

May 14, 2020

AMO COVID-19 Update: Continued Fiscal Stabilization Request + Re-opening Start

Municipal Fiscal Stabilization Requests:

Today, AMO wrote to the Prime Minister and Premier of Ontario to reinforce the call for immediate [fiscal stabilization](#) for municipalities and our support for [FCM](#) in its fiscal stabilization and economic recovery plan. This request built on our [May 8th letter](#) to Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford.

In April, [AMO called](#) for immediate fiscal stabilization of municipal governments through provincial funding as well as long-term federal, provincial and municipal partnership investments in local services that can increase economic efficiency and prosperity. This includes housing and childcare, environmental infrastructure, transit, and wireless and internet connectivity.

Ontario Announces Stage 1 of COVID Re-Opening:

As widely expected, Premier Doug Ford announced today that Ontario would begin [Stage 1](#) of its re-opening plan to gradually reduce the lockdown restrictions in response to COVID-19. **Stage 1 will begin on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.** The news comes as Ontario prepares to increase virus testing as well as several days of declining new cases in the province, with 258 new cases as of May 14, 2020, an increase of 1.2 % over the previous day.

Stage 1:

Earlier in the week, the Premier hinted at a significant announcement on Thursday regarding re-opening Ontario's economic and social activity. According to the province's [framework](#), Stage 1 can begin when several criteria are in place, including a sustained decline in new COVID-19 cases over a 2-4 week period, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and acute and critical care capacity (ventilator access) to respond to a potential surge in new cases.

When those criteria are met, workplaces eligible to re-open must be able to put in place practices that can limit transmission of the disease such as on-going physical

distancing, cleaning and disinfection protocols, and limited customer access amongst others. AMO understands that the specific activities the province is taking to ease the lock down [include](#):

- removing restrictions on construction
- limited retail (no shopping malls and separate, street-front entrances)
- vehicle dealerships
- some media operations
- veterinary services, stables and pet grooming
- cleaning and maintenance services

Certain in-person medical services such as counselling are also able to resume as are surgeries.

Marinas and golf courses were notified they could begin to prepare for the current season previously and may now begin to operate as of **Saturday, May 16, 2020**. The Premier also announced private parks and campgrounds can begin preparations for the upcoming season.

Stage 1 and Municipal Governments:

For municipal governments, Stage 1 means the ability to allow a return of residents to boat launches, off-leash parks and picnic areas, multi-use sport fields for non-team sports and allowing limited non-spectator sporting events such as water sports on lakes and outdoor bodies of water, track and field and tennis. Libraries offering pick-up and delivery may resume operations. Transit services will also need to accommodate safely an increase in riders due to a return to work for public and private sector workers.

Municipal governments may have changed staffing arrangements in response to the emergency. Some municipal staff have been re-deployed or laid off and seasonal hiring may have been cancelled or delayed. This could affect the quick resumption of municipal services in Stage 1. In addition, municipal cost pressures associated with reduced revenues or deferred fees and taxes during the lockdown period may mean that some municipalities will need to reduce staffing or services until revenues stabilize and recover.

Additional Re-Opening Stages- should start to plan:

The provincial re-opening guidelines has three Stages with each stage triggered every 2-4 weeks. With the declaration of Stage 1 beginning next Tuesday, AMO encourages municipal governments to review the guidelines and begin planning for the next stages of re-opening in Ontario's plan.

Access to Personal Protective Equipment:

Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Honourable Vic Fedeli today announced a new Ontario [portal](#) to connect businesses to PPE suppliers. AMO's LAS corporation also has [group buying](#) arrangements for PPE that can help municipal governments access needed supplies.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.