

Municipal Governance

During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Frequently Asked Questions – June 19, 2020

Although future updates will continue to be released on a bi-weekly basis, Municipal Affairs is committed to making information available when required to ensure municipalities have timely and relevant information as soon as possible as the province and municipalities deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following information addresses questions received since the expiration of the provincial public health emergency declaration. In addition, Alberta Health has provided guidance for the operation of taxis, limos and rideshares.

Municipal Affairs Updates

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

Public Health Emergency

Is the provincial relaunch strategy affected by the expiration of the provincial state of public health emergency declaration?

NO. Alberta's Relaunch Strategy is key to the safe reopening of Alberta's economy for the long term. The Relaunch Strategy includes triggers and measures for moving through phases 1 and 2 successfully.

Municipalities are encouraged to continue to visit [Alberta's Relaunch Strategy](#) for the most up-to-date information and to stay current on the status of the relaunch strategy.

Do the social distancing or group size gathering orders end when the provincial public health emergency declaration expires?

NO. The public is still encouraged to follow key public health measures such as group gathering size and social distancing as a means to keep COVID-19 under control while we reopen Alberta's economy.

Can businesses and recreation facilities open without any provincially imposed restrictions since the provincial public health emergency declaration has ended?

NO. All public health guidance on gathering size, physical distancing and hygiene must be followed. Sector guidance documents are available [online](#) to help businesses reopen and resume operations safely. As outlined on the [Alberta's Relaunch Strategy](#) website, there are businesses and facilities that are not yet allowed to reopen in stage 2 (e.g., buffets, nightclubs, vocal concerts, trade shows, concerts and festivals).

Are there any federal orders in place impacting municipalities?

NO. Municipalities are creations of provincial legislation, and as such, must follow provincial legislation. Federal jurisdiction would only be imposed through a declaration of a national state of emergency, which has not happened at this time. Municipalities do have relationships and agreements with the federal government that may be impacted or affected by federal priorities; however, these would be negotiated not imposed.

Can a municipality still maintain a pandemic SOLE, create local enforceable restrictions and provide for the staged opening of businesses and facilities?

YES. If a municipality determines that an emergency exists in the municipal boundaries that requires coordination or action to protect the safety, health and welfare of people, a pandemic SOLE can be declared and municipalities can then restrict travel into, out of, and within the municipality and close municipal properties. They can also make plans for repurposing public and private facilities such as community centres or hotels to house people with COVID-19 symptoms to self-isolate. The *Emergency Management Act* does not include powers to close a business, or reduce the capacity of businesses operating in the municipality.

Can a municipality maintain physical gathering restrictions by declaring a local pandemic SOLE under the recent amendments to the *Emergency Management Act (EMA)*?

NO. If a municipality determines that an emergency exists in their boundaries that requires action to protect the safety, health and welfare of people, a SOLE can be declared; however, municipal powers are specifically identified in the *EMA* and restrictions on gatherings and social distancing are not included within those municipal powers

When the provincial public health emergency declaration expires or ends, does the special enforcement authority for community peace officers also come to an end?

YES. As outlined in a bulletin issued by AB Justice and Solicitor General on June 16, 2020, Ministerial Order 24/2020, enacted under the *Peace Officer Act* to authorize community peace officers to enforce health Orders, expired when the provincial state of public health emergency lapsed on June 15, 2020.

Community Peace Officers are encouraged to continue educating individuals on the public health Orders. If enforcement is required, the RCMP or

Public Health Inspectors are still authorized to enforce Orders issued under the *Public Health Act*.

Taxis, Limos and Rideshares

Are there guidelines available to assist with the operation of taxis, limos and rideshares?

YES. Municipalities are encouraged to make the following information available to companies operating within their municipalities.

Under current Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders, operators or drivers are required to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with the General Relaunch Guidance, the guidance for taxis, limos and rideshares, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

Alberta Health recognizes the unique challenges faced by operators and drivers of taxis, limos and rideshare services and has created guidance to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and keep drivers and patrons safe. All operators and drivers are asked to develop and implement policies and procedures that align with the General Relaunch Guidance and Guidance for Taxis, Limos and Rideshares. These materials may be updated as more is learned about COVID-19 and as Alberta progresses through its relaunch strategy. As such, operators and drivers should check the alberta.ca/COVID19 website regularly for updates. Under the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Government of Alberta is also advising Albertans to wear facemasks as an extra measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community when physical distance of two metres cannot be maintained. Guidance is available online.