

### LEADERSHIP

As municipal leaders we have an important role to play in ensuring our residents have the most accurate and up-to-date information on COVID-19. It is also vitally important that municipal councils take responsible measures to protect their staff and community.

We all must recognize that this is not just a concern for “big cities” with big populations. COVID-19 is showing up in rural communities across Canada and we must assume it will here as well. We all need to be ready.

MNL is recommending that all municipalities **FOLLOW** directives and advice from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada. Links to the information are on our COVID-19 website - <https://municipalnl.ca/covid-19/>. These directives include suspending large gatherings, programming and events and encouraging residents to practice social distancing, as well as self- isolating if they have been travelling out of the country.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend that you **CLOSE** your municipal venues (community centres, town halls, fire halls, etc...) to public gatherings for at least two weeks. This includes public council meetings. We recommend that you live stream public council meetings as a temporary measure. Options such as Facebook Live are available for free and widely accessible for the public. The priority goal for all of us right now is to slow the spread of the virus and public gatherings are a primary means by which it can spread once it is in your community.
- We recommend that you **REVIEW** your emergency plan. Be familiar with your rights and responsibilities associated with emergencies under the Municipalities Act and the Emergency Services Act.

## RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- We recommend that you **COMMUNICATE**:
  - With local first responders. Inquire about their standard operating procedures and pandemic response guidelines.
  - With local health officials and your Regional Health Authority. You will need to know what is happening from a local health care perspective, and coordinate approaches and activities.
  - With local pharmacy and grocery store owners. Understand what their perspective is and plan accordingly with them to address needs in your community. There are vulnerable people in our communities who may not or cannot access medications and food during emergency situations.
  - With local gas station owners. Understand their position, their availability and their status under a State of Emergency, should one be necessary in the future.
  - With adjacent municipal leaders in your area, including those in Local Service Districts. You will need to discuss regional approaches, regional responses and the realities that people move between and among your communities.
  - With your municipal council. If you are not able to meet in person, you will need to establish a way to communicate collectively. Consider regular daily or weekly conference calls.

### RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- With your staff. Your staff need to know that you have a plan and that you are empathetic to their concerns. Talk with them about how you will approach running the municipality:
  - should the office need to be closed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, or
  - if you require implementing a state of emergency.
  - Be sure that staff members know their rights as employees. Encourage them to stay home and call 811 if they are ill, and to communicate with you. Establish a plan for them to work from home if required and find ways to support that work.
  
- With your business community. The Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador are putting economic provisions in place for businesses and employees impacted by these events. More information can be found here:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canada-outlines-measures-to-support-the-economy-and-the-financial-sector.html>
  
- With your residents. The residents in your municipality need to know that you have a plan and that you are ready in the face of uncertainty. We have seen many good examples of news releases from municipalities across the province. You can also find guidance in managing communications during this time in the MNL Crisis Communications Toolkit, available here:  
<https://municipalnl.ca/covid-19/membership-services/>.

### IF YOU NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT US

Craig Pollett: [cpollett@municipalnl.ca](mailto:cpollett@municipalnl.ca)  
Brad Power: [bpower@municipalnl.ca](mailto:bpower@municipalnl.ca)  
Christine Carter: [ccarter@municipalnl.ca](mailto:ccarter@municipalnl.ca)  
Renee Sharpe: [rsharp@municipalnl.ca](mailto:rsharp@municipalnl.ca)

Deatra Walsh: [dwalsh@municipalnl.ca](mailto:dwalsh@municipalnl.ca)  
Gail Woodfine: [gwoodfine@municipalnl.ca](mailto:gwoodfine@municipalnl.ca)  
Kathleen Parewick: [kparewick@municipalnl.ca](mailto:kparewick@municipalnl.ca)