

COVID-19 Policy

Updated: March 30, 2021



Overview

The **GeoNiagara 2021** Local Organizing Committee (LOC), in conjunction with our partners, the Canadian Geotechnical Society (CGS), and the International Association of Hydrogeologists - Canadian National Chapter (IAH-CNC) have prepared the following policy with respect to the COVID-19 situation.

Intention

GeoNiagara 2021 will be the 74th Canadian Geotechnical Conference and 14th Joint CGS/IAH-CNC Groundwater Conference. The LOC and our partners intend to host this conference as an **in-person** event. The LOC feels confident in the ability to host an in-person event in September for the following reasons:

1. **Vaccination Rollout:** The Canadian Government is projecting that most Canadians will have had the opportunity to receive vaccinations before the conference dates in late September.
2. **Timing of the Event:** GeoNiagara 2021 will be held September 26-29, 2021. Based on the conditions experienced in 2020, the incidents of COVID-19 during the late summer and early fall were dramatically lower due to the nature of coronaviruses, and only picked up after Canadian Thanksgiving in late October. There is no indication from Health Canada that this pattern will change in 2021.
3. **Venue:** GeoNiagara 2021 will be held at the [Scotiabank Convention Centre](#), a large, bright and modern facility with good ventilation and plenty of space to adhere to Health Canada guidelines on COVID-19 (i.e. social distancing, mask wearing, etc.). The layout and configuration of the rooms and conference common areas will factor in the latest best practices for organizing a safe event (i.e., spacing of seats, managing the flow of traffic, frequent cleaning of higher traffic spaces and surfaces).
4. **Additional Safeguards:** In addition to enhanced and frequent cleaning protocols, social distancing, and mask mandate in public spaces, we will be working under the direction of Health Canada, Public Health Ontario, and the Scotiabank Convention Centre to add measures such as daily temperature checks and requiring participants to conduct COVID-19 screening or self-assessments per the [Ontario protocol](#) prior to attending the event.

Contingency Plans

Should government restrictions or other factors prevent or severely limit an in-person event, GeoNiagara 2021 will be held September 26-29, 2021 as a virtual event, and:

- Delegates that have purchased in-person registrations will be issued a partial refund in recognition that the virtual event will not have the full benefits of an in-person event (i.e., networking, entertainment, tours, etc.).
- Sponsors and Exhibitors will be issued partial or full refunds depending on whether or not the virtual event has an effective online exhibition floor.

Thank you for your support of **GeoNiagara 2021**. We are looking forward to a truly amazing event in a beautiful part of Canada – one that will be informative, educational, fun, and most importantly, safe for all delegates, sponsors, and exhibitors.