

October 2, 2020

AMO Policy Update – COVID-19 Public Health Measures, Municipal Relief Phase 2 Funding, and an Inspector General of Policing

Additional COVID Public Health Measures

Given the rising number of new COVID cases, the Province has added [new public health measures](#) for both across the province as well as some targeted regional measures to prevent the increasing spread and to avoid future lockdowns as we experienced in the spring.

These new restrictions are outlined through the amended order [O. Reg 364/20](#) (Rules for Areas in Stage 3 under the *Reopening Ontario [A Flexible Response to COVID-19] Act, 2020*).

They include mandated use of face coverings in **all** public indoor settings across the province with limited exemptions as of Saturday, October 3rd at 12:01 am. AMO and municipal leaders have been asking for such a provincial order to improve public clarity on requirements which unfortunately has not been possible with the current patchwork of local mandatory mask bylaws and s.22 orders.

Targeted measures will also be implemented in Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto as a result of their higher than average rates of transmission. These include:

- setting an indoor capacity limit to restrict occupancy at restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments (including nightclubs), and other requirements;
- restricting group exercise classes at gyms and other fitness settings to 10 individuals, as well as restricting the total number of people allowed at these facilities to a maximum of 50; and
- setting a limit on the number of people allowed at meeting and event facilities, including banquet halls, to six people per table and 50 people per facility.

In addition, the government is:

- extending the pause on any further reopening of businesses, facilities, and

organizations for an additional 28 days, unless already permitted to open under [O. Reg 364/20](#);

- pausing social circles and advising that all Ontarians allow close contact only with people living in their own household and maintain two metres physical distancing from everyone else; individuals who live alone may consider having close contact with another household; and
- finalizing additional guidance for seniors (70 and over) on how to minimize their risk of acquiring COVID-19, including for upcoming annual gatherings such as Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day.

Note: Municipal leaders have been asking for such public health guidance with these upcoming community events coming soon.

There are also provincial changes to the COVID-19 Testing procedures which include:

- transitioning to appointment-based testing at Ontario assessment centres beginning Tuesday, October 6, 2020, to provide certainty to patients as to when they can receive a test during the winter and allowing assessment centres to conduct enhanced screening to ensure adherence to the [guidelines released on September 24, 2020](#);
- beginning on Sunday, October 4, 2020, assessment centres will discontinue walk-in testing services, so the Province's lab network can make progress in processing tests and to allow assessment centres the necessary time to be prepared for the new appointment-based model;
- continuing mobile testing and pop-up testing centres to reach vulnerable populations and provide targeted testing for long-term care, congregate care, and other vulnerable populations;
- expanding the number of pharmacies where people with no symptoms within provincial testing guidance can get tested; and
- implementing updated testing guidance for children to help parents determine when it is most appropriate for students, children, and their families to seek a test for COVID-19.

Safe Restart Agreement – Phase 2 Funding for Municipal Operating Relief

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing, wrote to all Heads of Council late yesterday with instructions for the Phase 2 funding as part of the Safe Restart Agreement. This second phase of funding targets municipal governments that require additional financial support to address extraordinary operating expenditures and/or revenues losses arising from the COVID-19 pandemic for 2020.

Phase 1 funding totaled \$695 million and was directly distributed to all municipalities

across Ontario. For Phase 2, another \$695 million is available to municipalities through an application process. This will require a Council resolution to request the additional assistance and a formal application completed by a municipal treasurer. To be eligible, the application for this second phase requires municipal governments to demonstrate additional financial pressures that were not alleviated as part of the Phase 1 stream.

To request Phase 2 funding, the Ministry will seek more detailed information through the application forms which need to be submitted using the [Transfer Payment Ontario System](#) by the **deadline of October 30th, 2020**. For additional support, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will offer webinars to help better understand the application requirements and process.

AMO is pleased that joint support from the Federal and Provincial government has made \$1.39 billion available to provide operating funding relief for municipalities in Ontario. This unprecedented funding will allow municipal governments to remain financially whole and to continue to provide needed services to their communities during the ongoing pandemic.

Ontario Appoints First Inspector General of Policing

The Ontario government has today appointed [Devon Clunis](#) as the Province's first Inspector General of Policing. This arm's length role will seek to provide policing oversight and ensure effective policing services are provided across Ontario.

In addition, an Inspectorate will be created with responsibilities to:

- conduct inspections of police services to ensure compliance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act* (CSPA) and its regulations;
- conduct inspections of police service boards to prevent police misconduct; and impose measures where necessary;
- investigate complaints related to the provision of adequate and effective policing services;
- conduct analyses regarding compliance with the CSPA and publish inspection results and annual reports.

It should be noted that AMO will continue to request that the Inspector General of Policing have a role in supporting police service boards in fulfilling their mandates.

AMO would like to offer our congratulations to Devon Clunis on being appointed Ontario's first Inspector General of Policing.