

DECONFINEMENT GUIDELINES

What you should know in times of crisis



When and how to deconfine

Considerations

The situations of independent community organizations greatly vary. Since declaring a state of public health emergency in March 2020, some organizations were able to adapt and maintain some activities in person or remotely, while others were temporarily interrupted. Several continued operating as, according to the Quebec government, they offer services and activities considered “essential and priority. However, even among them, some closed their doors or significantly reduced activities for various reasons.

Today, we are observing that organizations are feeling some level of pressure to resume service and reopen their premises to the community. This pressure may originate from partners, but also from members of the organization, work teams, boards of directors, etc.

However, before moving to a full resumption of activities, there are many elements to consider (continued on following page).

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NOTE

The content of this document is subject to change according to government announcements and the processes in force.



When and how to deconfine (cont.)

Considerations

Prior to resuming regular activities, questions need to be asked about the government directives affecting organizations, the feasibility of deconfinement, and the logistics involved.

Additionally, the obligations the community organization is subject to must be considered, including with respect to work standards, and workplace health and safety.

The resumption of activities must be planned and requires time. For each aspect to be reviewed, your staff's well-being must remain the focal point. Currently, the Quebec government is continuing to advise organizations to opt for remote work whenever possible.

In all circumstances, it is wise to assess whether the advantages of reopening outweigh the risks implied. As subject to compliance with your obligations, the decision lies with you as an independent community organization.



Before resuming activities, you should consider the following:

- Government guidelines concerning your organization;
- The feasibility of deconfinement and the required logistics;
- Your obligations as an employer under the *Act respecting labour standards* (Loi sur les normes du travail) and the *Act respecting occupational health and safety* (AOHS).

For workers

What is required



If staff presence is required, you must be able to provide a safe work environment and implement the required measures (Sec. 51, AOHS). This involves complying with the appropriate sanitary measures (refer to *Sanitary instructions*, p. 13).



You must inform your staff of any risks related to their work, and provide appropriate training, coaching, and supervision (Sec. 51, AOHS).



A worker must take the necessary measures to ensure their health and safety, as well as that of other persons at the workplace (Sec. 49, AOHS).

- A worker has a right to refuse to perform work if they believe the work is a danger to their health, safety, or physical well-being (Sec. 12, AOHS). They must inform their employer of the situation and can file a complaint with the CNESST* (Sec. 12 and 49, AOHS). If the work environment is evaluated as unsafe by the CNESST, the employer must make the required changes.
- An employee that believes their health condition (e.g. COVID-19 related symptoms) may risk the health and safety of others at the workplace must advise their employer.



Questions to be addressed

- Is your premises capable of applying the infection prevention measures to return to work? (Refer to *Sanitary instructions*, p. 13)
- What are the risks to consider for your team, according to the type of activity or service provided onsite?
- What health and safety measures are you implementing at work to comply with your obligations as an employer? (Refer to *Sanitary instructions*, p. 13)
- Is it possible to implement these measures?
- Will you need your entire work team onsite when you resume your activities?
- Is your team available for onsite work?
- Do you have a risk bonus for staff who will be in direct contact with participants?
- What are you planning for staff who are not available to be onsite?
- Will you need to reorganize tasks among your team?
- Do you have a plan if a case of COVID-19 is declared in your workplace?
- Are you implementing psychological support and protection measures for your staff?

*CNESST: Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

Points for consideration and action

According to the Government of Quebec, remote work is the preferred course of action...

To the extent possible, remote work contributes to protecting your staff's health and safety. Otherwise, the context may result in workers not currently being available at the time of resuming activities due to a medical condition, family responsibilities, their mental health (anxiety, burnout, etc.).

If you are working toward resuming your onsite activities...

You must comply with your employer's obligations of reducing any risk to your team through applying the appropriate sanitary measures (refer to *Sanitary instructions* p. 13). You can also take action at the workplace by involving your staff in the following:

- Coordinating your schedules (e.g. rotation);
- Developing procedures (e.g. declaring flu-like symptoms, hand washing, etc.).

For staff on the front line during the crisis...

Be aware of exhaustion or burnout. There is a risk of a drop in adrenaline after lifting emergency measures causing stress and anxiety among overworked staff.

With regard to employee vacations...

Should they be taken ahead of time? Be broken up? Be paid? If you do not have any significant financial challenges or particular issues, you should handle vacations as usual to enable staff to unwind in these difficult times (refer to the tool by ROC 03

http://www.roc03.com/files/Autres%20documents/Documents%20aux%20membres/les_vacances_et_la_crise_sanitaire.pdf).

For further information on protection measures, refer to...

The COVID-19 Toolkit on the CNESST website at:

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/toolkit.aspx>

A checklist from the CNESST to declare COVID-19:

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19/Documents/DC100-2146F-Fiche-Exclusions-Covid19.pdf>



For volunteers

What is required



According to the AOHS, a volunteer corresponds with the concept of a worker, defined as: "...a person, including a student in the cases determined by regulation, who, under a contract of employment or a contract of apprenticeship, even without remuneration, carries out work for an employer..." (Sec. 1, AOHS).



This person therefore has a right to the same measures as those applied to paid workers to respect and protect their health and security (Sec. 9 and 51, AOHS).



The Quebec government requests persons aged 70 and over to remain at home unless absolutely necessary:

<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/consignes-personnes-vulnerables-covid19/#c52761>.

Questions to be addressed

What are the risks for the volunteers involved with your organization? Is their participation essential?

Are the volunteers of your organization available to continue their involvement?

Do you have enough volunteers to maintain your activities and services?

Are volunteers covered by the CNESST? (Refer to *Points for consideration and action*, p. 6)

What measures are ensuring the health and safety of volunteers?

If you are lacking volunteers, how can you restructure your organization's activities and services?

If volunteers are needed, what tools do you have to recruit them (e.g. <https://www.jebenevole.ca/>)?

Stay at home if...

You are feeling sick.

A member of your family is sick at home.



Take care of your emotional and mental well-being

Don't forget that it is important to look after everyone's health and safety in and around your organization. Solidarity, social justice, and collaboration are values that can guide you in the measures to be selected.

Points for consideration and action

The current regulations may impact your volunteer workforce...

Confinement of people aged 70 and above, and quarantine measures may play a role in volunteers being available for your organization. On the other hand, you may be able to rely on the support of people who have stopped working in the given context. Progressive deconfinement means these “temporary” volunteers will gradually return to work, which will produce a workforce challenge once again.

The importance of properly assessing your options...

Confirming the availability of volunteers, as well as the activities and services they usually fulfil, is required.

... and the solutions to be implemented

Resuming your activities may require reorganization and making realistic choices, for example:

- A partial resumption of activities.
- Reduced activities and services.
- Hiring staff to make up for the lack of volunteers. In this case, confirm whether you have access to one of the measures implemented by governmental bodies.

If volunteers are not covered by the CNESST...

Your obligations in terms of health and safety toward volunteers are the same as those with regard to staff. You must therefore apply the same instructions. However, volunteers are not automatically covered by the CNESST for work accidents or health consequences. To address this, you must apply for protection from the CNESST by filling in a protection request for a volunteer worker. For more information, please use the following link:

<https://www.csst.qc.ca/employeurs/assurance/protactions/Pages/protection-travailleurs-benevoles.aspx>.



For visitors to your organization

What is required



Persons aged 70 and over must stay at home unless absolutely necessary (<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/consignes-personnes-vulnerables-covid19/>).



If you are opening your doors, the demographic you accommodate must correspond to that identified in the list of selected priority activities by the Quebec government, specifically identified in the section *Priority health services and social services* (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/reopening-maintaining-economic-activities-covid-19/>).



We encourage you to follow the developments of government directives on reopening workplaces as they may have an impact on visits to your organization (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/gradual-resumption-activities-covid19-related-pause/>).



Anyone who has flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, breathing difficulties), has COVID-19, is awaiting test results, or is coming back from travelling abroad must remain at home and isolate themselves (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/general-information-about-coronavirus/>).

Questions to be addressed

- Does the profile of visitors to your organization correspond with that identified in the Quebec government's list of priority activities and services?
- How many people can you accommodate at a time considering the size of your premises, the demographic you interact with, and the staff onsite?
- How can you ensure that the maximum occupancy will be respected?
- Does the maximum occupancy make it possible to better meet needs than employing remote work?
- How are you going to inform visitors to your organization about health instructions and physical distancing? Are you planning on creating materials for them?
- How are you going to respond to people that disregard instructions? What are you going to do about the anxiety people are experiencing due to the current context and instructions?

STAY UP TO DATE ON INFORMATION

The situation is developing on a daily basis and government directives change as a result.

Points for consideration and action

Once again, it is a question of feasibility...

This requires analyzing the extent of feasibility to deconfine while considering the point of view of visitors to your organization.

The level of acceptance and understanding of instructions...

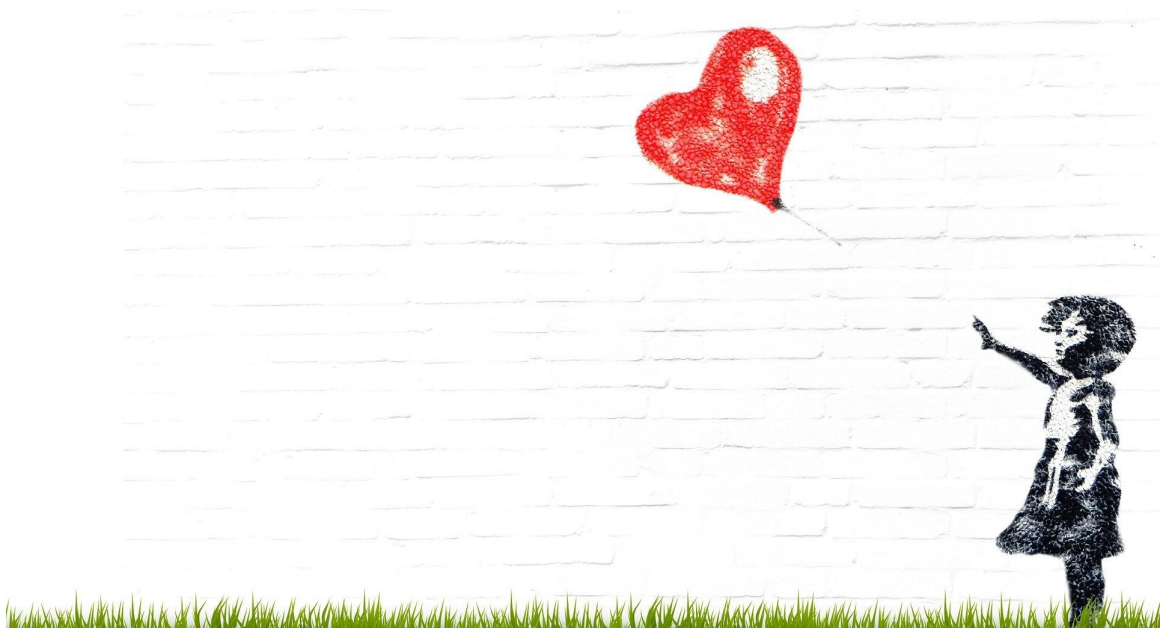
In some cases, the capacity for visitors to understand instructions is a challenge. For example, people with an intellectual or a mental disorder may be unable to follow public health directives.

... and the measures implemented, if applicable.

You must therefore ensure a procedure is in place for cases with participants not complying with sanitary instructions.

People's health and safety are on the line...

In any case, keep in mind the need to protect the health and safety of your team and other people on the premises.



In regard to activities and services

What is required



Many organizations are able to provide activities and services as they are considered “essential and priority” by the Quebec government.



You may consult the list of priority activities and services published on the Quebec government’s site by clicking on the following link:
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/reopening-maintaining-economic-activities-covid-19/>.



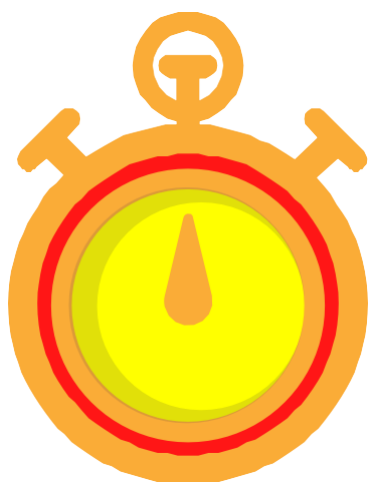
The list includes, among others, “Specialized resources offering accommodation for vulnerable groups and their relatives (domestic violence, vagrancy, cancer, addicts housed in community or private resources, palliative and end-of-life care, the underprivileged, immigrants, the elderly, the mentally ill, mother and child, prenatal and postnatal groups, young people in difficulty and their families, people with an intellectual or physical deficiency or an autism spectrum disorder, victims of crime).”



Another government list concerning the gradual resumption of activities that does not specifically refer to community organizations but may concern you if you have a social economy component with a corresponding profile
[\(https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/gradual-resumption-activities-covid19-related-pause/\)](https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/gradual-resumption-activities-covid19-related-pause/).

Questions to be addressed

- Is your organization included on the list of the Quebec government’s “essential and priority” activities and services.
- What is your evaluation of the current situation? Do your activities meet some of the most important needs of the members or people you work with?
- If you are considering resuming your activities or adjusting them, how are you going to evaluate the balance of social benefits against the health risks involved? Do the benefits outweigh the risks incurred?
- Is it necessary to review some of your practices in order to comply with public health directives in terms of the space available, the type of activity, and the demographic you work with?
- If you are resuming an activity or a service, what measures are you implementing to comply with public health directives?
- Based on this evaluation, what activities and services are feasible and needed to resume operations?



TAKE THE TIME

An assessment of your situation will save you a lot of trouble in the future. On occasion, time is the best teacher.

Points for consideration and action

Depending on your situation, it is possible that...

You consider it essential to reopen your premises to the public, based on the type of activities and services provided by your organization, and after having evaluated the pros and cons.

Reopening may not be conceivable...

Some organizations may not be able to resume regular onsite activities before a specified time, simply due to the nature of their activities and government directives.

However, there are alternatives...

For organizations that are not able to reopen their doors right away, you must assess other options, for example, remote work.



In regard to insurance

What is required



The following information about insurance coverage in the context of the current crisis applies to many insurance companies. However, they may vary based on your insurer and the terms of your policy. It is therefore important to confirm the necessary information with your insurance company in relation to the current situation.



Liability insurance remains in force. It will cover situations related to COVID-19 if the contract does not include an exclusion clause on infectious diseases (<https://portail-assurance.ca/article/reclamations-en-assurance-des-entreprises-et-covid-19-le-libelle-des-polices-sera-determinant/>).



Liability insurance for members of the board of directors remains in force (<https://lussierdaleparizeau.ca/en/blog/covid-19-scope-of-coverage-of-commercial-insurance-policies/>).



In regard to insurance for interrupted activities, refer to the following link: <https://portail-assurance.ca/article/covid-19-que-couvre-lassurance-des-entreprises/>.



In regard to collective insurance:

- It is recommended to opt for remote work whenever possible. However, in the event that this is not possible or an employee is too sick to work (even remote work), short-term insurance covers an employee with COVID-19.
- Continued coverage of a laid-off employee is possible if payments are ongoing.

Questions to be addressed

Does your insurance company cover your organization's activities, specifically if they have been changed?

- Has your insurer modified some terms and conditions since the beginning of the state of public health emergency?
- Would resuming your activities before the state of public health emergency is lifted have an impact on your insurance coverage and premiums?



Contact your insurer for the right information.

Points for consideration and action

Your insurance company may have modified your policy...

Since the beginning of the confinement period, some insurance companies have made changes to their coverage or premiums.

Regarding car insurance premiums...

Several insurers have considerably reduced personal and commercial car insurance premiums during the confinement period.

The timeframes for processing requests...

Given the context, many insurance companies are reporting delays with regard to processing requests.

Direct contact remains the best course of action...

In any case, it is recommended to quickly and directly contact your insurer to be informed about the scope of your policy in regard to the current situation.



In regard to sanitary instructions

What is required



Gatherings are permitted for people living at the same address.



For other situations, indoor gatherings are prohibited, except:

- If required in a work setting or public place to obtain a service, or when not subject to a suspension from the Quebec government.
- If required for means of transport.
- If a person is providing a service or required for support.



In any case, maintaining two-metre physical distancing is required to the extent possible.



Outdoor gatherings are permitted under certain conditions, which include maintaining two-metre physical distancing
(<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/gatherings-events-covid19/>).



Hygiene measures are required, including frequently washing hands with warm running water and soap for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based disinfectant
(<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/general-information-about-coronavirus/>).



Maintaining and disinfecting facilities are addressed in the CNSST's *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide – COVID-19* (<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Documents/DC100-2146A-Guide.pdf>). This guide addresses, among others, the maintenance of equipment and frequently touched surfaces at the workplace (p. 4).

Questions to be addressed

- Do you have access to your premises?
- Is applying physical distancing measures in your premises realistic?
- If yes, how are you going to redevelop the space to comply with distancing for everyone on the premises? Do you have to move furniture, install Plexiglas, make floor markings, or plan for physical obstacles?
- How many people can occupy an available space at one time?
- What maintenance cleaning measures have to be planned (person in charge, frequency, etc.)?
- Do disinfection stations have to be installed?
- If you are sharing your rental space (kitchen, washrooms, etc.), how are you going to share your premises, schedules, and maintenance?
- Do you have to provide personal protective equipment to resume certain activities and services?
- Do you have enough protective supplies?
- How are you planning to familiarize your team with the methods for using protective equipment?

In regard to sanitary instructions (cont.)

What is required



It should be noted that hygiene measures are not mandatory. However, as an employer, you must provide a safe workplace for your staff (Sec. 51, AOHS).



Wearing a mask is recommended when it is not possible to respect two-metre physical distancing, such as on public transport, at the grocery store, or in some workplaces.



Since May 12, 2020, the Quebec government is strongly recommending to wear a mask (or face covering) in public places (<https://www.newswire.ca/fr/news-releases/pandemie-de-la-covid-19-il-faudra-preconiser-le-port-du-masque-ou-du-couvre-visage-dans-les-lieux-publics-825535123.html>).



It must be noted that wearing a mask is not a replacement for other sanitary instructions such as hand washing, physical distancing, etc. (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/wearing-a-face-covering-in-public-settings-in-the-context-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>).

Questions to be addressed



Points for consideration and action

Directives regarding gatherings for the process of deconfinement...

Government measures on indoor gatherings are an essential point regarding possible deconfinement related to community organizations.

To know who is not subject to government suspension...

To know what environments are not impacted by governmental suspension in relation to indoor gatherings, you must consider the essential and priority nature of your activities and services, and the persons with which you work (refer to *For visitors to your organization*, p. 7, and *In regard to activities and services*, p. 9).

The matter of feasibility to apply sanitary directives remains...

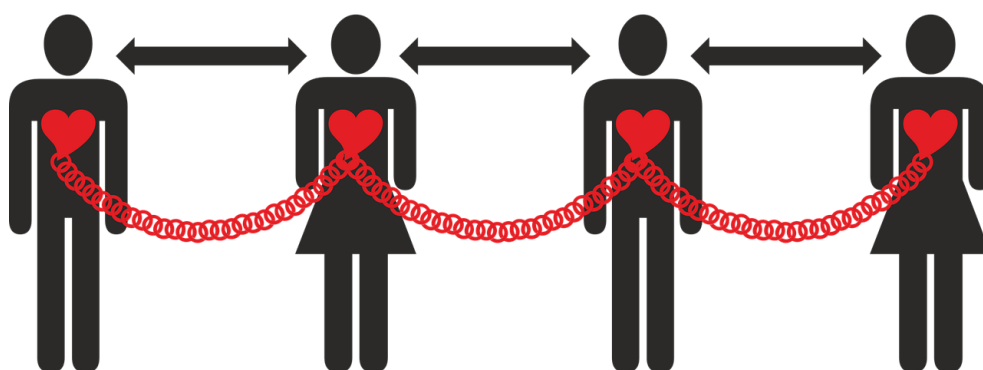
The feasibility of applying sanitary directives must be addressed. Some organizations won't have access to their premises for an undetermined time, while others will not be able to apply physical distancing measures because of the size of their premises.

Individual protective supplies are also a challenge...

Access to protective equipment in sufficient quantities also represents a challenge and can delay the resumption of some activities. Although using personal protective equipment is not always required, it may reassure your team members.

Pooling needs...

To facilitate equipment procurement, you might consider partnering with other organizations to create a purchasing pool. It is also an option to craft your own masks.



In conclusion



A constantly evolving situation

To put it plainly...

You must keep in mind that the situation is developing on a daily basis. In the coming months, you may be confronted with staff burnout and a difficult socio-economic context. You will need to adapt to the new realities, as will the entire population. It is therefore important to plan for the medium and long term, and to continue to focus on the well-being of your team.

You will also have to ensure the maintenance of the associative and democratic life of your organization, and the implementation of actions aimed at maintaining links with your members and the people you work with.

The CTROC will continue to provide information about considerations. Until then, we commend your courage and constructive thinking.

The CTROC and its members will continue to provide information on considerations in the coming months, especially concerning democratic practices and other challenges that have an immediate impact.

Some useful references

TOOLKIT FOR MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST), *COVID-19 Toolkit* (includes the Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide and checklists on various topics)

(<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/toolkit.aspx>)

GUIDANCE ON THE MANY TOPICS RELATED TO COVID-19

Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST), *COVID-19: IRSST's notices, recommendations and tools - Utilisation du masque barrière de type communautaire (couvre-visage) dans les milieux de travail*

(<https://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/covid-19/irsst-notice>)

Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ), *Interim Recommendations for Community Organizations - COVID-19 Preventive Measures in the Workplace*

(<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2946-community-organizations-covid19.pdf>)

GUIDANCE ON THE RETURN TO WORK

Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agréés, updated May 12, 2020, *Gérer le retour au travail: informations et recommandations à l'intention des employeurs*

(http://www.portailrh.org/covid19/PDF/CRHA_Guide_RetourTravail.pdf) .

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, *Are you a volunteer? Are you involved with a COVID-19 response group?*

(<https://santemontreal.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/Campagnes/coronavirus/Consignes-initiatives-citoyennes-COVID19-EN.pdf>) .

OBLIGATIONS RELATED TO THE DEMOCRACY OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

ROC 03, April 20, 2020, *Obligations relatives à la vie démocratique des organismes communautaires*

(http://www.roc03.com/files/OBLIGATIONS_RELATIVES_LA_VIE_DMOCRATIQUE_DES_ORGANISMES.pdf)

INFORMATION AND POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION ON VACATIONS

ROC 03, 30 avril 2020, *Les vacances et la crise sanitaire*

(http://www.roc03.com/files/Autres documents/Documents aux membres/les_vacances_et_la_crise_sanitaire.pdf)