COVID-19 |
Pandemic Preparedness for Recreation Professionals

In addition to the work of the health care industry when a pandemic hits, Local Government and Recreation Professionals play a critical role in protecting the health and safety of their citizens and limiting the negative impact on their communities. They also need to have a continuity plan that will minimize the impact on the department itself and facilitate a speedy resumption of activities if the department has been forced to scale back or close during the pandemic. Preparedness, not panic, is the best way to mitigate the risks posed by a COVID-19 pandemic to our citizens.

Should COVID-19 escalate in Canada, some of the things organizations need to plan for include:

- Staff absences due to a number of reasons (personal illness, ill family members, looking after children if schools or daycares close, feeling of safety being at home etc.). In some cases, employees may themselves elect to stay home; in other circumstances, the government may authorize or require them to do so.
- Disruption to essential services like information, telecommunications, financial services, energy supply, and logistics;
- A major increase or decrease in demand for services;
- Cancellation of public meetings or gatherings like sports events, concerts or religious services; and
- Increased public fear that causes citizens to avoid public places, including recreation facilities, green spaces, and tourist related, restaurants and leisure businesses.

To help you prepare for and manage through a potential COVID-19 escalation, we have adapted the below briefing based on the Canadian Chamber of Commerce - Pandemic Preparedness Guide. It is designed to assist planning and continuity efforts. This tool includes links to some of the most relevant and credible information, best practice tools and resources available.

Action	Things to Consider
Develop/update continuity and crisis plans. *(See section below for resources, tools and templates)*	• What is the process for decision-making during times of crisis? • What are the critical services, positions and skills required to keep your department running? • How and when are you communicating to internal and external stakeholders and managing the flow of information? • What is your plan for recovery?
Plan for the potential impact of the pandemic on your organization. *(See section below for resources, tools and templates)*	• What is the risk of the pandemic to your employees, partners, and customers? • Who are the members of the pandemic response team and what are their roles and responsibilities? • What are the triggers and procedures for activating and terminating the pandemic response plan? • What is the decision-making process related to the pandemic and the execution of the continuity plan? • Who are your most essential employees and what are the other critical inputs (e.g. other departments) required to maintain operations by location and function during a pandemic? • How are you planning for significant staff absences? • Do you have the tools and technology in place to enable staff to work remotely? • Have you trained and prepared your workforce and your back-up resources? • What is your plan for scenarios that are likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your services during a pandemic (e.g. effect of restriction on mass gatherings, programming or events)? • How are you assessing and managing the potential impact of a pandemic on your financials using multiple possible scenarios? • What are your sources of relevant, credible up-to-date, pandemic information from federal & provincial health emergency management, and other sources? • Is your emergency communications plan up to date and are key roles and responsibilities outlined and communicated? This plan should include identification of key contacts (with back-ups), and a chain of communications, including a process for tracking and communicating departmental and employee status. • What is your current travel policy and does it need to be updated? • Has your plan been tested?

Plan for the potential impact of the pandemic on your people. *(See sections below for resources, tools and templates)*	• What steps can you be taking to protect the health and safety of your staff and visitors to your workplace? • What are the infection control practices in your workplace? • What protective and preventative equipment and tools do you need to put in place to prevent the spread of infection? • How and how often are you communicating with employees, customers and stakeholders? • How are you monitoring and managing employee fear, anxiety, rumours and misinformation? • Do you have platforms (e.g. hotlines, website etc.) in place for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, customers, etc. and responding to their questions? • Are there guidelines and practices you can modify or put in place to curtail direct contact with the public if necessary? • Do your employee leave policies need to updated to reflect the unique circumstances of a pandemic? Are they compliant with our provincial labour regulations? • Do you have a policy in place for flexible work sites and work hours? • Do you have a policy in place for employees who may, or think they may have been exposed to the virus? • What healthcare services are available to employees? • What mental health services could be provided during a pandemic and possible quarantine? • Are there employees and customers with special needs that need to be accommodated?

Take advantage of existing tools, templates and best practices.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has created a continuity guide, which includes things to think about in light of a pandemic or other crisis situations.

Useful templates:

A few years ago, Calgary's downtown flooded. The Calgary Chamber was in the frey of this crisis. Out of bad comes good, and the chamber created an award-winning emergency preparedness kit.

Checklists:

Centre for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf

New Brunswick: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/Pandemic_Planning-e.pdf

Information and Advice: (updates will be posted as available)

Borden, Ladner, Gervais (BLG) issued this communiqué:

Deloitte has numerous tools on their web site: https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/risk/articles/practical-steps-for-pandemic- preparedness.html

Fasken has uploaded information for employers and employees: https://www.fasken.com/en/knowledge/2020/03/pandemic-planning-for-employers-responding-to-the-coronavirus-disease-2019

World Health Organization planning document: https://www.who.int/influenza/resources/documents/FluCheck6web.pdf

Use credible and reliable sources of information to monitor and assess the situation and refine your plans accordingly.

For health updates within Canada:

Alberta

British Columbia

Manitoba

Ontario

Quebec - English

Quebec – French

New Brunswick

Northwest Territories

Nova Scotia

Newfoundland and Labrador

Nunavut

Prince Edward Island

Saskatchewan

Yukon

Worldwide:

The World Health Organization has international information and updates:

https://www.who.int/

For travel updates:

The Public Health Agency of Canada has up-to-date information for Canadians travelling to foreign destinations: