

Guidance for municipalities during the COVID-19 public health pandemic in NL.

Newfoundland and Labrador entered Alert Level 2 on Thursday, June 25. MNL and PMA have come together to provide recommendations in key areas based upon inquiries from our members. Should you have specific questions, please email covid19@municipalnl.ca.

We recommend that all municipal leaders read the [community-based measures](#) section of the Public Health Agency of Canada's information on mitigating the spread of coronavirus disease. Their risk-mitigation framework identifies four areas, which are important to consider in the decision-making processes of councils and staff in communities as we reopen. These include: physical distancing controls (signage, floor markings, separating work spaces), engineering controls (physical barriers, enhanced cleaning), administrative controls (staggered schedules, working from home, screening and assessments, special options for at-risk populations) and personal protective equipment (surgical and non-surgical masks, gloves, gowns/coveralls).

We also ask that all members keep in mind the following from Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Chief Medical Officer of Health:

"As we continue to move through each alert level, please keep in mind the significance of four important words: PEOPLE, SPACE, TIME and PLACE. Simply put, the more people you interact with, the greater the risk of spread, so please keep your number of contacts outside your bubble small. Physical distancing is crucial to reducing your risk of contracting COVID-19. Therefore, please be sure your space can accommodate this. The risk of infection of COVID-19 increases as people spend longer amounts of time together. Moreover, spending time together indoors is more risky than spending it outdoors. Let these be our guiding principles moving forward."

From June 1 media availability.



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MUNICIPAL GUIDANCE

ALERT LEVEL TWO

COUNCIL MEETINGS

You may have an in-person council meeting as per the MAE circular, dated May 8, 2020. You have to be able to follow the public health and safety guidelines, including adequate space to physically distance and it still has to be accessible to the public.

MNL and PMA recommend that where possible and practical, councils continue to meet virtually while ensuring public access to those virtual meetings. If a council is contemplating in-person meetings, MNL recommends assessing whether it is necessary for it to be in person, whether a physically distanced, in-person meeting is possible in your current facility, and whether there are members of council who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure. Please remember that all meetings, whether in person or not, must be accessible to the public. MNL recommends that in person meetings, if they go ahead, should still be live broadcasted.

TOWN OFFICES

We recommend that town offices open if public health [guidelines](#) for workplaces can be followed. In cases where a full opening to the public is not possible, we recommend operating by appointment only.

Click here for public health information on [Risk-Informed Decision Making Guidance for Employers Operating During COVID-19](#).

MNL and PMA recommend that you speak with your employees to determine whether working outside of the home is possible for them, and whether they feel comfortable doing so. If you are looking for more specific guidance on back to work arrangements, please email covid19@municipalnl.ca.

ESSENTIAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

All essential services should continue as per public health and safety guidelines.

MUNICIPAL BEACHES AND TRAILS

These public spaces may open with appropriate and proper signage outlining health and safety guidelines. Public health guidance on Outdoor Recreational Activities can be found [here](#).

MNL and PMA recommend signage to promote one-way walking, and signage that reflects public health physical distance and gathering guidelines.

MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUNDS

Campgrounds may open following public health [guidance](#). Playgrounds may open following public health [guidance for parks](#) and using these [guidelines](#) for cleaning/disinfection of playground structures. Public health guidance on Outdoor Recreational Activities can be found [here](#).

MNL and PMA recommend that members open municipal parks if they are able to operate them within the guideline parameters and have the staffing capacity to do so.



MUNICIPAL GUIDANCE

ALERT LEVEL TWO

RECREATION FACILITIES, POOLS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Under **Alert Level 2**, additional municipal recreational facilities may reopen:

Click [here](#) for **Outdoor Recreational Activities** guidance.

Click [here](#) for **Indoor Recreational Facilities** guidance.

- Gyms and fitness facilities may open following public health [guidance](#).
- Arenas may open following public health [guidance](#).
- Bingo halls may reopen following public health [guidance](#).

Pools:

- Outdoor swimming pools may open following public health [guidance](#).
- Indoor swimming pools may open following public health [guidance](#).

Playgrounds:

Playground structures may be used following public health [Guidance for Parks](#) which states *"Municipalities and community groups may choose to open playground structures with public health measures in place, wherever possible, including: posted signage regarding physical distancing, regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, and routine monitoring."*

If your community is not able to meet all the public health [guidance for parks](#) and your council decides to open these facilities, you must put up the appropriate signage and inform residents publicly that this is the case. A sample facility safety sign can be found below.

- Playground structures may be used following public health [sanitization guidance](#).
- Click [here](#) for Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings guidance.
- Click [here](#) to download a Facility Safety Sign to post in your municipality. *(Artwork courtesy of The City of St. John's)*

Specifically for playground equipment, our recommendation is that municipalities open playgrounds, if they are able to conduct the required [sanitization guidelines](#). If this is not possible we recommend posting signage indicating that the facility is not sanitized ([facility safety sign](#)). We understand that members may have questions regarding specific facilities. Should you have a question and are uncertain, please email covid19@municipalnl.ca.

MNL and PMA recommend that members open permitted recreational facilities if they are able to operate them within the guideline parameters, and have the staffing capacity to do so.



MUNICIPAL GUIDANCE

ALERT LEVEL TWO

DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

Day camps are permitted to operate following public health [guidelines](#).

MNL is working closely with its partners to provide greater detail on day camp possibilities and structure. We recommend that municipalities assess whether a day camp is feasible for this summer by exploring the following questions:

- Do our residents need a day camp?
- Do they want it?
- Can we do it?
- How can we offer it within the guidelines?

MNL and PMA recognize that day camps are an integral part of supporting families and children throughout the summer under normal circumstances. We are here to support our members in your decisions making processes.

SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Click [here](#) for public health guidance for businesses and workplaces.

MNL and PMA recommend that municipalities encourage the support of local businesses as they reopen through communication with the local business community regarding their needs; through supporting buy local campaigns, and through encouraging a welcoming community spirit while communicating clear public health and safety guidelines to visitors. This can be done through proper signage.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19

- Click [here](#) to visit MNL's webpage: *Alert Level 2 Guidance FAQs* as provided by MNL and PMA
- Click [here](#) for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment Circular: *NL COVID-19 Alert Level System - Implications for Municipalities*
- Click [here](#) for a complete list of circulars from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment addressing municipal legislative requirements for local governments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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