

# Re-Opening Parks and Recreation in Saskatchewan

COVID-19 Best Practices



Created by



Saskatchewan  
Parks and Recreation  
Association

Funded by





## RE-OPENING RECREATION IN SASKATCHEWAN

The past few months have shown us how important access to parks, open spaces and recreation opportunities are to keep the people of Saskatchewan healthy, happy and connected. We are grateful that the Government of Saskatchewan values the recreation industry and is taking steps to safely re-open access. As we begin re-opening recreation in Saskatchewan, we are here to help guide the way forward.

### ***Re-Opening Recreation is GOOD for Saskatchewan***

Recreation contributes to a high quality of life by creating active, connected, vibrant individuals and communities. Recreation is a public good and has been proven to support individual and community resilience.

### ***Re-Opening Recreation is NECESSARY for Saskatchewan***

Recreation contributes to Saskatchewan's economy by building strong communities and families, enhancing mental, physical and social wellbeing, connecting people to nature and contributing to job creation and tourism.

### ***Re-Opening Recreation is POSSIBLE for Saskatchewan***

The people who work in this industry are committed to community wellbeing, that hasn't changed during this pandemic. There are dedicated recreation professionals and volunteers across the province committed to getting people recreating again in a responsible and safe manner that adheres to public health guidelines. Ensuring that Saskatchewan people have access to safe recreation experiences remains an integral part of our industry's work.

### ***We are here to help guide the way forward***

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) is a network of recreation leaders dedicated to energizing Saskatchewan and changing lives. We imagine a province where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy recreation and feel more connected to nature, our communities and ourselves. It's our job to connect, educate and inspire others to build this future together. We're empowered to succeed through funding support from Sask Lotteries.

We recognize that this best practices document is a starting point. SPRA will continue to provide opportunities across the province to collaborate through resource and knowledge sharing and by supporting and connecting all those in the recreation industry.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0 GOALS OF THE DOCUMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0 PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5.0 COMMUNICATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
GENERAL BEST PRACTICES .....	10
USER GROUP AND SPORT GROUPS BEST PRACTICES.....	11
<b>6.0 PHYSICAL DISTANCING.....</b>	<b>12</b>
GENERAL BEST PRACTICES .....	12
BEST PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PROGRAMS .....	12
BEST PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO DAY/OVERNIGHT CAMPS .....	13
BEST PRACTICES FOR AQUATIC CENTRES (INCLUDING BEACHES AND WATERFRONTS) .....	13
BEST PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO SPORT FIELDS .....	13
<b>7.0 CLEANING AND SANITATION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
BEST PRACTICES FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR AQUATIC CENTRES (INCLUDING SPRAY PADS) .....	15
BEST PRACTICES FOR PLAYGROUNDS, OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT, AND SITE FURNISHINGS .....	15
BEST PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO INDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES .....	16
<b>8.0 EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER SAFETY.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>9.0 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>10.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>11.0 RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>13.0 APPENDICES LIST .....</b>	<b>22</b>
APPENDIX A – SCREENING CHECKLIST .....	23
APPENDIX B – SERVICE READINESS CHECKLIST.....	24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) takes its role as the provincial leader for the wellbeing of people and communities through recreation very seriously.

The overall health and wellbeing of Saskatchewan people is a priority for the SPRA. This document has been developed to provide best practices in striving to create a safe and healthy return to indoor and outdoor parks and recreation activities and its primary audience is recreation service providers. The secondary audience is the Ministry of Health/Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) for use in establishing guidelines related to reopening recreation parks, facilities, and programs as part of the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#).

There is no “One Size Fits All” list of best practices. It is up to the local municipality and the larger community to consider local resources and how the practices can be implemented in a safe, healthy and beneficial manner.

The best practices contained within this document are based on lessons learned provided in a variety of documents from across Canada.

In each of the document’s sections, there are general practices that can be applied to most parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. We also highlight specific information for some facilities that require special considerations for a safe re-opening.

We provide links within the document to strike a balance between “too much” and “not enough” information, be efficient in developing the document with the best information and to give credit to the original authors. In addition, direct links allow parks and recreation professionals and community decision-makers to extract relevant information and scale practices to fit within their needs and resources.

The information contained within was up-to-date at the time of development. COVID-19 information and best practices are in a continual state of evolution as we become more educated on the virus and its implications on our population. Therefore, a continual review of information from credible sources is critical to ensure practices are up-to-date and we are striving for a healthier population.

Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.

*The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) does not consider itself an authority on health and safety issues, including those pertaining to COVID-19.*

*It is the responsibility of all providers of parks and recreation services to determine how to meet or exceed the guidelines provided by the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Authority.*

*Workplace Health and Safety Committees should be involved in all planning stages to ensure that local requirements are met.*

*All employers are responsible for adhering to the most current Provincial Acts and Regulations.*

## 1.0 Introduction

The overall health and wellbeing of Saskatchewan people is a priority for the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA). In order to realize our vision and mission, we have conducted significant research and compiled best practices into one document for re-opening parks and recreation spaces, programs and facilities in Saskatchewan.

This document has been developed to provide best practices in striving to create a safe and healthy return to indoor and outdoor recreation activities and its primary audience is recreation service providers. The secondary audience is the Ministry of Health/Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) for use in establishing guidelines related to reopening recreation parks, facilities, and programs as part of the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#).

There is no “One Size Fits All” list of best practices. It is up to the local municipality and the community to consider their local resources and how the practices can be implemented in a safe, healthy and beneficial manner. This pandemic is unprecedented. Therefore, it will require communication, collaboration and participation to make the choices that are the best fit for your community. As we slowly re-open recreation in our communities, the best approach we can take is to reach out to neighbours and similar communities to share information, lessons learned and best practices. After all, we have a shared goal: to keep our communities safe, healthy and active.

First and foremost, all parks and recreation facility practices must adhere to the policies contained within [The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996](#) as well as provincial and national guidelines on reopening after COVID-19.

This document is a compilation of best practices. These practices are those that have been applied and deemed successful at this point in time. Continual assessment of local environment and associated plans remain important planning tools – and practitioners are reminded of the importance of adapting them to meet their local context. We recommend these best practices be adapted to the community in which they are to be implemented. In addition, circumstances are changing rapidly: disease transmission, government directives, changes to the market and others. Be prepared to adapt your plan based on the changing situation.

One single plan will not work for all parks and recreation facilities. There are variables in facility design, maintenance, schedule demands, human and financial resources. These differences result in a variety of levels of service for each facility. What will be successful in one facility may not be transferrable to another. However, we should expect that patrons will demand that common practices exist in each building and between communities. As stated earlier, be sure to share your knowledge and experience.

The best practices contained within this document are based on lessons learned provided in a variety of documents from across Canada.

In addition, the appendices provide tools for your use/adaptation to fit the needs and resources of your community/organization.

The best practices in this document are a starting point. Never before has the role and importance of parks and recreation been more recognized worldwide. These important gathering spaces are intended to make us a healthier population, therefore, these spaces need to be re-opened in a healthy and safe manner.

## 2.0 Goals of the Document

- To provide information, tools and strategies for decision making that limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and allow the facilities, programs and services to re-open within the recreation industry.
- To provide an overview of best practices for parks and recreation programs, facilities and services that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of the organization, facility, program or service.
- To provide an overview of best practices for industries that have already reopened.
- To provide alignment with broader public health best practices.

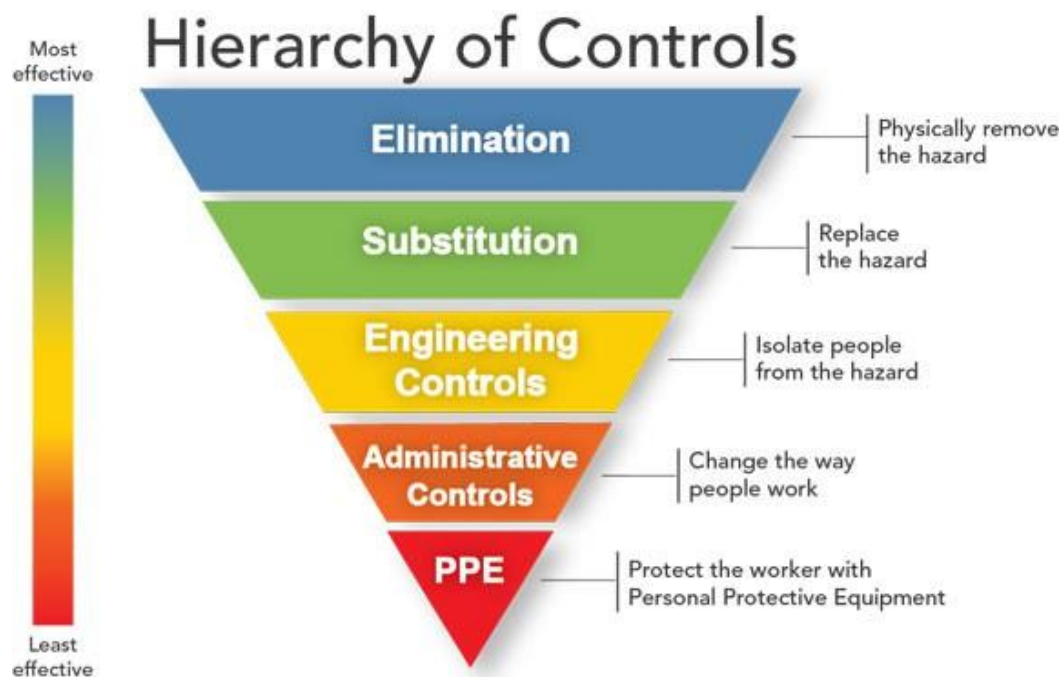
## 3.0 Public Health Information and Guidelines

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in collaboration with Canadian public health experts, provide guidance on the use of Public Health Measures (PHMs) to mitigate community transmission of COVID-19 on the Government of Canada website ([click here to access](#)). Section 2.0 (Risk Assessment) of this document will go into further depth on the risk assessment framework for parks and recreation facilities and programs.

The first step in re-opening should always be asking the question of whether it's safe (and necessary) to re-open the parks and recreation facility, program or service. If the answer is 'yes', appropriate public health controls need to be considered for each space.

The following graphic is a representation of the application of the Hierarchy of Controls to consider when mitigating the spread of COVID-19. These controls should be evaluated within the local context for how best to implement them to provide the greatest benefit to the community. Using the modified hierarchy of controls, COVID-19 mitigation measures can look like:

- **Physical Distancing** — wherever possible having people work or access the business from home; this should include restructuring responsibilities to minimize the numbers of workers that need to be physically present.
- **Engineering controls** — creating physical barriers between people.
- **Administrative controls** — redistributing responsibilities to reduce contact between individuals, using technology to facilitate communication.
- **PPE** — having people wear nonmedical cloth masks, gloves, etc.



(Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#))

Regardless of business specific considerations, there are measures that can be taken to mitigate the risk of infection to protect individuals:

- Use of nonmedical cloth masks.
- Incorporating engineering controls such as physical barriers where possible.
- Reconfiguring space to enable people to be located apart (ideally, at least two-meters).
- Supporting and enabling employees to remain at home if they are unwell or have been in close contact with someone who is sick.

It is recommended that municipalities and/or facility owners/managers utilize the content within the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) for the following facilities/spaces:

- Park amenities and components (e.g. play structures, outdoor exercise equipment and site furnishings)
- Campgrounds
- Outdoor individual recreation
- Golf courses

In addition, there are provincial guidelines related to:

- Environmental cleaning and disinfection
- Appropriate use of PPE
- Gyms and fitness facilities

Official provincial and federal documents should be checked on a regular basis for updates on public health information and relevant guidelines.



## 4.0 Risk Assessment

Risks are inherent in offering public services. Risk mitigation and management have always been an important part of the provision of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. Quality and safety are at the core of what we do. After all, our role is to improve the health and quality of life of the people of Saskatchewan. That role is even more critical in light of COVID-19.

The provision of recreational facilities and assets includes historical practices to ensure proper care, operation and maintenance. Examples of these historical practices include:

- Provincial Pool Regulations – detailed set of operating requirements to ensure the delivery of safe aquatic programs.
- Playground and Playspace Guidelines – detailed set of design and maintenance standards created for the safe use of these facilities by children.
- Arena Refrigeration Training and Provincial Licensing – have been created to help ensure the safe operation and supervision of commercial refrigeration systems for rinks and curling facilities.
- Pesticide Applicators License – was designed to help with the environmentally safe application of pesticides and herbicides as a means to improve the quality of community parks and open spaces.

Parks and recreation industry professionals (such as facility operators, program coordinators and community services directors) will need to continue considering several key factors as they plan to re-open indoor and outdoor recreation environments, recreation programs and services. The primary factor to consider is if the space allows for safe use as outlined in the *Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan*, including the need to implement and enforce additional mitigation best practices. Professionals should conduct a thorough risk assessment of each space and amenity before re-opening. A phased approach should be adopted to mitigate the level of risk and allow time for monitoring, navigating unexpected challenges and ensuring that transmission rates do not increase as a result of re-opening.

One of the first operational best practices that facilities are integrating within their re-opening plans is to convene a re-entry planning team to coordinate staff and internal and external stakeholders, prioritize resources, review equipment usage, develop cleaning schedules, and communicate plans to staff members, patrons, and user groups. This planning team should consist of the right people from the facility/space, not necessarily those with certain titles or roles within the organization.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in collaboration with public health experts from across Canada suggest that risk assessments should be integrated into decisions regarding the re-opening or closing of facilities and how to safely operate if the facility is open.

[A general risk assessment framework](#) has been developed to assist those responsible for management of the business, organization or programming with development of mitigation strategies. The framework contains suggestions for developing a mitigation plan to reduce identified risks and also outlines community based measures for measuring risk:

1. **Local context** – defined as the approximate likelihood of individuals entering the setting being infected with the virus responsible for COVID-19 based on current transmission patterns in the community.

2. **Characteristics of individuals in the setting** – defined as the vulnerability of people in a setting to experience more severe COVID-19 disease, whether individuals in the setting are essential workers, and where individuals in the setting have travelled from other countries.
3. **Setting characteristics** – defined by the intensity of contact between individuals, the frequency of contact with potentially infectious high-touch surfaces, and the environmental characteristics of the setting (e.g. ability to open windows in a confined setting). Contact intensity further considers the type of contact (close to distant), duration of contact (brief to prolonged) and number of contacts (few to many).
4. **Risk mitigation potential** – defined as the degree to which mitigation measures can be implemented or activities modified to reduce risk. This dimension considers both the type and number of measures that can be put in place.

Note that the majority of risk assessments are qualitative and based on expertise and judgement. Some decisions will need to be made to re-open some parks and recreation activities before there are validated data to know the levels of risk.

#### Insurance

As part of a strong risk management plan, facility owners and managers should ensure that insurance coverage has been discussed and confirmed with their carrier, as this information may further inform requirements placed on user groups and leaseholders.

#### User Groups and Leaseholders

Most municipalities lease or rent their facilities to third party user groups such as sport and community organizations. As such, their practices can increase the risk of a facility. The following are best practices provided for user groups and leaseholders:

- All user groups are required to have a COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan. This Plan will identify the specific control measures that will be taken to mitigate the risk of virus transmission, the party responsible for ensuring compliance within the user group and include (but is not limited to) a plan on managing physical distancing, common touch areas and flow of participants.
- 1. The COVID-19 Exposure Plan must align with the larger municipal/provincial guidelines for shared spaces (e.g. parks, open spaces, pools, track spaces).
- 2. Each sport organization is expected to follow its Provincial Sport Organization's Return to Sport plan approved by its Board of Directors in reference to the guidelines provided for the sport sector.
- 3. User groups are expected to have a plan that outlines safe practices to reduce transmission of COVID-19.
- 4. These plans need to be submitted to the municipality/facility owner and the user group agreement should be amended to include new provisions for COVID-19 transmission mitigation expectations.

British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)'s [Guidelines for Restarting Operations](#) provided the information above and includes Service Area Specific Measures (found on pg. 37 of that document) for restarting operations of public recreation facilities.

## 5.0 Communication

The strength of the parks and recreation industry is our connection to tourism, sport, culture and user groups, service, clubs and volunteers. This connectivity is an asset to sharing messages and collecting information within a community.

Communication is key. Everything you do and plan to do should be communicated clearly with staff, key stakeholders and the general public throughout every stage of the process. Clear, intentional and meaningful communication will accomplish many things. It can keep the public informed about what their local government and facility managers/owners are doing to help keep them safe and active, as well as what is expected of them, can reinforce their trust, reduce the spread of misinformation and lack of compliance, and alleviate general anxiety and confusion.

If the messages being sent are not clear to all patrons, the policies, practices and protocols will not be followed and public health will be at greater risk. Employees and the public should be provided with reliable and up-to-date information from the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and/or the World Health Organization (WHO).

The following best practices, for general areas and the attention of user groups and leaseholders, can be tailored and added to but – most importantly – the reader needs to understand the message being communicated about health and safety practices.

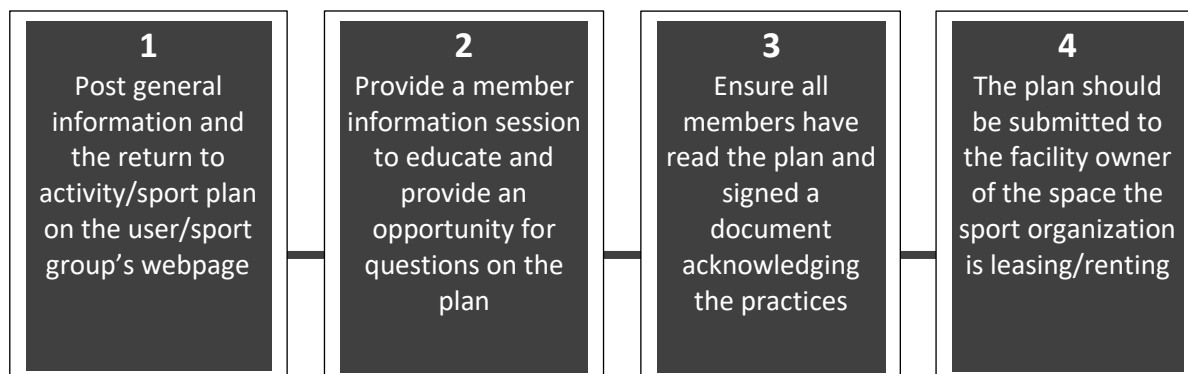
### General Best Practices

- Review operational plans to see what needs to be changed to comply with provincial and national COVID-19 regulations.
- Post signage at the entrance(s) that states that anyone with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is not permitted in the facility.
- Post signage outside all building entrances and any areas the general public can access to educate on the following facility policies and procedures:
  - Physical distancing expectations
  - Hand hygiene
  - Coughing and sneezing etiquette
  - Cleaning and disinfection practices
  - Play etiquette (no handshaking or loitering)
- Post clear signage outlining allowable activities, use and enforcement.
- Signage should be provided in multiple languages and include international images and symbols to communicate policies, practices and protocols.
- Ensure the public is aware and educated about the public health and safety measures that are in place including (but not limited to):
  - Gathering maximums
  - Limits on certain activities and gathering
  - Encouraging good hygiene
  - Staying home when sick
  - Wearing face coverings
- Ensure community organizations and facility user groups are aware of their roles and responsibilities when using facilities, programs and services.
- Have a plan in place to reinstate mitigation measures, including closures, if the patrons are not adhering to facility, program or service practices or if transmission increases.

- Signage should:
  - Be consistent throughout the community and branded as “COVID-related” information
  - Be easy to notice
  - Be easy to understand
  - Use colours that stand out from the background
  - Include languages other than English
  - Include graphics and the traditional “no” symbol of a red circle with a line through it
  - Avoid crowding too many messages into one spot
- Take down any closed signage, remove caution tape, temporary fences, etc.
- Warn users (parents, caregivers, older children, etc.) to employ good hygienic practices on their person and the equipment before and after use (sanitize face, hands, body, etc.) and equipment (as appropriate).
- Ensure signage is free of hazards and will not cause injury.
- Update the Employee Illness Policy to include symptoms of COVID-19 or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for staff to review when desired.
- Post clear signage on health policies in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices.
- Non-compliance penalties should be written, communicated and enforced.
- Continue with collection, collaboration and sharing of information as new cleaning tools and techniques come into the market.
- Communicate cleaning schedules and protocols.
- Consider awareness program for local volunteers. Community beautification is often a partnership with volunteers. Supervisory staff will need to consider including an awareness program as part of the re-opening plans.

#### User Group and Sport Groups Best Practices

- Ensure user and sport groups communicate their “return to activity/sport” plans to their membership. A sample process could include (but is not limited to):



It is imperative to communicate in a manner that positions the facility owner/operator as a source of information. Efforts should be made to relay information that is up-to-date, from a credible source, simple and clear. The lines of communication must be open between facility owners/operators, user groups and the general public. Policies and practices should be revised as new information from credible sources becomes available.

## 6.0 Physical Distancing

The following best practices can and should be applied to both indoor and outdoor settings where it is appropriate and possible to minimize the potential for transmission. While transmission is less likely to occur in outdoor settings, physical distancing must continue to take place and be respected.

### General Best Practices

- Review operational plans to see what needs to be changed to comply with Saskatchewan Health Authority regulations regarding COVID-19.

### Best Practices Specific to Community Events and Programs

- First and foremost, the physical distancing guidelines as communicated by the Government of Saskatchewan shall be the guiding regulation(s) for whether community events and programs occur, and if they do, how to conduct them within regulations.
- When thinking about reinstating events, recreation professionals will need to assess:
  - Level of transmission in the community and in areas from which people will travel.
  - Overall number of attendees.
  - Population served and number of people attending who may be high-risk.
  - Density of attendees in a confined area and the area where event would occur (e.g. outdoor vs. indoor).
  - Feasibility in limiting the number of people attending.
  - Ability to make modifications to the event that support adherence to physical distancing.
  - Availability of supplies needed to protect event attendees and staff.
  - Level of community awareness and education about the additional public health and safety measures and the ability to monitor and enforce measures.
  - Likelihood of attendees following public health and safety measures and the ability to monitor and enforce measures.

### All Areas

- Where appropriate (consider fire separation, facility air handling and weather), prop open entrances and exits to limit need for staff and customers to open/close doors.
- Leverage technology where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction (e.g. online check-ins and bookings).
- Post signage promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Mark areas on the floors where people can be that is within a safe two-meter distance from others.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Where possible, redesign floor plans to demonstrate capacity and required physical distancing.
- Where items cannot be removed to adjust for physical distancing, mark specific pieces of equipment for use.
- Where possible, provide directional signage to indicate flow through the facility/space (indoors and outdoors).
- Display signs in multiple locations (including online) that indicate the maximum number of customers and staff a facility/space can accommodate at any one time.
- Where possible and appropriate, online booking and counting apps should be utilized to allow patrons to sign in/up for access to the facility. This will also free up human resources for those that require in-person or phone bookings to have appropriate space and time to be treated equitably.
- Demarcate floor with markers in any areas where a line may occur (check-ins, restrooms, etc.).
- Restroom capacity may have to be limited to allow for proper physical distancing.

- Change rooms and lockers may have to be closed, depending on the size of the room.
- Where practical, separate equipment with physical barriers.
- Where possible, provide separate entrances and exits to facilities and components.
- Temporarily close water fountains and encourage users to bring their own water.
- Food retail should follow restaurant guidelines.
- Fitness, health and sport programs (and events) must follow the [current physical distancing requirements per the Government of Saskatchewan](#).

#### Staff Areas

- Train staff on physical distancing and how to best serve patrons with the least amount of contact.
- Separate patrons from staff with clear dividers if the distance between them is less than two meters.
- Where possible, stagger work stations so employees avoid standing directly opposite or next to one another.
- Where possible, provide multiple modes of transportation to move parks staff from one location to another.
- Use directional arrows in staff areas to control the flow of traffic.
- Inform and remind third-party patrons and delivery personnel of internal distancing policies, practices and protocols.
- Stagger shifts, breaks and meals in compliance with labour laws and regulations to maintain physical distancing. Consider reduced staffing requirements where possible.

#### Best Practices Specific to Day/Overnight Camps

The Saskatchewan Camps Association (SCA) has proposed [Re-Opening Guidelines](#) in cooperation with Christian Camping International/Canada on behalf of CCI/SK. Guidelines are provided for: safety, illness; drop-off and pick-up procedures; physical distancing; overnight accommodations; use of shared spaces; program planning; food service, meals and snacks; cleaning; bussing; and camp staff leaving site.

#### Best Practices for Aquatic Centres (including beaches and waterfronts)

Once it has been deemed safe to do so by the Saskatchewan Health Authority and other regulating bodies, specific policies, practices and regulations should be determined for each type of facility.

There are a lot of considerations in terms of physical distancing in Aquatic Centres. The Lifesaving Society has developed (and is continually updating) [many relevant documents and best practices](#).

#### Best Practices Specific to Sport Fields

- Support single and individual use activities.
- Support hygiene and public health (e.g. access to wash stations, clean restrooms, hand sanitizer, etc.).

## 7.0 Cleaning and Sanitation

The [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) stresses that “enhanced cleaning and disinfection should take place in workplaces, public spaces and recreational facilities”.

***Note: cleaning frequency is highly dependent on frequency of equipment usage. Therefore, it is important to review the equipment, its materials, frequency of use and available human resources to determine a cleaning frequency that works for each facility/space.***

PHAC has developed guidelines for [Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces During COVID-19](#) to provide best practices for the cleaning and disinfection of all public spaces.

### Approved Cleaning Products

Enhance environmental cleaning procedures and protocols with special attention to high-touch surfaces and objects. Per guidance under development from the Public Health Agency of Canada:

- Use only approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved for use in Canada.
- The CDC provides a thorough Cleaning & Disinfecting Decision Tool that can be helpful in deciding how to clean public spaces.

### Cleaning Procedures

- Review operational plans to see what needs to be changed to comply with COVID-19.
- Thoroughly clean the entire facility/space prior to opening.
- Update cleaning standards, schedules and logs to reflect increased cleansing for high-touch areas including, but not limited to: door handles, front of house counters, restrooms and staff areas.
- The following shared equipment must be cleaned and sanitized after each use, but is not limited to: credit/debit card machines, point-of-sale stations, safety equipment, headsets, outdoor rentals (e.g. paddle boats, canoes, and kayaks), etc. after every use.
- Hand sanitizer must be made available for staff and patrons.
- Have a deep cleaning response plan in place, in the event of an employee(s) testing positive for COVID-19.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment (including balls).
- Once washrooms are available for public use, they should be cleaned and disinfected on a schedule developed by related staff for each facility (e.g. cleaning, management and health staff). The areas to be cleaned with higher frequency include, but are not limited to: high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs and light switches. Clean and disinfect washrooms regularly and maintain a logbook to track frequency of cleaning. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.
- If transport vehicles (e.g. busses) are used, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g. hand hygiene, cloth face coverings) to clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g. risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms) to patrons using the facility.



- Use electrostatic sprayers to sanitize surfaces inside areas including the lobby, change rooms, halls, food preparation areas and gyms. In addition, the industry is examining the opportunity to use ultraviolet light technology for sanitizing.
- Many standard cleaning tools (e.g. mop heads, dust mops, etc.) will need additional cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning of any worker hand-held communication device such as phones or vehicle radios should also be included in an operations cleaning and disinfection plan.
- Cleaning work vehicles with a disinfecting product on high contact surfaces (such as door handles, steering wheels, seatbelt clips (non-material portion), etc.) should take place at the beginning and end of each shift, and if operators rotate vehicles throughout the day. This program should also be applied to field equipment.
- Consider installing plexi-glass between the driver and passenger(s).

#### Best Practices for Indoor and Outdoor Aquatic Centres (including spray pads)

There are a lot of considerations to make in terms of cleaning and sanitation of Aquatic Centres. [The Lifesaving Society has developed \(and is continually updating\) many relevant documents and best practices](#). More specifically, the Lifesaving Society has developed an [Information Bulletin – Cleaning, Decontamination & Water Management of Aquatic Facilities](#).

#### Best Practices for Playgrounds, Outdoor Exercise Equipment, and Site Furnishings

Cleaning and disinfecting playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment and site furnishings has been implemented in a number of communities in Canada and could be implemented as a best practice moving forward. *Recreation New Brunswick* (Recreation NB) and *Park N Play Design* have provided guidelines on the proper cleaning/disinfecting of [Playground Equipment Following the COVID-19 Crisis](#).

The practices contained in the *Recreation NB* and *Park N Play Design* document could be implemented on outdoor exercise equipment and site furnishings as well as playgrounds.

Cleaning frequency is highly dependent on usage. Therefore, it is important to review the equipment, its materials, frequency of use and available human resources to determine a cleaning frequency that works for each facility/space.

While there are no regulations on cleaning playground equipment, the following best practices provide the best guidance to do it safely:

- Start by cleaning with your regular cleaner (detergent or soap and water) to remove the germs and impurities.
- Then sanitize:
  - Most common household disinfectants, like Clorox, will be effective.
  - Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, will be effective.
  - A diluted-bleach solution can be used with caution. Be sure the surface is appropriate for bleach and that you are mixing it appropriately (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water).
- Pay extra attention to moving parts such as swings, links and fastening devices, bearing hangers, track rides and zip lines that may require lubrication and/or other steps prior to use.
- Install signage that provides information outlined in Section 3.0 (Communication) of this document.
- Read the playground manufacturer's instruction manual first. This will likely be the best source of information on how to clean structures, including which cleaning methods to use or avoid.
- Cleaning and sanitizing should be determined based on frequency of use
- Focus sanitizing efforts on frequently used surfaces such as climbing rungs, swing seats and chains, handrails, hand supports, etc.



- Start by using a power washer on metals and plastics (be sure to start on the lowest, least powerful setting to avoid damage to the equipment). PVC coated platforms can be power washed as long as any cracks in the coating are noted to avoid lifting, peeling or spreading of these areas which can lead to a larger maintenance problem (or replacement) in the future.
- Use a brush with warm soapy water on wood or anything sticky.
- High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, should be cleaned routinely.
- Cleaning and disinfection of groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.
- For more playground cleaning steps, refer to the article [Canada Ready to Open Its Playspaces?](#) by the Canadian Playground Safety Institute.

#### Best Practices Specific to Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

- Before opening synthetic turf fields, assessments will need to be performed to determine if a more rigorous cleaning approach will be required as a result of use during times when the fields were indicated as closed.
- The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA) has created considerations for the re-opening of arenas and artificial ice facilities. Click to access the [Recreation Facility COVID-19 Reentering and Reopening Guiding Principles and Best Practices Document](#) (the section pertaining to Safely Reopening Artificial Ice Sheets Post COVID-19 is on page 23).

## 8.0 Employee and Volunteer Safety

First and foremost, all parks and recreation facility practices must adhere to the policies contained within [The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996](#) as well as provincial and national guidelines on re-opening after COVID-19.

### General

- Review operational plans to see what needs to be changed to comply with COVID-19.

### Customers

- Consider policies, practices and procedures where customers can be refused entry if displaying signs of COVID-19.
- Consider screening practices for customers before they access the facility.

### Staff

- Public health orders and occupational health and safety regulations will guide conduct with staff.
- Train staff in policies, practices and procedures for working in outdoor spaces and being approached by members of the public.
- Train staff in policies, practices and procedures where customers can be refused entry if displaying signs of COVID-19.
- Appoint a health and safety point person for every shift to ensure protocols are adhered to and education is provided.
- Have a supervisor do roll call and sign-in for staff, provide separate pens or have staff text the supervisor when they start their shift.
- Clean any sign-in devices between users.
- Stagger start time and/or minimize contact during sign-in.
- Implement a pre-work screening “health check” for employees at the beginning of each shift which may include temperature checks.
- Do not allow staff on-site if they are sick or might be sick; they should return in an appropriate state of health or stay home.
- Establish a clear policy for what is expected of workers if they get sick, have symptoms or if an exposure is reported at the facility.
- Provide separate lockers or sealed bins/bags for employees to store their personal items. Do not allow staff to leave any items overnight.
- Limit the number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms to allow for physical distancing.
- With larger staff numbers, use communication boards or digital messaging to convey pre-shift meeting information.
- Follow the [Public Health Agency of Canada’s steps for self-assessment](#).
- Where handwashing after each transaction is not possible, establish clear procedures to have separate staff handle cash transactions than those serving patrons.
- Where possible, ensure washrooms remain open if a park is open to the public. The washrooms should be regularly stocked with supplies for handwashing including soap, materials for proper hand drying and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (where washrooms are supervised).
- Restrooms that have been closed should be prioritized in the re-opening plan, as they support and promote healthy hygiene and public health.
- Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems must be in working order to reduce humidity levels that have been linked to the growth and spread of COVID-19.

- An inspection of all buildings and systems must be conducted prior to re-opening.
- Hand tools have most often been considered multi-worker tools. Facility managers and owners will need to consider if workers should have dedicated hand tools that are marked or if a cleaning and disinfection program would work best.

#### Participants, Coaches, Instructors, Staff, Volunteers, Officials and Aides

The following has been taken from the Government of Alberta's [Return to Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation - Stage 2](#) document:

- Participants should proactively and regularly monitor for symptoms. Symptomatic individuals are prohibited from participating.
- Hand hygiene should occur before and after each activity.
- Hands should be cleaned before and after using sporting gloves.
- Gloves should be cleaned after each use.
- To the extent possible, participants should refrain from touching their eyes, nose, mouth and face during activity.
- Practice respiratory etiquette. Participants should refrain from spitting and clearing their nasal passages during activities.
- Limit group celebrations and other customs during activities (e.g. handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, chest bumps) that bring participants within two meters or promote contact.
- Water bottles should be labelled with the name of the owner. Do not share water bottles.
- To the extent possible, arrive dressed and ready to participate. There will be limited access to locker rooms to prevent gathering.
- After activities, individuals should minimize time spent in dressing/locker/change rooms and maintain physical distance in lobbies and common spaces.
- Transportation to and from activities should be arranged so that only cohort members, or members from the same household, share rides.

#### Personal Protective Equipment

- Beyond the traditional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used by a grounds worker, indoor and outdoor facility staff will need to consider if face masks and hand protective equipment will be required.
- Use of PPE should be aligned with guidance from public health authorities.
- For staff that cannot always physical distance at least two-metres from others, encourage the use of non-medical masks or face coverings if suggested by public health authorities.
- Gloves should be used when changing waste/recycling receptacles.

## 9.0 Conclusion

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) does not consider itself an authority on health and safety issues, it is the responsibility of all providers of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services to determine how to meet or exceed the guidelines provided by the Provincial Government and the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

This situation is unprecedented; thus, it is incredibly important that recreation professionals ask questions of themselves, colleagues, similar municipalities and public health authorities to gain additional information on best (and current) practices. It is also important that practice be scaled appropriately to fit the community.

This document provided practices on COVID-related risk assessment, communication, physical distancing, cleaning and sanitation, and employee and volunteer safety. The information contained within was up-to-date at the time of development. COVID-19 information and best practices are in a continual state of evolution as we become more educated on the virus and its implications on our population. Therefore, a continual review of information from credible sources is critical to ensure practices are up-to-date and we are striving for a healthier population.

Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.

*The COVID-19 pandemic will not be over until there is a vaccine and it has been widely distributed with the overwhelming majority of the population immunized. Public Health Orders and restrictions will remain in place for a long time. These restrictions will be lessened over time, with the distinct possibility that they may be reinstated if there is a second wave of COVID-19. The circumstances of re-entry and re-opening planning are the “new normal for now” not the “new normal”; that will come after we eradicate COVID-19.*

Source: Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) –  
Post-COVID-19 Facility Re-Entry Guide.  
May 2020.

## 10.0 Acknowledgements

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## 11.0 Resources

The following list of resources were used in the development of this document.

- Aspen Institute. [Return to Play: COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- BC Recreation and Parks Association. [The Recreation & Parks Sector Guideline for Restarting Operations – COVID-19: Recovery Through Recreation & Parks](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Belair, S. [Canada Ready to Open its Playspaces?](#) Canadian Playground Safety Institute. May 2020.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Government of Alberta. [Return to Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation – Stage 2](#). Accessed: June 2020.
- Government of Alberta. [COVID-19 Information: General Relaunch Guidance](#). Accessed: June 2020.
- Government of Canada. [Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) in Canada](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Government of Canada. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces during COVID-19](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – Center for Health Security. [Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Lifesaving Society. [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts – Lifesaving Society guidelines for reopening aquatic facilities after COVID-19 closure](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Lifesaving Society. [COVID-19: First Aid Programming Guidelines](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- Municipal World. [Steps to Good Council Communication during COVID-19](#). Accessed: May 2020.
- National Parks and Recreation Association. [Specific Guidance for Common Park and Recreation Spaces, Facilities and Programs](#). Accessed: May, 2020.
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) – [Centre for Applied Disaster and Emergency Management. Post-COVID-19 Facility Re-entry Guide](#). Version 1.6 – updated May 5, 2020.
- Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA). [Recreation Facility COVID-19 Reentering and Reopening: Guiding Principles and Best Practices](#). Accessed: May 2020. Version 1.0.
- Province of Saskatchewan. [The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#). RRS c 0-1 Reg 1. Accessed: May 2020.
- Recreation New Brunswick (Recreation NB) and Park N Play Design. [Proper Cleaning / Disinfecting of Playground Equipment Following the COVID-19 Crisis](#). Accessed: June 2020.
- Restaurants Canada. [COVID-19 Reopening Best Practices](#). April 29, 2020.
- Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA). [Re-Opening Saskatchewan's Recreation Facilities: Starting the Conversation](#). May 26, 2020.
- Saunders, R, Weiler, B, Scherrer, P & Zeppel, H in 2019, '[Best practice principles for communicating safety messages in national parks](#)', Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, vol. 25, pp. 132-142. Accessed: May 2020.
- Tennessee Pledge. [Exercise Facility Guidelines](#). Accessed: May 2020.

The following list of resources are additional documents that may assist your organization/community in the re-opening of your parks and recreation facilities, programs and services.

- Lear. [Safe Work Playbook: An Interactive guide for COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness and Response](#). 2nd Edition.
- Lear. [Supplement 1 – Operational Pillar Content. Contains Only New Content Covering Playbook Execution](#).

## 13.0 Appendices List

**Appendix A** – Screening Checklist

**Appendix B** – Service Readiness Checklist

## Appendix A – Screening Checklist

If an individual answers **YES** to any of the questions, they **must not** be allowed to participate in the sport or activity. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them to complete this screening tool.

1.	Does the person attending the activity have any of the following symptoms:	<b>CIRCLE ONE</b>	
	• Fever	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Cough	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Shortness of breath / Difficulty breathing	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Sore throat	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Chills	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Painful swallowing	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Runny nose / Nasal congestion	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Muscle / Joint aches	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Headache	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	• Conjunctivitis	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
3.	Have you or your children attending the program had close, unprotected contact (face-to-face contact within two-metres) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
4.	Have you or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected</u> contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

If you have answered “**YES**” to any of the above questions **do not** participate. Proceed home and use the Government of Saskatchewan’s [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if testing is recommended.



## Appendix B – Service Readiness Checklist

When assessing their risk, local governments will evaluate their various service offerings to determine their level of readiness to re-establish services. The following five areas of consideration offer a checklist of considerations:

### 1. Physical Distancing and Limiting Gatherings

- ☐ Does the space/facility/program allow for physical distancing of the public and employees?
- ☐ Does the space/facility/program allow for controlling maximum gathering requirements?
- ☐ Have you calculated the new capacities for each programmable facility component?
- ☐ Have policies or procedures been developed for the monitoring and educating patrons about physical distancing and gathering requirements?
- ☐ Have employees been trained on proper procedures for monitoring physical distancing?
- ☐ Do you have a communications plan for sharing information on physical distancing, gathering requirements and monitoring procedures?
- ☐ Has signage been posted reminding community members to physically distance, stay home when sick, avoid lingering, and limit gatherings?
- ☐ Do you have a contingency plan in the event that mitigation and gating measures need to be reinforced due to a resurgence in COVID-19 case counts?
- ☐ Have you adjusted our emergency evacuation protocols and mustering arrangements to consider physical distancing (recognizing that physical safety in an emergency is the primary concern)?

### 2. Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

- ☐ Can the space/facility/program materials be properly cleaned/disinfected regularly? [The Government of Saskatchewan offers guidance.](#)
- ☐ Have maintenance plans/checklists outlining cleaning protocols and frequency been created to prepare employees for implementation?
- ☐ Have you established service levels to maintain the cleaning protocols and frequency your facility has planned?
- ☐ Have you secured cleaning/disinfection supplies and non-medical PPE for employees?
- ☐ Do you have a plan in place for securing additional cleaning/disinfection supplies within the supply chain?
- ☐ Have you trained employees on proper cleaning/disinfection?
- ☐ Do you need to provide hand sanitizer to users?

- ☐ Have you posted information for patrons on your cleaning and disinfection practices (e.g. how often spaces are cleaned?)
- ☐ Have you considered requiring patrons to clean equipment after use? If so, have you provided the required cleaning supplies?

### **3. Staff Capacity**

- ☐ Do you have a staffing plan in place to reopen spaces/facilities/programs?
  - ☐ Does your staffing plan include re-orientation of employees who have been off the job for an extended period of time and overall training of all employees to review all COVID related policies, expectations and opportunities for feedback?
- ☐ Do you need to repurpose employees (e.g. full time to staff seasonal operations; admin shifting to maintenance/sanitization roles, etc.)?
- ☐ Is there a plan in place for protecting vulnerable/high-risk employees?
  - ☐ Does the plan include training, supervision and support for any workers expected to monitor compliance with public and/or may encounter disgruntled patrons? Employers should review working along and harassment policies and procedures.
- ☐ Is there a contingency plan in place in the event of losses in staff capacity?

### **4. Measures to Protect Employees and the Public**

- ☐ Do you have a clearly stated policy that every employee adheres to regarding the absolute need to stay home if sick or experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#)?
- ☐ Have you identified for your employees when and what PPE is needed?
- ☐ Have you secured a supply chain for the necessary PPE?
- ☐ Have you trained employees on the proper use and disposal of PPE?
- ☐ Is there a clear understanding in place regarding hand washing/sanitizing frequency of employees?
- ☐ Do you have updated emergency contact information for employees?
- ☐ Have you updated your first aid protocols, supplies, and dedicated rooms?
- ☐ Are there any processes required for start-up that might introduce risks? Consider the impact of restarting machinery, tools and equipment, or clearing systems and lines of product that may have been left when your business was closed.

## 5. Site-Based Questions

Based on the specifics of your spaces, facilities and programs, have you created a plan for additional employees and user protective measures that may be required? This may include:

- ☐ Do you need/have updated emergency contact information for patrons?
- ☐ Do you have a plan to offer [health screenings](#) for employees? For patrons?
- ☐ Are you able to limit the number of patrons or stagger entry times?
- ☐ Can signage be installed reminding the public to physically distance, limit gatherings, stay home when sick, wear face coverings if necessary, and practice proper personal hygiene per CDC guidance?
- ☐ Will adjustments to equipment or office space be needed to meet physical distancing and/or reduce common touch points?
- ☐ Have you developed a drop-off system for childcare programs?
- ☐ Is there an isolation room on-site in the event someone falls ill during a program?
- ☐ If you are providing food, what policies are in place for food deliveries and distribution?
- ☐ Do you need additional organization vehicles?
- ☐ Will you need to install physical barriers to keep frontline employees safe?
- ☐ Do you have a plan should a case or outbreak occur on your site?

[BCRPA Restarting Guidelines Appendix 1](#) was used to assist with creating this checklist



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