

THE OPENING OF COMMON RECREATIONAL AREAS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



ASSOCIATION QUÉBÉCOISE des
GESTIONNAIRES de COPROPRIÉTÉS

Directors should act with caution and diligence to protect the health and safety of residents to prevent the spread of COVID 19. It is for this reason that last March the common recreational areas were closed.

With the coming summer, it is tempting to open the common outdoor areas. If a syndicate decides to open certain common areas, it must bear in mind that there is no single formula for success and that the measures implemented must meet the needs of the residents and be adapted to the specifics of the building. To this end, an analysis of the risks and methods of mitigating those risks should be carried out and guide the processes of opening the facilities.

Decisions must be made based on the majority of residents and their health and safety. We must not give in to the pressure of a small group of co-owners with the consequences that these decisions will have on the majority. The majority of residents should not be put at risk for those who are willing to risk their health.

Administrators need to be creative to make community life more enjoyable. It is not necessary to allow or prohibit an activity, but rather to manage the risks it entails during the pandemic period, while the health emergency remains in force. On the other hand, if the experiment is inconclusive or if the residents do not comply with the guidelines issued, the Board of Directors should consider closing access to these common areas.

We invite you to regularly check the update of these directives from the competent authorities, which vary according to the situation.

Establish an action plan to open common areas

01. Conduct a risk analysis and establish mitigation processes that comply with the instructions of relevant authorities:

- physical distancing by two (2) meters;
- coughing in ones elbow;
- wash hands frequently;
- If symptoms are suspected, do not use common areas, isolate at home and require the affected persons to be tested;
- exterior gathering up to 10 people (subject to change by the government over time);
- wearing a mask is recommended.

02. Communicate clearly the processes put in place by the syndicate:

- notify co-owners if certain provisions incur fees and increase their common expenses;
- communicate the reopening plan to residents;
- provide for a display of regulations and guidelines and a visible installation.

03. Change the action plan if social distancing is not respected

Analysis of risks and suggestions for mitigation

The risk analysis is unique to each syndicate and you may identify other risks and find alternatives to mitigation than those proposed below. This table is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather a guide to help you begin your reflection. It is also important to reassess the situation periodically, as long as the state of health emergency is in effect.

Risks	Suggestions de mitigation
<p>Difficulty in maintaining compliance with the rules of social distancing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to receive adequate monitoring of use and access; • resend reminder memos to the rules in case of significant breach and notify problematic co-owners directly; • when there is no guard on the premises, encourage co-owners to remind groups that do not comply with the rules of their lack of compliance; • restrict the access of a co-owner who does not respect the rules of social distancing when the area is managed by an access control system; • if the furniture is not fixed to the ground and you want to leave it on the spot, position it to encourage the distance of 2 meters between people; • leave 4 meters of space between groups to allow the movement of people, without compromising the distance of 2 meters between people; • have a separate entrance and exit for access to, and egress from common areas, if possible, to prevent people from crossing unnecessarily; • place temporary markings on the ground to indicate traffic areas to allow adequate distance (a bit like in grocery stores); • install a system at the entrance of the common area to indicate the occupancy to avoid having to enter the premises unnecessarily if the maximum capacity is reached; • when space to access elevators is limited, consider a way to circulate people to maintain the distance of 2 meters. When this is not possible, the mask must be worn to circulate in this location.
<p>Risk of waste contamination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • install garbage cans in various areas in the common areas so that co-owners can easily dispose of masks, disposable gloves, disinfectant wipes and other debris; • invite your residents to take with them any personal items and trash so that a third party does not have to handle them to dispose of them.

<p>Risk of people blaming the syndicate if they have been infected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a routine of disinfecting recreational common areas, including furniture and equipment, and ask the maintenance worker to indicate the days and times of cleaning; • provide disinfectant and hand sanitizer dispensers at strategic locations, including entries and exits of a common area; • Install posters stating that "Access to common areas is at the users own risk" and that "If you are a person at risk (over 70 years of age, asthma, lung problem, etc.), we recommend that you do not frequent the these."
<p>Pool-specific risks (indoor or outdoor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that for the moment they are closed (we must wait for government directives at regarding public swimming pools); • If the pool is accessible by a terrace, put a sign immediately in front of the pool and take all measures to avoid its use; • In preparation for the opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clean the pool and maintain water quality (avoid odours, mosquitoes, etc.); ○ Stay current with government rules and recommendations for opening public swimming pools; ○ Maintain the quality of the water and check its parameters before allowing it to swim.
<p>Risk specific to spas and other small pools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing that the proximity of the people who use them makes it impossible to maintain social distancing, it is recommended to keep them closed.
<p>BBQ-specific risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is too difficult to maintain social distancing, close the BBQ area by cutting the gas and/or putting the appropriate display; • Close one BBQ if there are 2 or more to allow the distance of 2 meters; • Provide access to disinfectants to clean the BBQ area after use and at the beginning of each use; • Require that only one person uses the BBQ at the time.
<p>Risk specific to indoor common areas (pool, gym, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the risks of spreading are greater (many surfaces to touch or equipment) and indoor gatherings are not allowed, it is not suggested to open these indoor spaces to residents; • If the syndicate is able to put in place a process to ensure compliance with government rules, to ensure decontamination after the use of a resident (or people from the same household) and that the syndicate is ready to assume the additional costs that this implies, it is possible to consider the opening.

APPENDIX 1

Available in french only

La maladie à coronavirus (COVID-19)
cause une infection respiratoire
pouvant comporter les symptômes suivants :



Fièvre



Toux



Difficultés
respiratoires

Se protéger,
ça sauve des vies.



Toussez dans
votre coude



Jetez vos
mouchoirs



Lavez
vos mains



Gardez vos
distances

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)

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