

# Municipal Governance

## During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions – April 23, 2021

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On April 6, 2021, the Government of Alberta announced a return to Step 1 of the Path Forward. For the most up-to-date information, visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19).

While we continue to navigate the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic together, Municipal Affairs remains committed to issuing regular updates to address frequently asked questions and provide new information or resources as they become available.

If you would like a specific issue addressed in an upcoming update, please email your request to [ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca).

### Municipal Affairs Updates

Previous COVID-19 updates are available at [www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx)

## Council Meetings

**Have there been any changes to council meeting procedures with the return to Step 1?**

**NO.** There have been no changes to council meeting procedures. The Public Meeting Procedures (COVID-19 Suppression) Regulation remains in effect for councils to conduct council meetings by entirely electronic means to help control the spread of COVID-19. All attendees of meetings held in person must wear masks and socially distance, as required by public health orders.

## Municipal Election

**Does the Government of Alberta have plans to allow for expanded use of special ballots for the 2021 general election?**

**NO.** Municipal Affairs will continue to monitor developments relating to the pandemic, but based on progress to date in the vaccine rollout, it is anticipated votes will be able to take place safely according to relatively normal processes. No changes to special ballot provisions are planned at this time.

## Recreational Facilities

**Can splash parks, outdoor pools, and other outdoor facilities operate as part of the Step 1 restrictions?**

**YES.** Outdoor fitness and recreation facilities may be used, as long as they align with public health guidelines. Physical distancing of two metres between households or individuals is required, and group activities can have a maximum of 10 attendees. If activities cannot be made to align with public health guidelines, the activity is not permitted.

### Municipal Advisory Services

If you have further questions, please call 780-427-2225 (or toll-free by first dialing 310-0000) or email [ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca).

### Can municipal golf courses be open?

**YES.** Golf courses and driving ranges are allowed to open. As with other activities, physical distancing is required, and group activities can have a maximum of 10 people.

### Can indoor recreational facilities be open?

**YES.** Indoor recreational facilities are permitted to be open; however, indoor recreational spaces may only be used for individual or household one-on-one fitness training. Indoor group fitness for adults is not permitted (both low and high intensity). Youth lessons, practices, and physical conditioning activities are allowed for indoor and minor sports/activities. Youth school athletics are linked to school board decisions so for all places shifting to online schooling, indoor youth sports activities will be paused. Games are not allowed.

### Can campgrounds with toilets and showers be open?

**YES.** Shared amenities and high-touch surfaces should undergo regular cleaning and disinfection procedures with increased frequencies.

### Can community halls be open?

**YES.** Community halls may be open for any activities permitted under Step 1, such as wedding ceremonies (up to 10 people) and funeral services (up to 20 people). Receptions and trade shows are not permitted. Group meetings may be held so long as masks are worn, individuals or households are spaced at least two metres apart, hand hygiene facilities are available, and movement through the facility can be properly facilitated.

### Can municipalities choose to keep municipal properties closed even if they can be open under Step 1?

**YES.** The decision to open facilities remains a local council decision. Municipalities and the public must continue to put safety first.

### Are adult team sports, such as softball, allowed to proceed?

**NO.** Adult team sports are not permitted under the current guidelines. Adult team sports may be part of Step 3 of the Path Forward.

## General Questions

### Are municipalities responsible in any way for use of their community halls or facilities in contravention of the order or parameters of use under the Public Health Order?

**YES.** Community hall and facility operators, including municipalities, are responsible for any contravention to public health orders that occur within their premises.

### Should municipalities be encouraging employees to work from home?

**YES.** Working from home is mandatory unless the employee's physical presence is required to meet operational needs. While in the office, individuals must practice social distancing and wear masks when in public areas of the office. Municipal staff should be encouraged and supported to have remote work arrangements where feasible.

## Additional Resources

RMA's COVID-19 response hub is available at <https://rmalberta.com/about/covid-19-response-hub>.

AUMA's updated guide is available at [www.auma.ca/covid19](http://www.auma.ca/covid19).

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities links and resources for municipalities is available at [www.fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities](http://www.fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities).

For the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation in Alberta, visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](http://alberta.ca/COVID19).