



caem CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
of EXPOSITION MANAGEMENT

acge L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
de GESTION D'EXPOSITIONS

August 24, 2020

Dr. Bonnie Henry, MD, MPH, FFRCPC
Provincial Health Officer
Ministry of Health
4th Floor, 1515 Blanshard Street
PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT,
Victoria BC V8W 9P4

Dear Dr. Henry,

The Canadian Association of Exposition Management (CAEM) represents the producers, suppliers and venues which comprise the Canadian Exhibition Industry. CAEM has been working with industry leaders as well as Infection Prevention and Control Canada to develop a set of reopening guidelines. Subsequently, we have met virtually with WorkSafeBC to review the guidelines. They offered extensive and specific input about how we should best assess the risks associated with every aspect of conducting an exhibition. The WorkSafeBC COVID-19 six step safety plan template helped us to identify the specific risks associated with producing an exhibition. Our guidelines then addressed the specifics on mitigating each of the risks. Additionally, we expanded on some of the guideline's definitions, including the criteria and accountability of our Health & Safety Point People. The result was that we revised our guidelines, resubmitted them to WorkSafeBC and received this response on July 27:

All the revisions you mention and their inclusion in the Guidelines represent a marked enhancement of the document and its utility. I would like to specifically reference the prominent attention given to risk assessment, which has to be the very foundational piece and building block of every site specific protocol. The emphasis on training and communication, along with the high degree of collaboration and coordination that's encouraged between the different parties also merit acknowledgement.

Overall, it is fair to conclude that this is a useful document that's easy to follow and should assist the venues, event organizers, and other employers in developing their specific protocols. The Guidelines are now at a point where it's unlikely that they would benefit from additional input from us, given that WorkSafeBC is only in a position to provide high level feedback and any further detail would have to have site specific focus. Also, please note that while we have been able to provide comment, WorkSafeBC does not approve or endorse plans.

Finally, we wish all the best to CAEM, its members and all their stakeholders.

Tom Pawlowski, Manager, OHS Consultation & Education Services, WorkSafeBC

Further to the development of CAEM's Guidelines, we understand that each show producer, venue and supplier would also need to complete a reopening guideline document, specific to each event. Having said that, producers require significant lead time so an approval to proceed today doesn't necessarily represent an immediate re-opening of our sector, however it allows us lead time to plan and proceed.

On August 7, we read the new BC Public Health Act Order for Gatherings and Events, which replaced the July 27th document. Based upon the updated information it contains, especially surrounding information about who the Order does **not** apply to, we believe our sector falls within that category. Looking at the updated Order, it states:

For certainty, this Order does not apply to workers at a worksite when engaged in their work activities, workers living at a work camp; students, teachers or instructors at a school or post-secondary educational institution when engaged in educational activities; customers in a mall or retail establishment when engaged in shopping activities or seeking services; individuals attending an episodic vending market;

Exhibitions fall into the episodic vending market category, as they are retail in nature. Exhibitions differ greatly from social events, meetings, conventions, galas or conferences, which are highly social in nature. In fact, they are defined as comprising vendor stalls, behaving in a manner similar to retail outlets or farmers' markets. As an industry, and with the oversight of IPAC and WorkSafeBC, we have developed the [BC-Exhibition-Industry-Safe-Reopening-Guidelines](#) and are confident that we can operate with a level of safety and compliance that meets and exceeds that which is currently outlined for big box stores or markets. The other consideration worthy of mention is the size of exhibition venues. The massive square footage should play a role in establishing the number of people allowed to gather and could be based upon the industry standard approach to assigning a set square footage allowance per person.

Based on the information outlined above, our sector is respectfully submitting a request for an exemption to the 50 person gathering limit and would be happy to meet and discuss protocol with you and Public Health to best determine how we move forward safely and responsibly together.

Thank you,



Bianca Kennedy, Chair
Exposition Recovery Taskforce
Vice President, CAEM



Catherine MacNutt, Co-Chair
Exposition Recovery Taskforce
President, CAEM