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**caem** CANADIAN ASSOCIATION  
of EXPOSITION MANAGEMENT

**acge** L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
de GESTION D'EXPOSITIONS

# Canadian Exhibition Industry Safe Reopening Guidelines

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# Economic Impact of Exhibitions – At a Glance

## EXHIBITIONS DRIVE ECONOMIES

In 2018, business events in Canada, including exhibitions, had a direct spend of \$33 Billion, and contributed \$19.3 Billion of direct GDP. Following a period of unprecedented economic decline, restarting exhibitions will help drive economic recovery.



## EXHIBITIONS MEAN JOBS

The Canadian Business Events Industry, sustains 229,000 direct jobs. A prolonged shutdown of exhibitions will result in further job losses. Reopening the sector means getting tens of thousands of people back to work - something we can do safely.

## EXHIBITIONS VERSUS MASS GATHERINGS

Exhibitions are different from festivals, concerts and sporting events. Whether B2B or B2C, the participants in these business events are focused on buying products and services, exchanging information, showcasing innovations and sharing knowledge.



## EXHIBITIONS CREATE BUSINESS

By allowing companies and people to engage in the buying and selling of goods and services, exhibitions can inject some much needed liquidity into the market, fueling commerce, sales and business activity across hundreds of sectors in the Province.

## A SAFE RESTART

Similar to retail and grocery stores, exhibitions - with clear physical distancing measures and enhanced health, hygiene and safety protocols - can operate safely, playing a key role in restarting the economy and getting people back to work.



# Introduction

The Canadian Association of Exposition Management (CAEM) is the voice of the exhibition industry in Canada. It is the national not-for-profit association for Canadian professionals involved in the production, management, and planning of business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) exhibitions.

CAEM works on behalf of the exhibition industry in Canada to provide targeted education and networking, health and safety guidelines, best practices, and positions on regulatory issues. Our members include hundreds of organizations from across the country, including producers of exhibitions, facilities and suppliers of products and services to the industry.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an Exhibition Recovery Taskforce was created by CAEM, to establish a set of proposed guidelines for the responsible, safe and effective reopening of exhibitions in Canada. **Consult Appendix A for a list of Taskforce member contributors.**

The suggested measures in this guide constitute recommended reopening guidelines which allow business activities in the exhibition sector to resume, in a phased and structured approach, with clear measures to be put in place to open safely and limit health risks.

These recommended guidelines cover the entire process of the exhibition, from set up, to the exhibition days themselves, through to the dismantling of exhibits and the moving out period. The coordinated objective is, to allow all stakeholders to operate exhibitions in a safe, responsible and effective manner.

Recognizing that each province and venue has their own specifications, this guide is meant to outline the basic measures and considerations that are required to reopen exhibitions safely. These guidelines must be applied in conjunction with relevant provincial, territorial and local legislation, regulations and policies which may evolve overtime to accommodate changes in relaunch / reopening plans, as well as consumer confidence.

It is also important to note that CAEM will periodically update this document, as new information about the virus is available or as health and safety measures are lifted, based on guidance from government and public health officials.

The proposed guidelines have been prepared in consultation and with the support of leaders across all areas of the exhibition industry. This guidance is informed by currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion, and is subject to change as new information becomes available. The guidelines also include professional oversight from infection prevention experts at [Infection, Prevention and Control Canada](#).

# Definitions



**Venue:** Convention centre, exhibition centre, conference centre or any other facility where an exhibition might take place.

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**Exhibition:** An event in which products, services or information are displayed and disseminated. An exhibition can be business to business (B2B) or business to consumer (B2C).

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**Organizer:** A company who is renting space and/or services in a venue for the purpose of holding an exhibition.

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**Exhibitor:** A representative from an organization that is presenting their products and services at an exhibition for commercial purposes.

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**Attendee:** An individual attending an exhibition as a registered or ticketed visitor of the event.

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**Worker:** An individual employed by the venue or the venue's service providers, or an individual employed by the organizer or by an exhibitor.

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**Participant:** Any individual involved in the production of the exhibition (workers, exhibitors, attendees).

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**Hand Sanitizer:** A hand sanitization product that contains at least 60% alcohol that has been approved by Health Canada. Click [HERE](#) for a list of hand sanitizers authorized by Health Canada.

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**Disinfectant solution:** A product that inactivates or kills microorganisms that has been approved by Health Canada. Some products function as both cleaners and disinfectants. If a product does not function as both, separate cleaning and disinfection steps are required since surfaces must first be cleaned of dust, dirt and organic matter that can interfere with the effectiveness of disinfectants. Click [HERE](#) for a list of disinfectants authorized by Health Canada.

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# Exhibition Industry Overview

## EXHIBITIONS DRIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- According to [Meetings Mean Business Canada](#), in 2018, business events had a direct spend of \$33 Billion, were responsible for 229,000 direct jobs and contributed \$19.3 Billion of direct GDP.
- According to COVID-19 Research (Destination Canada), the estimated impact of COVID-19 on business events is a loss of -\$636.84 million in direct delegate spending, and we anticipate this number will grow as more events are cancelled or rebooked. (as of April 13, 2020)
- Exhibitions - with clear guidelines for strict physical distancing, increased cleaning & hygiene, and enhanced crowd control – can play a key part in restarting the economy safely.
- Following a period of unprecedented economic decline, restarting exhibitions in a phased and structured approach, will allow companies and people to re-engage in the buying and selling cycle of goods and services, thereby injecting liquidity into the marketplace.

## BUSINESS EVENTS VERSUS MASS GATHERINGS

- A clear distinction should be made between business events and mass gatherings.
- Exhibitions are business events, promoting trade and commerce within a given industry, where products and services are displayed and information is disseminated.
- Exhibitions are not festivals, civic events, concerts or sporting events, which are leisurely in nature.
- Whether they are business to business events or business to consumer events, participants are focused on buying products and services, exchanging information, showcasing innovations and sharing knowledge.
- Exhibitions comprise business events of different sizes and may be Local, Regional, National, North American and/or Global, and as such will have different travel restrictions. By beginning with Local, Regional and/or National Exhibitions, a phased and structured reopening of exhibitions is entirely possible.

## A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

- Exhibition stakeholders commit to collaborate with public health authorities to establish a layout, traffic control and occupancy plan that meets local safety requirements.
- Exhibitions have much greater flexibility when it comes to layout and design, as they are held in a controlled facility environment, allowing them the flexibility to design layouts that accommodate people very differently than other venues and events.
- Exhibitions can limit the number of participants on the exhibition site in order to enable physical distancing, in accordance with public health regulations. In the same way that grocery stores have been able to continue operating safely, exhibitions can also operate safely, with plans to limit health risks through enhanced physical distancing measures and enhanced cleaning and hygiene protocols.

- Exhibitions have much greater control over the flow of traffic, within their space. Organizers of exhibitions, in collaboration with their venues and suppliers, have the ability to manage and direct the movement of their attendees - from arrival at the venue, to entering and navigating the exhibition site, to food and beverage areas, as well as washroom facilities.
- By implementing physical distancing measures, increased health and safety measures and enhanced crowd control protocols, exhibitions can be held safely, in accordance with public health regulations.

### **TIMING CONSIDERATIONS**

- Organizers require several months of lead time, to plan, prepare, market and execute exhibitions. This operational requirement necessitates receiving advance notice from government and public health officials in order to make the necessary arrangements to reopen exhibitions that will take place in several months.

# Guidelines

The health and safety of all participants in exhibitions (exhibitors, attendees and workers) is a top concern amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, all parties must place an increased focus on physical distancing, as well as health, hygiene and safety in order to reopen exhibitions. When the exhibition industry is allowed to reopen, the health and safety of all participants will be paramount, and will guide our approach, with all reopening actions to be informed by provincial guidelines, health data and the adoption of clear measures.

## Occupational Health and Safety

The recommendations in this guide constitute a set of industry specific best practice guidelines for the reopening of the exhibitions sector in British Columbia. These guidelines should be used by exhibition stakeholders as a supplement, in addition to the obligations that already exist under the Province's existing Occupational Health and Safety Acts, including all existing resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace.

[BC Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

[BC's Restart Plan](#)

[Work Safe BC](#)

## HEALTH HYGIENE AND SAFETY MEASURES

<b>Venue and Organizer to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appoint a Health and Safety Point Person for the duration of the exhibition, including planning, set up, the exhibition days and dismantling of the exhibition, to ensure best practice guidelines are being followed.</li><li>• Implement, as required, a pre-work screening "health check" with workers, at the beginning of each shift, in accordance with public health regulations. This may include an active daily screening of workers for symptoms of fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose or difficulty breathing. Workers with these symptoms should not be allowed in the workplace and should be advised to return home.</li><li>• Encourage workers to clean their hands regularly with hand sanitizer or soap and water, including at the start of their shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared / common items, after using the washroom, after any commercial transactions if contact was made, and at the end of their shifts.</li><li>• Ensure that key workers (cleaning, medical, food and beverage workers) are provided with and trained on the safe use of personal protective equipment which may include masks, eye protection and gloves. Continuous masking of all workers should be considered where physical distancing cannot be maintained between workers and between workers and exhibitors/attendees.</li><li>• Promote contactless payments at restaurant / food areas, on-site box office, and anywhere else on the exhibition site where commercial transactions</li></ul>
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	<p>might take place. If a cash payment is accepted, worker (cashier) should immediately sanitize their hands after completing the transaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure shared equipment, machinery and tools, including but not limited to forklifts, pump trucks and scissor lifts, are regularly cleaned and disinfected.</li> <li>• Use appropriate disinfectant solutions, approved by Health Canada, for all cleaning and disinfecting procedures.</li> <li>• Ensure that any information booths, service counters, registration areas, box offices, restaurants / food service areas etc. are equipped with transparent partitions between workers and exhibitors/attendees.</li> <li>• Strongly encourage participants to use personal protective equipment, including masks, when on-site at the venue.</li> <li>• Encourage a no-contact policy (e.g. no shaking hands or exchanging business cards, encourage contactless payment and the advance purchase of tickets by visitors).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Venue to:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post signage outside all entrances to the building, including loading docks and parking garage entrances, stating that individuals with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or individuals who have been asked to self-isolate by public health authorities, are restricted from entering the premises.</li> <li>• Install hand sanitizing stations and/or hand washing stations at key locations throughout the venue and exhibition site including entrances, restrooms, food and beverage locations, conference rooms, etc. with regular use encouraged for all participants.</li> <li>• Strongly encourage hand sanitizing and/or washing upon entry into the venue.</li> <li>• Operate all food service areas as outlined by public health regulations.</li> <li>• Conduct a thorough cleaning of exhibition site, as outlined by public health regulations, prior to move-in, before the exhibition opens and at the end of each exhibition day.</li> <li>• Implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols with special attention to high-touch surfaces and areas including door handles, restrooms, waste receptacles, counters, seating areas, food preparation areas, pay stations, bank machines, ramps, escalators, elevators etc.</li> <li>• Implement appropriate measures for restrooms which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ managing line-ups at the entrance points to each restroom</li> <li>○ publishing the maximum capacity for each restroom</li> <li>○ putting every other urinal “out of service”</li> <li>○ maintaining restroom doors in the open position</li> <li>○ install hand sanitizing stations at entrance/exit of restrooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Display / publish cleaning protocols and measures.</li> <li>• Increase the collection and removal of waste receptacles.</li> <li>• Consider suspending coat check services, to avoid queuing and the unnecessary handling of personal objects, or implement enhanced health and safety measures to adapt coat check services and operations. In cases where coat check is managed by the organizer, this responsibility should be assumed by the organizer.</li> <li>• Ensure ventilation, temperature, humidity and air purification controls inside the venue meet the standards set out in public health regulations.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage procedure to address on-site concerns and answer questions from participants.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizer to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post signage outside all entrances to the exhibition stating that individuals with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or individuals who have been asked to self-isolate by public health authorities, are restricted from entering the exhibition site.</li> <li>• Post signage around the exhibition reminding participants to clean their hands regularly, avoid touching their face, practice respiratory etiquette and for exhibitors to clean and disinfect their booths regularly.</li> <li>• Consider eliminating badges, badge holders and lanyards in favour of a bar coded confirmation on the participant's mobile device. If badges, holders and lanyards must be used, they should be cleaned and disinfected before distribution.</li> <li>• Discourage handouts on show site, including exhibitors' brochures, guides, catalogues and bags.</li> <li>• Clean and disinfect any and all audio-visual equipment after each use, according to the manufacturer's instructions on products and process to avoid damage.</li> <li>• Communicate to exhibitors their responsibility to clean their respective booths and exhibits regularly throughout the exhibition.</li> <li>• Manage procedure to address concerns and answer questions from participants.</li> </ul>

### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES**

<b>Venue to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate that all venue workers practice appropriate physical distancing measures, in accordance with public health regulations. If a situation occurs where it is impossible to maintain physical distancing, a mask should be mandated and worn by workers. In this case, the venue will provide its workers with masks.</li> <li>• Introduce barriers, demarcate floors and plan for additional attendants to administer physical distancing guidelines in areas under the venue's management where line-ups might occur.</li> <li>• Manage restaurant seating and layout (where applicable) to enable appropriate physical distancing, in accordance with public health regulations.</li> <li>• Post the maximum capacity of each elevator, based on appropriate physical distancing in accordance with public health regulations.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizer to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate that all participants practice appropriate physical distancing measures, in accordance with public health regulations. If a situation occurs where it is impossible to maintain physical distancing, a mask should be mandated and worn by participants. In this case, the organizer will provide its participants with masks.</li> <li>• Ensure that during the set up and dismantling process, a dedicated worker (with a mask) is stationed at the entrance of the loading docks, to ensure the</li> </ul>

	<p>delivery and pick-up of material is managed according to a pre-set move-in and move-out schedule and to control the number of individuals in the loading docks and on the exhibition site. In cases where dock access is managed by the venue, this responsibility should be assumed by the venue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design floor plan with aisle widths and booth layouts to allow participants to practice appropriate physical distancing, in accordance with public health regulations.</li> <li>• Introduce barriers, demarcate floors and plan for additional attendants to administer physical distancing guidelines in areas under the organizer’s management where line-ups might occur.</li> <li>• Manage seating in conference spaces (where applicable) to allow participants to practice appropriate physical distancing, in accordance with public health regulations.</li> </ul>
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**CROWD CONTROL MEASURES**

<p><b>Venue to:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage entry and exit points to and from the exterior of the building, in case of an emergency, participants must have access to all emergency exits in the building.</li> <li>• Remove or restrict seating in waiting areas and create a process to ensure attendees stay separate while waiting to enter the exhibition site (e.g. floor markings, outdoor distancing, etc.).</li> <li>• Consider how emergency preparedness plans are impacted by COVID-19 public health measures (e.g. building evacuation plans).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organizer to:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage number of exhibitors and their workers on exhibition site during set up and dismantling.</li> <li>• Enable online registration and online ticketing, wherever possible, to reduce contact onsite.</li> <li>• Limit the number of participants on the exhibition site in order to enable physical distancing, in accordance with public health regulations. Some suggested strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ managing the number of people based on area in gross square feet</li> <li>○ restricting the capacity in the venue to a pre-determined percentage of maximum capacity</li> <li>○ implementing designated time slots for participants</li> <li>○ implementing advance registration and advance ticketing</li> <li>○ using, where appropriate, directional arrows on the floor, to create a logical flow of traffic throughout the exhibition site, to reduce crossover between attendees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATION MEASURES

<b>Venue to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate in advance to the organizer and the venue’s official suppliers, all health, hygiene and safety measures; physical distancing measures; and crowd control measures that they are expected to follow and implement during the exhibition.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizer to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate in advance to exhibitors and attendees, all health, hygiene and safety measures; physical distancing measures; and crowd control measures that they are expected to follow and implement during the exhibition.</li> <li>• Ensure each exhibitor signs an Exhibitor Health and Safety Acknowledgment Form outlining their obligation to respect and enforce certain health, hygiene and safety measures; physical distancing measures; and crowd control measures, with their own workers and within their own booth space. See attached sample of Exhibitor Health and Safety Acknowledgment Form.</li> <li>• Ensure each exhibition supplier (decorators, A/V companies, registration companies, staffing agencies etc ...) signs a Supplier Health and Safety Acknowledgment Form outlining their obligation to respect and enforce certain health, hygiene and safety measures; physical distancing measures; and crowd control measures, with their own workers while at the venue. See attached sample of Supplier Health and Safety Acknowledgment Form.</li> <li>• Communicate safe reopening guidelines in exhibitor manual, on exhibition website, on mobile apps and through push notifications (if applicable).</li> <li>• Display signage throughout the exhibition site to communicate the most important health, hygiene and safety guidelines, as well as physical distancing guidelines.</li> <li>• Consider making announcements about the importance of maintaining physical distance and the importance of washing and sanitizing hands, in addition to other safe reopening practices.</li> <li>• Communicate with attendees in advance - through email, social media channels, ticket purchasing sites and push notifications (if applicable) - key pieces of information, including updates from health organizations about admission policies; health, hygiene and safety guidelines; physical distancing guidelines; and crowd control guidelines.</li> </ul>

# Appendix A

The Canadian Association of Exposition Management (CAEM) gratefully acknowledges the following taskforce members for lending their valuable time and knowledge in developing the Canadian Exposition Industry – Safe Reopening Guidelines:

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