

# Municipal Governance

## During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions – February 19, 2021

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

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 online at: [www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx)

## Public Health Order

**Are Community Peace Officers still authorized to enforce provisions contained in the COVID-19 orders?**

**YES.** There is still a state of public health emergency in the province, and mandatory, province-wide restrictions remain in effect to protect the health system and slow the spread of COVID-19. The intention is to allow the network of enforcement officials, including community peace officers, to continue to enforce the orders in place.

## Path Forward

**Details on when restrictions may be lifted would help municipalities make longer-term decisions about opening facilities and program planning. Can additional details be included in each stage?**

**YES.** The Path Forward is intended as a roadmap for how restrictions will be eased in steps in a safe manner in the coming months.

These steps are intended to take a slow and steady approach to opening. As the Path Forward continues, more details will be shared for each step. Moving between steps will happen at least three weeks apart to assess the impact on cases.

## Elections

**Can municipalities use community centres/halls for election activities?**

**YES.** Community halls are closed for general use. [Order 2-2021](#) provides an exception for election activities.

This order provides some exceptions for activities to continue in community halls because it is in the interest of the community for them to continue and there may not be other appropriate venues for these activities.

## Municipal Facilities

### Can municipalities rent out community centres to faith or support groups?

**YES.** Renting community centres to faith groups is permitted. The intent is to allow faith groups who do not have their own building to continue to operate. The current order ([Order 2-2021](#)) also allows mutual support groups to take place in community halls, provided they follow all public health measures.

### Can an indoor arena be used as an off-site facility to support curriculum-related educational activities?

**YES.** K-12 and post-secondary institutions are allowed to use off-site facilities, such as an arena, to support curriculum-related activities.

### Are practices for school sports/teams/groups allowed outside of regular school hours?

**YES.** School hours are not a limiting factor for children's school-related indoor and outdoor sports and performance.

### Are municipalities obligated to make their facilities available to school groups and/or academies?

**NO.** Municipalities are in a position to determine the best use of their facilities; therefore, municipalities can decide whether or not their facilities will be available to school groups.

### Can municipalities rent out a municipal arena or pool to a household for a one hour period each household?

**YES.** Individual families are able to privately rent out a facility (e.g. rink, pool), provided they are the only ones at the facility. The facilities would be expected to have appropriate safety and cleaning [protocols](#) in place.

## Municipal Advisory Services

If you have further questions, please call:

780-427-2225 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000) or email: [ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca)

### Some team-based sport groups have requested to use a divider curtain to split into groups of 10 per surface. For example, a curtain divider splitting a soccer field or arena into two halves with 10 on each side. Can facilities be divided to allow for more than one group of 10 at one time?

**YES.** As long as there is three metres of distance between the two different groups, whether it's a common ice surface or a swimming pool, you can have multiple groups at the same time. Physical distance must be maintained at all times.

The entrances and exits may require staggering. There are no set capacity limits. Capacity limits will be determined by the size of location and ability to adhere to the physical distancing requirements.

### Are minor hockey associations able to rent a facility to teams?

**YES.** Arenas can be rented for practice and training sessions, but games are not permitted. This activity is permitted if there are a maximum of 20 skaters (players under 18 and coaches). Rules around facilitating practices are up to the association.

### Can there be spectators in facilities for youth practices or can parents remain in our facilities to watch their children train?

**NO.** There can be no spectators. Parents or caregivers may not stay for training. If required for youth safety purposes, a chaperone may be present, but must not be involved in training and must be distanced at least three metres away from the training group.

**In order to reopen pools and aquatic centres, lifeguards must be sufficiently trained and all certifications need to be current prior to a guard being present on the pool deck. Given COVID-19 lifeguard certifications have expired, can we proceed with recertification under the current restrictions?**

**YES.** Alberta Health has not put specific limits on the number of participants in this type of situation, provided that appropriate distancing can be maintained.

## General Questions

**Do the former relaunch guidance documents still apply or will the “Path Forward” documents replace those guideline documents on BizConnect?**

**YES.** Current, guidance documents continue to apply. Where there are additional measures or specifics in the Path Forward, the Government of Alberta is working with those specific industries to provide more information and clarity.

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

## Helpful Links

For up-to-date information on vaccine distribution, visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine.aspx>.

Variant numbers are now being updated a twice a week. For up-to-date information on the variants within Alberta, visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx#jumplinks-1>

## Additional Resources

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) continue to be a valuable resource for municipalities.

RMA's COVID-19 response hub is available at: <https://rmaalberta.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 also has a list of links and resources for municipalities available at: [www.fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities](http://www.fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities).

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### Alberta Biz Connect

Alberta Biz Connect provides workplace guidance and support to businesses and non-profits. The online tool also provides sector-specific guidelines to ensure businesses can reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses with questions regarding the relaunch can [email the Biz Connect team](#). Common questions are also posted [online](#).