

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

### Overview

This Addendum to the [COVID-19 INFORMATION: Guidance for seniors' centres and seniors-serving organizations](#) includes considerations for reopening, and common topics to help you prepare.

[Alberta's Relaunch Strategy](#) is a three-stage plan that puts safety first, while gradually reopening businesses and activities to the public, and getting people back to work. All Albertans have a responsibility to [help prevent the spread](#). We all need to be careful, not only for ourselves, but for people around us that are vulnerable. Take steps to protect yourself and others.

Not all the information provided may be relevant to all seniors-serving organizations. You may need to work with provincial or national organizations in your sector to define best practices. The [Alberta Biz Connect](#) web page provides business owners with information on health and safety guidelines for general workplaces, and sector-specific guidelines.

### Considerations for reopening:

1. [Stage of the relaunch](#)
2. [Steps to take](#)
3. [Know the risks](#)
4. [Sample protocols for offering a service](#)

### Common topics to consider when reopening:

5. [Supporting volunteers](#)
6. [Home supports guidance](#)
7. [Resuming personal care services](#)
8. [Health and wellness programs and supports considerations](#)
9. [Delivering services in a congregate living setting](#)
10. [Resuming recreational activities](#)
11. [Adapting food services](#)
12. [Library and resource sharing considerations](#)
13. [Shared multi-use facilities](#)
14. [Face shields versus face masks](#)
15. [Intergenerational activities](#)

To learn how other seniors-serving organizations are relaunching, view [CORE Alberta's](#) June 19, 2020 Relaunch Discussion Forum [video](#) and transcript: *A CBSS Sector Discussion on Relaunching Health and Safety Considerations*.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change, and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found at [Alberta.ca/covid19](#).

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

**Considerations for reopening:**

<p><b>1. Relaunch stage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check out <a href="https://alberta.ca/covid19">Alberta.ca/covid19</a> for the “Current Situation”, the relaunch status map, and other important links.</li> <li>• Because each seniors’ centre and seniors-serving organization operates independently, you will each need to determine when your supports and services are permitted to reopen based on the kinds of services provided; and to ensure all guidance has been met. Some services might need to reopen at different times. If you have questions about how relaunch may apply to your business, please review information on the <a href="https://alberta.ca/bizconnect">Alberta Biz Connect</a> website.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Steps to take</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the <a href="#">General Relaunch Guidance</a>, common questions on <a href="#">Alberta Biz Connect</a>, <a href="#">Guidance for seniors’ centres and seniors-serving organizations</a>, and relevant <a href="#">sector-specific</a> guidance documents to comply with public health measures and workplace guidance, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 among all attendees (including clients, volunteers, congregants, general public, and staff). Here is a summary of the five steps to take when reopening (from the <i>Relaunch Considerations Plan</i> <a href="#">template</a>):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Distancing Measures</b> – Ensure people maintain two metres between each other and consider how to mitigate the risk of transmission when two-metre distancing cannot be maintained, for example through masks, gloves, and/or physical barriers.</li> <li>○ <b>Cleaning</b> – Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in your location, and have sanitizing solution available for all attendees.</li> <li>○ <b>Screening for Symptoms</b> – Plan to be aware of, and respond to, symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose or difficulty breathing for all attendees.</li> <li>○ <b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b> – Obtain and promote appropriate PPE use (e.g., masks and gloves) and install physical barriers when people are unable to be two metres apart.</li> <li>○ <b>Responsibilities</b> – Consider who will be responsible for ensuring all attendees are following your precautions. Have you updated contact information for staff and volunteers, so that they can be notified in the event of a known exposure?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Know the risks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 is a serious health threat, particularly for older adults, people with underlying health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems.</li> <li>• Choosing to relaunch and/or participate in programs and services, is about considering the attendee’s level of comfort with the risk of being exposed and the risk that the exposure would result in a severe outcome. Attendees include clients, volunteers, congregants, general public, and staff. Any risk attendees take may be shared with those close to them, including those who may be at</li> </ul>

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

	<p>higher risk of an adverse outcome. Each individual needs to decide on how to balance the risks and benefits, in discussion with their family and friends.</p> <p>Here are some factors to help consider the risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Likelihood of contracting COVID-19</b> – Increasing your rings of defence (such as hand washing, physical distancing, and masks and gloves) help mitigate the risk of getting sick. The safest activities to offer are those without common touched surfaces, which allow people to distance, and have good ventilation, such as being outdoors. The more intense the exercise, the higher the risk of spreading the virus.</li> <li>○ <b>Potential consequences to attendees (including clients, volunteers, congregants, general public, and staff), their families and cohort groups</b> – Consider both the risk of contracting and spreading the virus, as well as the benefit of your programs and services to your clients' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Older adults, people with underlying health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are at a higher risk of severe disease and/or adverse outcomes.</li> <li>○ <b>Relaunch status in your area</b> – Consult the <a href="#">COVID-19 relaunch status map</a> to see the level of risk in regions and information about local health measures. It also shows the rate of COVID-19 cases and the number of active cases.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no age-specific public health measures on relaunching services. During Stage 2, at-risk Albertans outside of a congregate living facility - including seniors - can resume normal activities and interactions, with caution. Encourage these individuals to wear a mask where unable to physically distance. Additionally, be aware of the bylaws on mandatory masking.</li> <li>• There are no provincial public health measures specific to relaunching services in independent living facilities, although operators of these facilities may have more conditions.</li> <li>• Congregate living settings (such as long-term care facilities and licensed supportive living facilities, including seniors' lodges and group homes) have associated public health measures because their residents are at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19 and experiencing adverse outcomes. Within these congregate living settings, the measures intended to protect seniors, such as continued limits to visitors and strict health protocols for staff, are expected to remain in place through all stages of relaunch. Any changes would be guided by the advice of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Sample protocols for offering a service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each seniors' centre and seniors-serving organization needs to develop and individualize a standard protocol for working with clients. Here is an example of what a protocol for client outreach work could look like:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assess the needs of the individual over the telephone, and assist as much as possible by telephone or video.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If an in-person meeting is needed, call the client to let them know you are taking every precaution possible to avoid exposure, but that a home visit involves some risks to both of you; pre-screen the client for symptoms and risk of exposure using the screening tool <a href="#">COVID-19 Alberta Health daily checklist</a>.</li> <li>○ On the day of the home visit, assess your and the client's health situation for symptoms of COVID-19 using the screening tool <a href="#">COVID-19 Alberta Health daily checklist</a>. If either of you have symptoms, cancel the meeting and follow Alberta Health's medical advice by calling 811 or go <a href="#">online</a> to arrange for testing, and self-isolate for 10 days or until the symptoms are resolved, whichever is longer..</li> <li>○ If the home visit is able to continue, staff will perform hand hygiene and wear masks when meeting clients and will maintain a distance of two metres apart. It is best if the client also wears a mask, if they can safely do so.</li> <li>○ If the client needs to sign a document, staff will ask the client to use their own pen, if possible, or the staff will ensure the senior uses hand sanitizer prior to using the staff member's pen.</li> <li>○ When the meeting is done, staff will remove the mask and dispose of it into a garbage bag at the client's door/room, while maintaining appropriate physical distance from the client. Staff will then perform hand hygiene.</li> <li>○ Staff will sanitize their pens, telephone, and any additional equipment used during the meeting.</li> </ul>
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**Common topics to consider when reopening:**

<p><b>5. Supporting volunteers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many volunteers are seniors and may be at higher risk for COVID-19. Volunteers and employees who support volunteer organizations, must follow all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, for their own protection and the protection of those they help. Check out the <a href="#">General Relaunch Guidance</a> and <a href="#">Information for Non-health Care Volunteers</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Home support guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Home supports involve a range of activities, usually within a client's home or property. Before entering a client's home, staff should perform hand hygiene, screen themselves and the client for symptoms, and wear appropriate personal protective equipment, such as nonmedical face masks, if necessary. Other tips for reopening home supports are found in the Addendum: <a href="#">sample client outreach work protocol</a>. Guidance for home care providers are listed below:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Home services, such as home visits, home cleaning, prescription delivery – see Alberta Health Services' <a href="#">FAQ for Home Care Clients</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

	<p>and <a href="#">Information for Home Care Staff</a>. In addition to gloves and a mask, consider using an apron or protective gown if there may be splashes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal care services – see Addendum: <a href="#">Personal Care Services</a>.</li> <li>○ Alternate transportation, including handicap and ride-sharing services, for medical appointments and other activities of daily living – see <a href="#">Taxis, limos, rideshares and commuting</a>; and <a href="#">Chartered tour buses, multi-city buses and passenger trains</a>. For mass transit, people are encouraged to use masks at all times. Try to keep some distance from the driver, such as having seniors in the back seat. Additionally, be aware of the bylaws on mandatory masking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Personal care services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personal care services include a range of activities, such as nail care, haircuts and wellness services that are offered outside or inside (see Addendum: <a href="#">Home Supports</a>) of the client's home (see <a href="#">Personal services</a> and the <a href="#">personal services regulation and standards</a>). Operators are encouraged to call their local public health inspector with questions about compliance with the regulation and standards.</li> <li>● Other useful resources and information within this document include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Addendum: <a href="#">Home Supports</a>; and</li> <li>○ Addendum: <a href="#">Health and Wellness Programs</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Health and wellness programs and supports considerations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some programs and supports include essential services, such as health assessments, annual check-ups, mental health and emotional well-being, urgent care, foot care, and dental services. Other supports may include non-essential services, like massage therapy and teeth cleaning. Relevant guidance documents to consider include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wellness services such as acupuncture, acupressure, massage therapy, floatation / sensory deprivation, reflexology, reiki, energy healing - see <a href="#">Wellness services</a>;</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Non-medical Masks for Non-Health Care Settings</a>;</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Information for Alberta Health Services Staff and Health Professionals</a>; and</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Public Health Orders</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Delivering services in a congregate living setting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public health orders are in place to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, among seniors and vulnerable groups at congregate living settings, such as long-term care facilities and licensed supportive living facilities, including seniors' lodges and group homes, and licensed residential addiction treatment centres (under the <i>Mental Health Services Protection Act</i>). More information is available here:</li> </ul>

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS' CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Protecting residents at congregate care facilities</a>; and</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Disability service providers</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Resuming recreational activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During Stage 2, organizations can offer more indoor and outdoor programs and supports, as long as you follow all public health orders, including <a href="#">limiting gathering sizes</a>, practicing <a href="#">physical distancing</a> of two metres, and avoiding high-risk or prohibited activities.</li> <li>• The safest activities to offer are those without common touched surfaces, which allow people to distance and have good ventilation, such as being outdoors. The more intense the exercise, the higher the risk of spreading the virus.</li> <li>• It is recommended that no equipment be shared, such as in card games, unless the participants are able to be two metres apart or all wear face masks, not touch their faces, and can sanitize their hands and/or equipment between players. At this time, seniors and those with underlying health conditions are <u>not</u> able to be part of a <a href="#">cohort group</a>.</li> <li>• Indoor programs include exercise programs, such as pickle ball, yoga, fitness classes, weight training, swimming, gyms, and activities such as cards, games, and bingo.</li> <li>• Some guidance documents to consider are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Sport, physical activity and recreation-Stage 2</a>;</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Swimming pools and whirlpools</a>;</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Indoor recreation, entertainment and play centres</a>; and</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Bingo halls</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Outdoor programs, such as pole walking, lawn bowling, and horseshoes may allow for better physical distancing, fresh air, and larger gatherings. Guidance documents to consider include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Outdoor fitness</a>;</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Sports, physical activity and recreation-Stage 2</a>; and</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Outdoor events</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>11. Adapting food services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizations that offer, prepare, or deliver snacks and meals during programs to patrons or to homes, should consider the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Programs or events that used to offer snacks or meals: It is recommended that no food or drink be shared at these events. Not sharing food or drink at events is a way to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. If food is necessary in a social gathering for cultural or other reasons, it is recommended utensils and pitchers of drinks <u>not</u> be shared, and that the food be served directly to attendees. Consider handing out individually wrapped cutlery to attendees.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# COMMON TOPICS FOR SENIORS’ CENTRES AND SENIORS-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage attendees to eat in dining areas only, to minimize the chance that attendees touch their faces or mouths after coming into contact with shared surfaces or equipment – see <a href="#">Indoor recreation, entertainment and play centres</a>.</li> <li>○ Delivered (fresh and/or frozen) meals or take-out meals - see <a href="#">Food processing facilities</a> and <a href="#">Food catering</a>.</li> <li>○ Dine-in and beverage services – see <a href="#">Restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars</a> and <a href="#">Food catering</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12. Library and resource-sharing considerations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organizations may offer resource information through libraries, guides, and brochures – see <a href="#">Libraries</a>.</li> <li>● Other ways of sharing information include outreach to lifelong learning and social supports, such as wellness program classes – see <a href="#">Indoor recreation entertainment, entertainment and play centres</a> and <a href="#">Post-secondary institutions</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13. Shared multi-use facilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seniors-serving organizations that share a multi-use facility, may need to phase-in their activities and consider the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shared common areas within the building – see <a href="#">Office buildings</a>;</li> <li>○ Cultural programs, entertainment or performances – see <a href="#">Instrumental Music</a> and <a href="#">Singing and vocal performances</a>.</li> <li>○ Room rentals such as for weddings – see <a href="#">Indoor Events</a> and <a href="#">Food catering</a>;</li> <li>○ Host services and faith-based activities - <a href="#">Places of worship</a>; and</li> <li>○ Retail, shops and stores - <a href="#">Malls and shopping centres</a> and <a href="#">Retail</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>14. Face shields versus face masks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Face masks may present issues for a client with a hearing issue, as it muffles sound and makes lip-reading impossible. Face masks may also be a challenge for clients with cognitive issues.</li> <li>● A face mask is still recommended, rather than a clear face shield, as the face mask covers your mouth and nose, whereas a face shield protects only your eyes and does not cover your mouth.</li> <li>● As an alternative to face masks, consider physical distancing of two metres without a mask, so that the mouth is not covered.</li> <li>● Additionally, be aware of the bylaws on mandatory masking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>15. Intergenerational activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some centres offer intergenerational activities, like storytelling or music programs with young children.</li> <li>● Intergenerational activities should be done cautiously, with small groups, and involve those able to understand how to maintain masks, distancing, or other circles of defence.</li> </ul>