Protocols, Liabilities, and Procedures for Re-opening Municipal Offices

As part of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy, the Government of Alberta has developed **a guide** to help workplaces manage reopening, while continuing to maintain proper protocols.

Because this is not a municipal or non-profit-specific guide, RMA Insurance has expanded the scope and added recommendations below. If there are any instances where the Government of Alberta's guide and RMA's guide seem at odds, please defer to the AHS document as the primary guide to follow.

Included in the linked guide are guidelines and protocols specific to seniors and healthcare facilities. Additional directions have been provided for operators and service providers of long-term care, supportive living and residential addiction treatment facilities.

Operations

To mitigate risk, initial reopening should be on a voluntary basis for staff whenever possible. Start by canvasing your group to identify those who would like to be part of the first wave of returnees. Special concessions, such as extending work-from-home provisions, may be necessary for employees who are in high-risk groups or have family members in high-risk groups. Some employers may be able to stagger or alternate their staff to promote a continued level of social distancing. It is important to consider a legal review of any reclassifying of roles due to COVID-19 concerns.

Some precautions for employers to consider are:

- maintaining social distancing
- use of PPE where appropriate, for areas of public and internal interface
- scheduling appointments for meetings (no drop-ins)
- ensuring employees who feel ill stay home
- having someone at the main door controlling access by the public in and out of the building
- hand sanitizer available in multiple locations
- markers on the floor indicating the distance apart people should stand
- shields to separate municipal members from the public, or designated offices that have shields in place that can be booked by staff for meeting with the public
- sanitizing all chairs, doors, and surfaces after visits
- use of credit or debit card tap readers for payment transactions
- avoiding cash, cheques, or paper transactions
- completing hazard assessments for all duties

- increasing signage around workplaces regarding hand hygiene and covering coughs and sneezes
- considering continuing with group meetings via teleconference

Childcare

Consideration should be provided to the fact that while schools and daycares are closed, those who have children may not have safe, alternative options for childcare. With the opening of a variety of businesses on May 14, childcare will continue to be an issue as there will be additional demand for the currently limited services. Additionally, there may be staff who don't have access to family members or friends who can act as sitters due to social distancing or other factors.

Additional provisions should be made by employers to support the difficult situation those with young children may be facing. One of the recent labour changes may reflect that one cannot terminate an employee over work vs. childcare conflicts. Employers may need to consider extending work-from-home provisions for employees with children until September.

Recreation Facilities

As restrictions for parks, campgrounds, and other recreation facilities begin to relax, it is expected that additional resources and guidelines will be released by the Government of Alberta. Please check the **workplace guidance website** regularly for updates.

There have also been several questions regarding guidelines for golf courses. The Government of Alberta has developed **a factsheet for golf course operators**.

As members begin to consider plans for reopening, RMA Insurance risk management staff are available to offer advice and assistance.

For any questions or more information please contact:

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