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April 27, 2020

AMO COVID-19 Update – What You Need to Know Today: Provincial Re-Opening Approach, PPE Access, LTC Orders, Increased COVID Pay, Community Gardens

Provincial Direction on COVID-19 Re-Opening Approach

Today, the government released [A Framework for Re-opening our Province](#) to assist planning for stage by stage approach to re-opening the economy in a safe manner. According to Premier Ford, it is a “roadmap, not a calendar”. The framework does not set out hard dates nor provide specific detail on which businesses will re-open. Rather it outlines criteria to guide Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts to use when advising the government on the loosening of emergency measures.

As well, there are guiding principles for the safe, gradual reopening of businesses, services, and public spaces. The framework also provides details of an outreach strategy to help inform the restart of the provincial economy. This will be led by the [Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee](#). Further information on the announcement is found in the [Ontario Newsroom](#).

New Orders regarding Long-Term Care Homes

The Province has introduced new and has amended some emergency orders under subsection 7.0.2 (4) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* to regarding Ontario's long-term care homes. These orders provide for the [redeployment](#)

[of staff](#) to allow health service providers, including hospitals, to temporarily reassign frontline staff to provide services and supports in long-term care homes.

We understand that these provincial orders have been put in place for those few urgent situations where hospital staff needs to be redeployed immediately to a long-term care home to protect residents' and staff health and safety. It is expected that such extreme measures would only be used only if absolutely necessary and that all other additional support and assistance methods available had been exhausted.

Additional Pandemic Pay for Some Frontline Workers

The Ontario government is now providing [frontline](#) staff with a temporary pandemic payment to recognize the dedication, long hours, and increased risk of working to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Those eligible to receive the payment are staff working in long-term care homes, retirement homes, emergency shelters, supportive housing, social services congregate care settings, corrections institutions and youth justice facilities, as well as those providing home and community care and some staff in hospitals.

We understand that paramedics nor LTC management are not currently part of this program; however, the Province has indicated that they “are continuing to consult with our health care partners to address questions and determine who might meet the criteria for pandemic pay”.

Community Gardens

The opening of community and allotment gardens has been an area of great public interest with the start of better spring weather. It was announced on April 25th that the use of allotment gardens and community gardens across the province is now permitted. These gardens are an essential source of fresh food for many individuals and families, including those who face food insecurity.

Local Medical Officers of Health will be providing operating direction and instructions for these gardens – such as physical distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting commonly used equipment and surfaces.

Two Methods to Access PPE for Municipal Purposes:

Provincial Process: (text provided by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services)

On March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario declared a state of emergency to help contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public. Significant efforts have been made and continue to be underway to support the Province's battle against the pandemic.

Ontario, like many other jurisdictions, faces significant shortages of critical supplies and equipment for frontline workers across the public sector. We are experiencing a highly competitive market, hardening borders and disrupted supply chains, so working together to take advantage of any and all opportunities available to us makes sense.

On March 28, the Ontario government enacted regulations that enabled the Province to require data from certain public sector entities. This requirement includes gathering information on inventories, orders, and supply constraints for critical COVID-19 products.

The information is being collected in a Virtual Inventory to provide an aggregated view of urgent and near-term demand and supply requirements allowing government to prioritize buying what is needed most, deploying them, and allocating them on a priority basis to support the delivery of essential services to Ontarians.

The list of critical supplies and equipment the Province is centrally procuring, and tracking is evolving and currently includes:

- ventilators
- eye protection
- masks
- hand sanitizer
- swabs and test kits
- gloves
- gowns
- sanitation supplies
- thermometers.

How can municipal governments participate in provincial process?

Participating in the Provincial COVID-19 supply chain gives municipalities access to provincially purchased critical supplies and equipment, in addition to their current supply chains.

Municipalities currently participating should continue to report inventory and demand to:

- the Ministry of Health (e.g. health centres, paramedic services, LTC homes)
- the Ministry of the Solicitor General for municipal fire and police services.

For all other critical municipal PPE supply needs to support frontline workers and/or the people they serve (e.g. homeless shelters, supportive housing, community housing, and transit), a municipality can choose to participate in the integrated public sector supply chain through the Virtual Inventory.

In addition, the federal government, through the Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC), is also undertaking bulk purchasing of critical supplies and equipment to support COVID-19 response. The Province is working closely with PHAC to access these needed supplies and equipment. The federal government recently indicated that municipalities should work through the Province as part of our ongoing

orders. The best way for municipalities to send their requests for these critical products is to participate in our inventory and demand process.

If municipalities decide to opt-in, the Province asks that the COVID-19 supply and demand requirements for all municipal services that aren't yet captured, be included in the reporting. They have tools and training available to support municipal participation.

If your municipality is interested in participating in an integrated public sector supply chain, please contact doingbusiness@ontario.ca and provide a single point of contact for your municipality to receive the survey link, training options and instructions.

LAS Process: (Local Authority Services is AMO's business service)

Need PPE? Look no further than the LAS Municipal Group Buying Program. Our partnership with Grainger Canada provides masks, gloves, and other safety equipment for municipalities and their frontline staff, including paramedic and police services. [Contact LAS](#) for more information or to [connect with Grainger directly](#).

Suspension of Timelines in the *Ontario Heritage Act*

AMO has been asking many Ontario ministries about the application of [Ontario Reg. 73/20](#) on their respective legislation that includes statutory timelines.

On April 24th a letter from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to municipal governments clarified that Ontario Reg. 73/20 applies to *Ontario Heritage Act*, specifically the timeframes under subsections 32(2), 33(4), 34(2), and 42(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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.

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