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SUPPLEMENTARY CIRCULAR TO MUNICIPALITIES **SAFE ELECTIONS**

In light of the continued presence of COVID-19 in our province and the upcoming general elections for municipalities, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs is providing this circular with guidance for running safe campaigns and elections in our municipalities. As of this date, the COVID-19 Alert Level for Newfoundland and Labrador is Level 2. Please refer to the following link for latest [Alert Level 2 - COVID-19 \(gov.nl.ca\)](https://www.gov.nl.ca/alert-level-2-covid-19). With respect to conducting municipal elections, information can be viewed at the following link [Municipal Elections - Municipal and Provincial Affairs \(gov.nl.ca\)](https://www.gov.nl.ca/municipal-elections).

In preparation for municipal elections occurring during COVID-19, some municipalities have requested to change their voting from in-person voting to mail-in voting and/or a hybrid approach of offering both in-person and mail-in voting options. Any municipality still considering using mail in voting, must submit their request for approval of the mail-in regulations, and following that approval, send in their draft regulations for approval to Municipal and Provincial Affairs by July 5, 2021. This date will ensure the Department has time to review and approve the regulations 60 days prior to the general fall election.

Risk mitigation measures are provided to ensure the safety of all people involved in the election process. Please note that under section 8 of the **Municipal Elections Act** election proceedings may be adjourned by returning officer due to health and safety risk or integrity of election.

The following risk mitigation measures are essential to all those involved in the electoral process, from election workers to candidates and their scrutineers:

- Practice **physical distancing** (maintaining two metres or six feet of separation between individuals).
- Use a **non-medical mask**, which is mandatory in all public buildings. Non-medical masks do not replace physical distancing requirements.
- **Stay home when sick.**
- Practice **hand and respiratory hygiene**. Use a Health Canada approved hand sanitizer.
- Enhance **cleaning and disinfection** of high touch surfaces as per <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-NL.pdf>
- Follow all guidance from the **Chief Medical Officer of Health**

Guidelines for Operations at Campaign Offices, including Home Offices:

- All visitors must wear masks, per current Public Health measures
- Public access should be conducted via appointment
- Anyone feeling ill should not interact with the public, stay home and complete the online self-assessment tool (<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment>)
- Wear masks when serving members of the public

- Wear masks when unable to maintain minimum physical distancing
- Counters, desks and other surfaces available to visitors must be cleaned after each visitor
- Door handles and touch points must be cleaned regularly
- Consider floor decals, directional arrows, floor markings utilized for social distancing measures
- Consider additional signage for instructions to visitors (distancing reminders, etc.)
- Sanitizer must be available for visitors and staff

Guidelines for Door-to-Door Campaigning by Candidates and their Representatives:

- Candidates and representatives who are feeling ill should stay home and complete the online self-assessment tool (<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment>)
- Knock on the door and step back to ensure a distance of at least six feet between them and other individuals at the door
- Sanitize hands before and after contact with each household
- Wear masks for the duration of door-to-door campaigning
- Candidates should not shake hands and any campaign materials should be left in mailbox or on step

Guidelines for Campaign Events:

- Attendees who are feeling ill should stay home and complete the online self-assessment tool (<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment>)
- Attendees at events should be limited to the guidelines from the Chief Medical Officer of Health at the time of the event
- Sanitizer must be available for all attendees
- All attendees must wear masks
- Door handles and touch points must be cleaned regularly
- Floor decals, directional arrows, floor markings utilized for social distancing measures
- Additional signage for instructions to attendees (distancing reminders, etc.)
- Attendees' contact information should be collected to facilitate Public Health contact tracing. This information should be kept for 14 days and then disposed of in a manner that protects the privacy of any personal information

Guidelines for Polling Day Locations and Polling Stations:

- A poll is a public place and, therefore, masks or face shields must be worn by all members of the public and all election workers
- Social distancing guidelines must be adhered to (maintaining 6 feet of distance)
- Frequent sanitization of hands, along with regular cleaning of door handles and other touch points
- sanitize the voting booth area after each elector
- ensure pencils are sanitized between voter usage
- Sanitizer must be available for all attendees

- All attendees must wear masks; disposable single-use masks must be available for whoever needs one to ensure everyone has an opportunity to vote
- Floor decals, directional arrows, floor markings utilized for social distancing measures
- Additional signage for instructions to attendees (distancing reminders, etc.)
- Agents, representing candidates, will be accommodated at a polling station with all required public health measures being followed.
- Agents and campaign workers who are feeling ill should stay home and complete the online self-assessment tool (<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment>)
- Agents entering polling locations must wear masks, sanitize their hands upon entry and observe social distancing guidelines

If you require additional information or support please contact your local Municipal Affairs regional office.

Western/Labrador Telephone: 709-637-2332	Central Telephone: 709-256-1050	Eastern Telephone: 709-729-0259
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Sincerely,



TED LOMOND
Deputy Minister