



# JANUARY 2021 – PANDEMIC:

## ADAPT AND ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

# A TOOL FOR ACA\* BOARDS OF DIRECTORS



\*Autonomous community action

Translation: courtesy of Townshippers' Association

The second wave of COVID-19 entails new measures put in place by the government—a harsher lockdown and a curfew. With these in mind, organization boards of directors and administrators must juggle multiple issues to legally adapt their practices—respect the culture that is specific to ACA organizations—and comply with the public health measures in place.

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:



Whenever possible, opt for virtual group or individual activities.



Anyone out and about between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. is likely to be interrogated by the police.

If your organization's activities conclude after 8 p.m., it may be beneficial to inform your local police force.

### Lockdown :

#### For community organizations funded by the PSOC

These organizations can maintain their activities and services within their premises as long as public health measures are respected. To do so, refer to the *Guide pour le maintien et l'adaptation des activités et services offert par les organismes communautaires* (Guide in French for maintaining and adapting activities and services offered by community organizations). This guide was updated in January.

#### For family community organizations

The government only authorizes physical, in-person meetings for emergency needs—it is up to each organization to determine whether a situation is urgent or not. The same holds true for community drop-in childcare services. You can refer to the *Ministère de la Famille's decision-making tool* (in French only) *Outil d'aide à la prise de décision ministère de la Famille*.

### Curfew:

People who are in need of emergency help or aid in meeting basic needs—and people in distress—can visit organizations that will welcome them after the curfew time.

Workers who are responsible for these services and outreach workers will be allowed to circulate when the curfew is in effect. **We strongly suggest that you provide each employee—who will be required to circulate between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m.—with an attestation justifying his/her movements**

If a person must leave your organization after 8 p.m. (e.g., a youth centre that closes at 9 p.m.), **we suggest that you provide them with a business card or a document displaying the organization's coordinates and the telephone number of a person to contact if necessary.** Doing so could avoid lengthy explanations to the police.

# Health and safety:

**Administrators have a legal responsibility to provide this component for employees, volunteers and members.** If an individual within the organization has concerns about their health, they have the right to file a complaint with the (CNESST) *Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail* (Commission on Occupational Health, Safety, and Security); if there is an investigation, you may have to justify any decisions and practices in place as they relate to health and safety in this context.

**In order to adequately reflect on a gradual deconfinement plan adapted to your specific context several components need to be discussed and considered. This should be done collectively, by members of your BOD and in collaboration with management and the work team. The information package from the CTROC is a comprehensive resource that can help facilitate this discussion.**

**In addition, we have included some discussion starting points below:**

- What is the current situation of your employees and/or volunteers?
- What parts of the organisation should be closed, opened, or modified?
- Does your civil liability insurance need to be reviewed?
  - although this is an exceptional situation, it is a good idea to verify that your organisation is protected in the event of litigation should an individual contract COVID-19 and pursue a claim.



## Caring for emotional and mental well-being

Epidemics are a stressful and anxious time for all of us. Be on the lookout! This year more than ever, employees, volunteers, and management will need time (vacation or otherwise) to relax and unwind.

- ◆ What mechanisms have you/can you put in place to ensure the well-being of your volunteers, management and work team?
- ◆ How have you planned for the organisation's summer period (in addition to vacation time for management and the work team)?

## Your choices: a reflection of your values



As an NGO you are all working for a fairer and more equitable world; you work to improve people's living conditions and develop individual and collective potentials. **Since you know how to do this for your members and your community, you also know how to do this for your volunteers, the work team and management.**

As a member of the BOD of an NGO it is important to **be compassionate**. During these troubled times, individuals may not be able to perform at the same level as usual and expectations must be adjusted.

For more details about autonomous community action (ACA) values, [please click here](#).

*Wrapping up...*

# Checklist



## Continue working with telecommunication

For organizations that are able to use telecommunication, this is the easiest way to protect ourselves and our communities.



## Find the right tools

A great deal of information has been made available during this unprecedented time. Gather the information you need, pay attention to the sources of the information you find, and take the time to analyze it together before making decisions.



## Focus on communication

Make sure that information is well-circulated throughout the organization and that your communications are useful and easy to understand. Do not forget to use humour– it can be good for the soul right now!



## Flexibility and patience

Things are changing quickly and everyone's ability to adapt may be wearing thin. It is normal to feel overwhelmed by the situation and important to remember that everyone reacts differently.



## Keep in touch

Our relationships are more important than ever. Nourishing them with positivity and caring can improve our collective ability to get through this pandemic.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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