



Public Recreation Sector Impact, Province-wide Restrictions

February 3, 2020

BCRPA's municipal and regional district members responded to our survey (January 29 through February 2, 2021) asking the anticipated impact on programs, facilities, and staff if the current province-wide restrictions are extended past February 5th. The response rate was 60% from municipalities ranging in size from Vancouver to Ucluelet.

Summary Findings

The majority of community sport participants access their sport on public recreation fields, courts, pools, arenas, and gymnasiums. The pandemic has reduced capacity in indoor spaces, and the current Province-wide Restrictions has further reduced access to adult physical activity and non-physical activity. An extension of the current Province-wide Restriction period will further decrease access to public indoor spaces because municipalities will be forced to respond to the acute financial challenges by reducing operating hours and/or access to amenities or closing facilities completely.

Many adult and older adult residents benefit mentally, socially and spiritually through participation in individualized and controlled arts and culture activities. Further extensions disallowing these types of activities in public recreation centres have great impact on the communities' health. From a financial perspective, many of the adult programs subsidize the lower priced children and youth programs.

The Survey asked about three scenarios of restriction extension periods: 2 weeks, 4 weeks, and over 4 weeks. See Appendix A below for a comparison of current status to these three scenarios. We note that the data in this survey analysis reflects 60% of the public recreation sector; the 40% of municipalities that were not able to respond would offer percentages similar to their peers, and therefore the actual projections are up to 40% higher than reported.

Looking at the 4-week scenario, municipalities report that 45% will close a facility (now at 37%), 92% will close amenities within facilities (now at 71%), and 98% will reduce operating hours (now at 75%). Half of the municipalities have laid off permanent staff and 20-30% have laid off casual/auxiliary staff; this percentage increases to 63% for permanent staff layoffs and 31-47% for casual/auxiliary staff layoffs if the restrictions are extended by 4 weeks.

Public access Previous to the pandemic

- 75% of British Columbians visited public recreation facilities annually (Vital Signs, 2017)

- Indoor recreation facilities record over 30 million visits annually, in addition to sport groups (BCRPA sector survey 2018)
- There are upwards of 500 public facilities, of which there are 175 swimming pools (122 indoors) and 153 ice arenas (147 indoors, 191 sheets of ice), in addition to gymnasiums, fitness and arts studios, sport courts (indoors and outdoors), curling rinks, youth and senior centres, sport fields, and other amenities (BCRPA sector survey 2018)

Current Status, as at February 2nd, 2021

Facilities:

- **37%** of respondents have **already** closed facilities
- **75%** of respondents have **already** reduced operating hours
- **71%** of respondents have **already** closed select amenities within a facility, including saunas, wave pools, fitness spaces, meeting rooms, squash / racquet courts, food and beverage centres, indoor play structures, table tennis, bleachers, change rooms, and more.

Staff:

- **50%** of permanent staff have been laid off or had hours reduced
- **20-30%** of casual and auxiliary staff have been laid off or had hours reduced

The Anticipated Impact of Extended Provincial-wide Restrictions, in addition to current status: Three Scenarios

Scenario 1: If restrictions extended for 2 weeks

Impact on Facilities and Amenities

- **10%** report they would need to **close additional facilities**, these include:
 - 5 Ice Arenas
 - 3 Seniors Centres
 - 1 Curling Rink
 - 1 Gymnastics Facility
- **24%** report they would need to **close additional amenities within a facility**, these include:
 - 4 Gymnasiums
 - 2 Fitness Centres
 - 2 Weight Rooms
 - 6 Racquet Courts
 - 19 Multi-Purpose Rooms
 - 9 Indoor Cycling studios
 - 6 Arts Studios
 - 40 Meeting Rooms

- 9 Seniors' Centres
- 1 Youth Centres
- 2 Curling rinks
- **26%** report they would need to **further reduce operating hours**, affecting:
 - 18 Ice Arenas at 20% to 50%
 - 11 Pools / Aquatic Centres at 10 to 50%
 - 35 Recreation Centres at 10% to 75%
 - 5 Seniors Centres at 30% to 75%
 - 1 Youth Centre at 50%
 - 2 Community Halls at 10% to 50%
 - 16 Fitness Centres at 10% to 80%
 - 1 Curling Rink

Impact on Personnel

- **26%** report part-time or full-time permanent will be affected:
 - **80 to 90** to be **laid off**
 - **40 to 43** to have **working hours reduced**
- **55%** report casual and auxiliary staff will be affected:
 - **121 to 125** to be **laid off**
 - **852 to 857** to have **working hours reduced**

Scenario 2: If restrictions extended for 4 weeks

Impact on Facilities and Amenities

- **21%** report they would need to **close facilities**:
 - 12 Ice Arenas
 - 2 Recreation Centres
 - 3 Seniors Centres
 - 1 Community Hall
 - 1 Fitness Centre
 - 3 Curling Rink
 - 1 Gymnastics Facility
- **29%** report they would need to **close additional amenities within a facility**:
 - 6 Gymnasiums
 - 5 Fitness Centres
 - 2 Weight Room
 - 6 Racquet Court
 - 9 Indoor Cycling Studios

- 18 Arts Studios
 - 69 Meeting Rooms
 - 19 Multi-Purpose Room
 - 9 Seniors' Centres
 - 2 Youth Centres
 - 3 Curling Rinks
- **31%** report they would need to **reduce operating hours**, affecting an additional:
 - 28 Ice Arenas (20% to 50% reduced hours)
 - 13 Pools / Aquatic Centres (20% to 50% reduced hours)
 - 43 Recreation Centres (10% to 75% reduced hours)
 - 5 Seniors Centres (30% to 75% reduced hours)
 - 1 Cultural Facility (90% reduce hours)
 - 3 Community Halls (10% to 75% reduced hours)
 - 19 Fitness Centres (25% -50% reduced hours)
 - 1 Curling Rink

Impact on Personnel

- **29%** report additional part-time or full-time permanent will be affected including:
 - **109 to 119** to be **laid off**
 - **65 to 68** will have **working hours reduced**
- **58%** report additional casual and auxiliary staff reductions including:
 - **198 to 213** to be **laid off**
 - **Approximately 887-892** will have **working hours reduced**

Scenario 3: If restrictions extended for more than 4 weeks

Impact on Facilities and Amenities

- **35%** report they would need to **close facilities**:
 - 27 Ice Arenas (8 communities will have no arenas)
 - 1 Pool
 - 4 Recreation Centres
 - 6 Seniors Centres
 - 1 Youth Centre
 - 1 Cultural Centre
 - 2 Community Halls
 - 1 Fitness Centre
 - 2 Curling Rinks
 - 1 Gymnastics Facility

- **29%** report they would need to **close additional amenities within a facility**, including:
 - 13 Gymnasiums
 - 5 Ice Arenas
 - 10 Fitness Centres
 - 2 Weight Rooms
 - 6 Racquet Courts
 - 9 Indoor Cycling Studios
 - 18 Arts Studios
 - 139 Meeting Rooms
 - 46 Multi-Purpose Rooms
 - 9 Seniors' Centres
 - 3 Youth Centres
 - 3 Curling Rinks

- **31%** report they would need to **reduce operating hours**, affecting an additional
 - 32 Ice Arenas (20% to 50% reduced hours)
 - 14 Pools / Aquatic Centres (20 to 50% reduced hours)
 - 35 Recreation Centres (10% to 75% reduced hours)
 - 5 Seniors Centres (30% to 75%)
 - 1 Cultural Facility (90% reduced hours)
 - 3 Community Halls (10% to 75% reduced hours)
 - 21 Fitness Centres (10% to 30 reduced hours)
 - 1 Curling Rink

Impact on Personnel

- **33%** report additional part-time or full-time permanent will be affected including:
 - **142 to 154 permanent staff** to be **laid off**
 - **89 to 93 permanent staff** will have **working hours reduced**

- **58%** report additional casual and auxiliary staff reductions including:
 - **284 to 306** to be **laid off**
 - **Approximately 964** to have **working hours reduced**

Conclusion:

The longer the restrictions are extended, the more deleterious the impact on municipal recreation services and facilities. These impacts on the services and facilities impact communities, employees, and participants.

While the financial challenge of the reduced activity impacts every facility and service, the smaller towns are hit the hardest because their reductions and closures will leave many with no alternative in the community for arenas, pools, fitness studios, gymnasiums, recreation centres, and meeting spaces.

The survey findings are based on a 60% response rate representing the entire province, so to extrapolate the projections to 100% of the municipalities the picture is stark for a continued closure of more than 2 weeks.

Municipalities report that, in addition to the current cutbacks, a four-week extension of the current restrictions would see further cuts:

- 33 additional facilities would close (37% of municipalities have already closed facilities),
- 148 amenities within facilities would close (71% have already closed select amenities within facilities),
- 114 facilities would reduce operating hours (75% have already reduced operating hours),
- 174-187 permanent staff would be laid off or have hours reduced,
- 198-213 casual and auxiliary staff would be laid off,
- 887-892 casual and auxiliary staff would have hours reduced.

These impacts of a four-week extension would be compounded with an extension longer than 4 weeks, creating so severe an impact that recovery would be long and challenging.

The pandemic has reduced the community's participation in physical and non-physical recreational activities in public recreation spaces, but not the demand or need. Many residents are experiencing declining fitness and overall health as a result of their inability to access safe and controlled physical and static activities. A continued restriction of activities will continue to reduce access to recreation facilities due to the fiscally necessary closures, reduced hours, and reduced staff. As sport, physical activity, and non-physical recreational pursuits begin to return there will be an increasing lag-time for facilities to restart the longer the restrictions remain.

Appendix A: Comparison of Current Facility and Staff Reductions with Extended Restrictions

Municipalities closed facilities

	Current reduction since restart in September	2-week extension of restrictions	4-week extension of restrictions	over 4-weeks extension of restrictions
Percentage Change from Current		additional 10%	additional 21%	additional 35%
Actual %	37%	41%	45%	50%

Municipalities closed amenities within facilities

	Current reduction since restart in September	2-week extension of restrictions	4-week extension of restrictions	over 4-weeks extension of restrictions
Percentage Change from Current		additional 24%	additional 29%	no further reductions possible
Actual %	71%	88%	92%	92%

Municipalities reduced operating hours

	Current reduction since restart in September	2-week extension of restrictions	4-week extension of restrictions	over 4-weeks extension of restrictions
Percentage Change from Current		additional 26%	additional 31%	no further reductions possible
Actual %	75%	95%	98%	98%

Municipalities laid off or reduced Permanent Staff

	Current reduction since restart in September	2-week extension of restrictions	4-week extension of restrictions	over 4-weeks extension of restrictions
Percentage Change from Current		26% will further lay off or reduce hours	additional 29%	additional 33%
Actual %	50% (laid off staff)	63%	65%	67%

Municipalities laid off or reduced Casual and Auxiliary Staff

	Current reduction since restart in September	2-week extension of restrictions	4-week extension of restrictions	over 4-weeks extension of restrictions
Percentage Change from Current		55% will further lay off or reduce hours	additional 58%	no further reductions possible
Actual %	20 to 30%	31% to 47%	32% to 47%	32% to 47%