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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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# Canadian Exhibition Safe Reopening Guidelines – At a Glance

## SAFE REOPENING COMMITMENT

The Canadian Exhibition Sector commits to work in collaboration with Public Health, Government and all Stakeholders to establish and follow guidelines for a safe, responsible and effective reopening.



## PHYSICAL DISTANCING & CROWD CONTROL



Exhibitions will follow provincial public health regulations and Health Canada protocol to ensure a safe and controlled environment throughout all stages of the exhibition. This will be achieved by managing entry and exit points, number of exhibitors, workers or participants on the exhibition site, restricting capacity in the venue to adhere to physical distancing guidelines, and designing floor plans to direct traffic flow throughout the exhibition.

## INCREASED HEALTH & HYGIENE

Enhanced Health, Hygiene and Safety Measures will include Health and Safety point persons, hand sanitizing and/or hand washing stations, health screening of workers, favouring contactless payments, increased cleaning protocols, the recommended use and training of PPE and encouraging a no contact policies between stakeholders.



## COMMUNICATION TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS



Policies will be communicated to all stakeholders in advance of the exhibition and will be reinforced with on-site messaging through personnel, signage, websites, social media, and push notifications (when appropriate).

## A SAFE REOPENING PLAN FOR EXHIBITIONS TO HELP RESTART THE ECONOMY

By implementing these safe reopening guidelines and adhering to provincial public health regulations and Health Canada guidelines, exhibitions – with clear physical distancing measures and enhanced health, hygiene and safety protocols – can play a key role in safely 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's Restart Plan](#)

[Work Safe BC](#)



# RISK ASSESSMENT

In accordance with WorkSafeBC, these guidelines are intended to provide a comprehensive plan. The “Risk Assessment” section will identify risks that may occur and will take into consideration the various employers and employees involved. The “Guidelines” section will provide the details to implement the process involved to implement protocol to reduce risks, develop policies, communication plans and training to enforce the protocols and monitor and update the process regularly.

## Risk Assessment:

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE

#### **Risk of cross contamination from event to event.**

Prior to each client taking control of a rentable space, the venue will be sanitized using hospital grade cleaning chemicals and disinfecting tools to ensure the venue is prepared for the client’s possession. Before every event move-in the venue is sanitized from the event prior. Then the venue will be sanitized at the end of move-in prior to show opening to ensure the health and safety of the event attendees. This process will also be completed between show days on the overnight shifts.

### WASHROOMS

#### **Risk: Lack of physical distancing possible. High touch surfaces could spread virus.**

The venue will work with the organizer to identify clear, well identified queuing areas for the washrooms on the show floor. Washroom attendants will be encouraged. Washrooms will be disinfected and sanitized regularly during occupancy. Washrooms will be sanitized and restocked completely every night after the event closes between show days.

### FOODSERVICE AREAS

#### **Risk: Food court areas if left unattended may become soiled and contaminated.**

The food service provider will assign dedicated and uniformed cleaning staff to food and beverage areas. High touch point areas within the food and beverage area will be regularly sanitized. Each point of purchase location will have hand sanitizer available for attendee use.

#### **Risk: Exhibitors may contribute to spread of virus if not instructed and trained.**

Exhibitors will be given a checklist, instructions and acknowledgement form to train themselves and their staff on protocol for distancing at the booth, cashless transactions, cleaning of surfaces, barriers between booths and fellow exhibitors. Employers will be encouraged to provide training and orientation on protocol and policies.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Risk: Build-up of waste in receptacles as well as cross contamination due to disposing of PPE in the wrong garbage stream.**

Highly visible containers and instructions will be available throughout the venue and will be regularly emptied and high touch surfaces will be sanitized by venue staff.

## HVAC SYSTEMS

**Risk: Virus transmission via poor air exchange and ventilation.**

Venue to monitor air flow, and building temperature and adjust regularly to ensure clean air is maintained.

## EMPLOYEE SCREENING

**Risk: Symptomatic employees may spread virus.**

All employees will be subject to a questionnaire asking specific questions regarding their health and wellness before the start of their shift. Staff are encouraged not to come to work if they are not feeling well.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PPE

**Risk: The lack of PPE supply or use may result in virus spread where physical distancing is not possible.**

Quantities of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and wipes will be made available by the venue and organizer. Exhibitors will encourage use of PPE at the booth level. The wearing of PPE is at the discretion of the employee, however in the instance that their job or task cannot be performed while maintaining appropriate physical distancing allowance (2 meters), or the job function requires protection, PPE must be worn.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

**Risk: Lack of detail and training may result in poorly managed emergency response.**

Venue and organizer to provide updated Emergency Response Plans to include virus protection measures.

## ENHANCED EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND AWARENESS

**Risk: Staff must be trained to assess, mitigate and follow COVID-19 protocols as outlined by employers at every level to avoid potential virus spread.**

All employers at the exhibition will instruct employees in advance of the exhibition about all health & safety risks, policies and protocol and their specific tasks and responsibilities. Training will be encouraged and monitored/updated on a regular basis. This includes venue, organizer, exhibitors, general service contractor and suppliers.

## COMMUNICATION

### PRE-EVENT

**Risk: Lack of pre-event communication can result in the confusion of the event attendee.**

Event organizers along with the venue may work together to formulate a detailed communication plan prior to the event, providing clarity for event attendees, exhibitors, suppliers and workers. The use of all communication channels should be strategized and applied in a consistent method.

### SIGNAGE

**Risk: Unclear direction may result in lack of physical distancing or virus spread. Signage is integral, to creating consistent clear messaging.**

A detailed signage plan needs to be in place for each event. Venue and Organizer may collaborate on the development of this plan. This will include Informational Signage such as, common sense hygiene practices, physical distancing, be prepared for possible line-ups, specific event entrances and sanitization practice signage.

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

**Risk: Exhibitors, Workers, Suppliers and attendees will arrive through a number of doors at the venue. Expectations must be outlined in advance and on-site to ensure physical distancing is met.**

Entrance protocol and policies will be communicated to all parties in advance and during the event. Venue and organizer to consider an on-site training session for all employees.

### Floor plan

**Risk: A floor plan needs to include physical distancing and appropriate traffic flow to discourage physical proximity and virus spread.**

Show organizer and general service contractor will develop a floor plan that allows for physical distancing and appropriate traffic flow.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY POINT PERSONS

**Risk: Hierarchy and accountability of health and safety personnel must be outlined and coordinated between the venue and organizer.**

Venue and Organizer to each appoint a health and safety point person. Policies, protocol, monitoring and reporting to be outlined in advance of each exhibition. Qualifications may include first aid accreditation, security training and/or COVID-19 protocol training. In the guidelines below, the responsibilities of the venue and organizer are outlined. The point people report to the most senior manager on-site for the Venue and the Organizer, who will be responsible for making final decisions on recommendations from the Health & Safety Point People. The Venue and Organizer Health and Safety Point People will communicate and collaborate in their actions and reporting.

## HEALTH HYGIENE AND SAFETY MEASURES

<p><b>Venue and Organizer to:</b></p>	<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 might take place. If a cash payment is accepted, worker (cashier) should immediately sanitize their hands after completing the transaction.</li> <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,</li> </ul>

	<p>food and beverage locations, conference rooms, etc. with regular use encouraged for all participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <li>• Manage procedure to address on-site concerns and answer questions from participants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organizer to:</b></p>	<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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage procedure to address concerns and answer questions from participants.</li> </ul>
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### **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 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.</li> <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>

## CROWD CONTROL MEASURES

<b>Venue to:</b>	<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>
<b>Organizer to:</b>	<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;</li> </ul>

	<p>and crowd control measures, with their own workers while at the venue. See attached sample of Supplier Health and Safety Acknowledgment Form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><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>
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# 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:

**Catherine Macnutt – Co-Chair Recovery Taskforce**  
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