alcohol in their orders. And we've allowed trucks to make deliveries to grocery stores and pharmacies 24/7 to make sure shelves stay stocked with the things our families rely on.

We've also mobilized Ontario's manufacturing power to produce the medical equipment our frontline health-care workers need. It has been absolutely incredible to see how quickly companies have retooled to start making this equipment. We've eliminated regulatory roadblocks and worked closely with businesses so they can pivot to producing essential supplies to help us fight the virus. We're making sure we don't have to rely on other countries anymore — because "Proudly Canadian" and "Made in Ontario" are words that matter more today than ever.

There are still great challenges ahead of us, and our government is committed to providing the resources and support small businesses need. We're in this together — and we'll come back stronger and more prosperous than before.

Doug Ford

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Doug Ford".

Premier of Ontario



A message from the Minister

As Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction — and as the proud son of small business owners — I understand what they mean to the people who run them, the communities they serve and the economy they support. This is why reducing the burden imposed on hard-working job creators by often out-of-date and redundant regulations, processes and paperwork has been an important priority for our government from the moment we took office.

Nobody knows what businesses need more than businesses themselves. That's why, every step of the way, we've listened to what businesses have told us about how we can help them keep their doors open and create good jobs for the hard-working people of Ontario. Every day we're talking with businesses small and large, the health care sector and communities across the province about how we can help them overcome the very real and significant challenges they face due to COVID-19, and what they need to weather the storm and help get our economy back on track.

Through our Tackling the Barriers portal, we have received almost 1,300 submissions. Through 80 roundtables with leaders and small business owners from every sector and corner of our province, including meetings with my Ministerial Advisory Councils on Entrepreneurship, Small Business, and Red Tape and Competitiveness, I've heard their thoughts, concerns and ideas first-hand. These are the conversations that will continue to shape our government's economic recovery plan.

Business owners know better than anyone else what it takes to succeed — in good times and in bad. Their struggle underscores the urgency of our work to move more services online, update regulations, and cut outdated and redundant red tape — restoring Ontario's competitive advantage for years to come.

Our province remains the economic engine of Canada. And the skill and commitment of the entrepreneurs who built Ontario's Main Street will carry us through our recovery, as the province emerges from this public health crisis stronger than ever.

Prabmeet Sarkaria

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Prabmeet Sarkaria', written over a light beige background.

Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

Protecting health and safety, supporting business owners and helping Ontario stay on the job during the pandemic

The government's top priority remains protecting the health and safety of the people of Ontario. This has required businesses to make sacrifices and redefine what it means to be on the front lines of health care delivery. Every action taken by Ontario was to support and enhance the COVID-19 response and aid businesses struggling through this crisis.

The people of Ontario have been eager to continue working safely, while supporting those on the front lines who need our help. Many companies are counting on the government to support them as they tackle the challenges of the pandemic, jump-start their operations and start hiring again.

Ensuring grocery and pharmacy store shelves are stocked

Ontario has a one of the strongest supply chains in the world, but COVID-19 pushed it to its limits as demand for certain items reached record levels. For example, food suppliers had to adapt quickly and without notice when Ontarians shifted overnight from eating at restaurants, work or school to cooking and baking at home.

Our government took immediate action to keep shelves stocked with food and essential medicine, through a regulatory amendment to allow **24/7 deliveries, including delivering essential items to grocery stores and pharmacies**. This allowed retailers to prevent shortages and made it easier to provide families with the goods and medications they rely on, while maintaining the public's trust in our supply chain. Based on two previous pilots, changes such as this that enable off-peak deliveries, are also expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, fuel needs and traffic congestion on our roadways. With trucks less likely to be stuck on the roads during morning and afternoon rush hour, they can travel when they can make deliveries more quickly and efficiently.

Supporting our hospitals and frontline health care workers

To help prepare the health care system to meet the demands of the pandemic, the government allowed the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to temporarily certify qualified physicians. With this change, more trained professionals could play a role in supporting Ontario's response to the pandemic, while ensuring the people of Ontario could access a health care professional when needed.



Eliminating barriers to producing hand sanitizer

The demand for hand sanitizer, in Ontario and around the world, has skyrocketed. With alcohol the chief ingredient in most sanitizers, many breweries, distilleries and wineries were eager to join the fight and start their own production. However, they faced a major hurdle: a shortage of bottles approved by Health Canada for packaging hand sanitizer.

Ontario worked with the federal government to ease the requirements so these businesses could use non-traditional packaging, including beer and wine bottles, provided they were clearly labeled and included warnings not to drink the contents. Collaboration with Health Canada led to expedited health and safety approvals so breweries and distillers could produce hand sanitizer for store shelves as quickly as possible.

This regulatory flexibility opened the way for an explosion of hand sanitizer manufacturers in Ontario — from a handful before the pandemic to almost 100 a few months later, at a time when supply is critical. The Ontario government is also procuring hand sanitizer for frontline workers from some of these manufacturers, including spirits makers Rheault Distillery in Hearst and Kinsip House of Fine Spirits in Bloomfield.

Giving bars and restaurants the choice to offer alcohol with delivery orders

To help flatten the curve, bars and restaurants were required to close their dining rooms for several months. In order to support these businesses throughout the lockdown while providing more choice for consumers, the government introduced [a series of temporary regulatory actions](#). These included allowing bars and licensed restaurants to sell alcohol with food orders for takeout or delivery, a measure the government is considering making permanent. The government also permitted restaurants and bars to sell spirits at a lower price with these orders. And it streamlined the process for creating and extending outdoor patio spaces so they could safely accommodate staff and patrons while maintaining the physical distancing required to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Alleviating cash-flow pressures on companies

Through [Ontario's Action Plan](#), the government took immediate action to provide \$10 billion in support to improve cash flow for hard-hit businesses in every sector and region of the province. An interest and penalty-free period for payments on most provincial taxes and fees provided \$6 billion in relief. Property-tax deferrals for individuals and businesses were worth up to \$1.8 billion, and \$1.9 billion in relief was provided to allow employers to defer WSIB payments until August 31. This flexibility helped make life easier for people and better for business throughout the pandemic.

Protecting commercial tenants from eviction

COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on our small businesses, who are the backbone of our economy. To help them get back on their feet, the government passed the [Protecting Small Business Act and the Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act](#). These laws temporarily halted or reversed evictions of struggling small businesses, while protecting them from being locked out or having their assets seized during the pandemic.

Ontario also supported landlords and business tenants through the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program for small businesses. Working with the federal government, over \$900 million in relief was provided to tenants and landlords to protect Ontario's small businesses from evictions and allow them to focus on their economic recovery.





Providing flexibility to do business virtually and electronically

Making it easier for companies to conduct business while protecting the health and safety of employees, clients and customers is critical to successfully reopening the Ontario economy. [That's why the government allowed](#) Ontario corporations and municipalities to conduct virtual meetings and defer certain annual meetings in specified circumstances. It also allowed them to submit documents electronically. This temporary flexibility is helping businesses and municipalities meet their regulatory obligations safely while reducing the number of touchpoints needed to file documentation.

Empowering companies to suggest temporary changes to the rules

Ontario businesses have had to overcome unique challenges due to the pandemic. Through the [COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers website](#), the government has worked with businesses to identify unnecessary and overly complicated regulations standing in the way of retooling their operations to produce health-related products or adapting their operations to maintain physical distancing. Business owners were also provided with the opportunity to provide suggestions for removing these roadblocks through temporary regulatory changes. The site has received nearly 1,300 submissions, with nearly 400 roadblocks being actively investigated by the government.

Helping businesses source the PPE they need

To provide companies with an up-to-date list of sources where they can buy this equipment to keep their employees and customers safe, the government launched the [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#). The site now lists more than 660 companies. Of these, almost 250 are domestic manufacturers and the rest are Ontario distributors of imported products. A survey of suppliers listed on the directory showed that, as of July 16, 74 per cent had received inquiries through the site and 45 per cent had made sales.

Tracking our progress on streamlining government

The government has streamlined Ontario's regulatory system through our twice-annual burden reduction and regulatory modernization packages — ending duplicative or outdated rules that place burdens on businesses, municipalities, universities and colleges, school boards and hospitals.

The government's work to transform Ontario into a modern regulator is informed by five guiding principles:

1. Protecting health, safety and the environment
2. Prioritizing the important issues — even if they're tough
3. Harmonizing rules with Ottawa and other provinces where we can
4. Listening to you
5. Taking a whole-of-government approach.

As Ontario is modernizing, moving more services online and ending duplicative and outdated requirements in a careful and meticulous way, the government is committed to ensuring that health, safety and environmental protections are either maintained or improved. While paying close attention to detail has slowed progress, it is ensuring that the government's efforts are saving businesses time and money – without unintended consequences.

As part of the government's commitment to transparency, a ministry-by-ministry breakdown of progress on regulatory reduction is being provided for the first time in the table near the end of this report (p. 14). The starting point is a baseline count as of June 29, 2018. This is then compared with the number of requirements two years later, as of June 30, 2020.

Ontario's regulatory count includes requirements on business from all government ministries, agencies, boards, commissions and delegated administrative authorities found in all legislation, regulations, policies, and forms.

The table shows how widely the number of requirements varies by ministry, depending on how significant a role it serves as a regulator. The variations in percentage also differ over the two years, reflecting the specific areas that each ministry regulates and the status of its ongoing efforts to remove barriers.

Ontario is looking to other provinces that have had a clear head start on similar regulatory streamlining efforts. By comparison, it took British Columbia from 2004

to 2020 to reduce its total count of regulatory requirements by 15 per cent — an average annual reduction of just under 1 per cent. And over the three years ending in March 2019, Manitoba reduced its total number of regulatory requirements by 8.6 per cent.

As the table shows, the government reduced its total number of regulatory compliance requirements by 4.2 per cent over the two years ending in June 2020. That was a steady and prudent rate of reduction — and a significant achievement.

These figures suggest that Ontario's rate of reduction falls somewhere between the rates in B.C. and Manitoba.

Here are broad insights regarding the efforts in some of Ontario's key ministries:

- The **Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade** has been busy reorganizing the way that government supports business and how investments are made to promote economic growth, both regionally and province-wide. As we look to ensure that more decisions are made outside political interference and in a streamlined way, this ministry has seen a reduction of 34.8 per cent in its number of regulatory compliance requirements over two years. While a significant percentage reduction, the change also reflects the relatively small regulatory role played by this ministry.
- Key actions by the **Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines** include introducing the *Fixing the Hydro Mess Act* and revoking the Fair Hydro Plan Regulations. These helped create a modern, transparent and accountable electricity system by increasing bill transparency, holding residential bills to the rate of inflation and modernizing the Ontario Energy Board. Other initiatives that have contributed to the 10.9 per cent reduction in its regulatory requirement count include repealing the *Green Energy Act, 2009* in order to restore planning decisions to municipalities and ensure local voices have a final say on projects in their community.
- The **Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development** has made significant changes to modernize and improve Ontario's apprenticeship system — an important goal for the government. The ministry has been hard at work to ensure that employers and workers have the help they need to fill the demand for skilled trades and apprenticeship jobs, which is a key to bringing high-quality jobs back to Ontario. This ministry has reduced its regulatory requirements count by 5.8 per cent.
- Through the *More Homes, More Choice Act* and additional actions, the **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing** has reduced duplication and streamlined processes. Eliminating numerous burdensome and unnecessary regulations under the *Planning Act* and repealing the *Statute Labour Act* provides more flexibility and modern alternatives to municipalities. That has helped this



ministry reduce its regulatory count by 3.6 per cent. The ministry has also made significant advances in red tape reduction through efforts to harmonize Ontario's Building Code with National Construction Codes by endorsing the Reconciliation Agreement under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

- The **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry** has reduced duplication and put an end to outdated rules in order to support Ontario's job-creating forestry and aggregates sectors. This includes making the most significant changes to the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* since its creation in the 1990s by streamlining forest management manuals. It also modernized management of aggregates by updating the Aggregate Resources of Ontario Provincial Standards for the first time since they were created in 1997. As northern communities recover and Ontario's infrastructure needs grow, these changes will help create prosperity and jobs across the province, while reducing the ministry's regulatory compliance requirements total by 7.1 per cent.
- The **Ministry of the Solicitor General** is working on regulations to bring the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* into force in order to protect local communities and keep Ontarians safe. It has also replaced the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1990* with the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019* to better protect animals from abuse and neglect. These actions have helped the ministry streamline and modernize duplicative and outdated rules, and to reduce its regulatory count by 7.1 per cent.
- **Treasury Board Secretariat** has played an essential role in centralizing processes across government. With the passage of the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*, Treasury Board Secretariat saw the introduction of requirements that are time limited, do not apply to for-profit organizations and are focused on the public sector. They support the government's policy to ensure public sector compensation reflects the province's current fiscal reality.
- The **Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks** plays a significant role in regulating the province's businesses and industries to ensure our environment is protected. The Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan is our roadmap to preserving and protecting our land, air and water while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Over the past two years, the ministry has improved

processes and eliminated unnecessary duplication. This includes creating a one-stop-shop for heavy-duty vehicle emissions and safety inspections and implementing a single, flexible, multi-media environmental approval for General Motors' Ingersoll facility. These initiatives, among others, have resulted in a reduction of 4.9 per cent in regulatory compliance burdens.

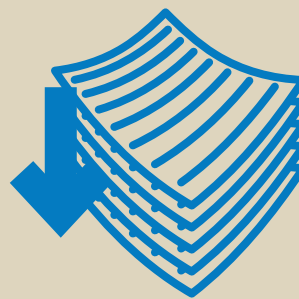
- The **Ministry of Health** and **Ministry of Long-Term Care**: As part of our government's plan to significantly improve the care Ontarians receive and end hallway health care, the partnerships formed as part of creating Ontario Health Teams have demonstrated remarkable responsiveness to COVID-19. They've done so by simplifying the purchase of personal protective equipment, supporting the staffing of long-term care homes and assessment centres, expanding virtual care options, and by breaking down long-standing barriers to better connected care, both in support of patients and our brave frontline heroes. The province will continue to build on these successes to find more effective and efficient ways to deliver the high-quality care Ontarians expect and deserve while we continue to ensure the health care system is prepared to respond to any waves of COVID-19.

The government-wide total reduction of 4.2 per cent over two years shows that, by ensuring that we adhere to our guiding principles, our target remains out of reach. As in other jurisdictions, it will likely take a number of years to reach. But our commitment to moving in this direction is steadfast.

Key numbers at a glance

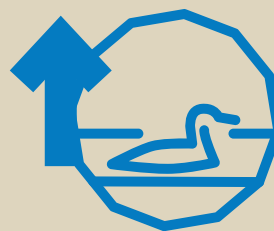
-4.2%

Change in the total number of regulatory compliance requirements affecting businesses from June 29, 2018 to June 30, 2020



\$331 million

Net annual savings to businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities, universities and colleges, school boards and hospitals in regulatory compliance costs since June 29, 2018



Regulatory compliance requirements by ministry

Ministry	Regulatory compliance requirements as of June 29, 2018	Regulatory compliance requirements as of June 30, 2020	% change
Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	15,839	16,054	+1.4%
Attorney General	17,678	16,815	-4.9%
Children, Community and Social Services	6,217	6,225	+0.1%
Colleges and Universities	3,169	3,166	-0.1%
Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade	322	210	-34.8%
Education	35,882	34,578	-3.6%
Energy, Northern Development and Mines	25,513	22,728	-10.9%
Environment, Conservation and Parks	39,369	37,454	-4.9%
Finance	6,451	6,404	-0.7%
Government and Consumer Services	13,473	13,056	-3.1%
Health / Long-Term Care	36,293	35,362	-2.6%
Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries	6,759	6,693	-1.0%
Infrastructure	126	126	0.0%
Labour, Training and Skills Development	9,986	9,407	-5.8%
Municipal Affairs and Housing	10,031	9,672	-3.6%
Natural Resources and Forestry	8,481	7,882	-7.1%
Seniors and Accessibility	670	671	+0.1%
Solicitor General	8,589	7,976	-7.1%
Transportation	5,911	5,850	-1.0%
Treasury Board Secretariat	50	59	+18.0%
TOTALS	250,809	240,388	-4.2%

For more information on how we're
making Ontario better for people and
smarter for business, visit:

[Ontario.ca/openforbusiness](https://ontario.ca/openforbusiness)

All figures are in Canadian dollars.
The information is accurate at
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