

Municipal Governance

During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions – February 5, 2021

On January 29, 2021, a [stepped approach](#) was released for easing restrictions over the coming months based on hospitalization benchmarks. Each step sets a more predictable path for easing restrictions, while protecting the health system. Step 1 starts February 8, with some health measures potentially being eased for restaurants, indoor fitness and some children's activities.

While we walk this path together, Municipal Affairs remains committed to addressing frequently asked questions and providing new information or resources to municipalities as they become available. For the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation in Alberta, visit: 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.

Municipal Affairs Updates

Previous COVID-19 updates are available online at: www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx

Restriction Changes

When a hospitalization benchmark is reached, do changes to restrictions occur automatically?

NO. For each step, the government will announce the specific measures that will be eased to ensure Albertans are clear on any changes.

Mandatory Masking

We are considering what to do with our municipal masking bylaws that came in effect prior to the provincial order. Does the province have a plan in place to remove the mandatory masking regulations in the near future?

No. Masks remain mandatory in all indoor public places, indoor workplaces, and places of worship. The provincial mask restriction is a helpful addition to the multiple layers of protection in place to be able to prevent further spread.

Recreational Facilities

Does Step 1 contemplate opening municipal facilities such as recreation centres, arenas and aquatic centres?

YES. Step 1 sees the potential easing of some restrictions for school-related indoor and outdoor children's sport and performance curriculum activities only (e.g. swimming and skating lessons). This means K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions are permitted to use off-site facilities to support curriculum-related educational activities. All other program activities remain restricted at this time.



In Step 1, are municipalities allowed to rent out recreational facilities to single households looking for a private booking?

NO. Facilities ordered closed cannot be accessed by members of the public, including private rentals.

Are there any target dates identified for when restrictions related to municipal recreation facilities might be lifted that municipalities can use to plan staffing and programming?

NO. Discussions related to restrictions are ongoing and take into consideration a variety of factors. The potential of community spread of the new variants is a significant factor that will influence the lifting of restrictions. Rates of hospitalization, ICU utilization and health system capacity remain the key triggers for action in Alberta. It is anticipated there will be slow incremental steps for the lifting of restrictions.

General Questions

Is the province looking at options to reduce restrictions on a regional basis?

YES. The Government of Alberta is cautiously examining a region-based plan to ease restrictions. The province wide restrictions are in place to support our public healthcare system; therefore, easing restrictions in some communities or regions due to a decline in case numbers is not feasible at this time.

Will municipalities be notified if a variant case is detected in our community?

NO. While Alberta Health is committed to sharing information on variants with Albertans through the COVID-19 [website](#), due to confidentiality under the *Health Information Act* the specifics of which municipality the variant is located in will not be shared.

Helpful Links

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

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

For up-to-date information on the variants within Alberta, visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx#toc-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.

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.

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

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](#).