

COVID-19 Gathering Size Restrictions Request

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon is implementing a Council approved data-based framework that includes measures to mitigate COVID-19 transmission framework. The evidence indicates that Saskatoon is in the high risk, orange level. One measure contained in that level is to request that the Government of Saskatchewan issue a public health order to limit gathering sizes in the Saskatoon zone.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Mayor write a letter on behalf of City Council to the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Health, and any relevant ministers requesting that the Chief Medical Health Officer for Saskatchewan issue a Public Health Order for Saskatoon that imposes the following:

- A limit of 150 person maximum capacity at an event facilities, casinos, bingo halls, theatres, art galleries, libraries and recreational facilities, or 1/3 of the current capacity, whichever is less, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained.
- A limit of 15 people at private gatherings, including household gatherings.
- A limit of 150 people at public indoor gatherings and private indoor gatherings or 1/3 of the current capacity, whichever is less, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained.
- A limit of 150 people at public outdoor gatherings with physical distancing in place.
- If an event or facility has in place the requirement for a proof of vaccination, or a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to the event, that the event be exempted from these gathering restrictions.
- The current province-wide masking mandate remain in place.

BACKGROUND

At its September 27, 2021 Regular Business meeting, Saskatoon City Council approved the “Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon”. An accompanying report described the implementation process of the various contained in the framework. As described in that that report “there are several steps that occur prior to the activation of any measures within this framework.” These measures provide a review process with several considerations to ensure measures are necessary and required at that level.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In preparing this report, the City Administration has consulted with the Saskatchewan Health Authority Saskatoon Medical Health Officer, reviewed the current COVID-19 situation, reviewed the current Public Health Orders, and consulted with important stakeholders and partners. After this consultation and analysis, the Administration determined that the gathering restriction measures are necessary to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Saskatoon. Hence, this report is recommending that the Mayor write to the Government of Saskatchewan request the implementation of gathering size limitations in Saskatoon, in addition to the measures already announced and/or active (e.g., province-wide mandatory masking).

The recommendation provides a general request about the intent of a potential order, but not the implementation details. That can be left to provincial Health and Justice officials. Since the emergence of the pandemic in March 2020, the City's response to COVID-19 has been guided by federal and provincial public health direction. As a reminder, COVID-19 is a public health emergency and given the Government of Saskatchewan's leadership role in matters of public health, the City of Saskatoon has followed—and will follow—the provincial direction. Public Health Orders are drafted and issued by the provincial government and they are best to determine the details and implications of a gathering size restriction request

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this time.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, a letter with this request would be submitted to the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Health, and any relevant ministers.

Report Approval

Written by:	Pamela Goulden-McLeod, Director of Emergency Management
Reviewed by:	Mike Jordan, Chief Public Policy and Government Relations Officer
Approved by:	Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager