Guidance for Reopening Museums

Overview

On April 30, 2020, the Government of Alberta released *Opening Soon: Alberta's Relaunch Strategy*. Museums and art galleries were included in Stage One of the relaunch, eligible to reopen as early as May 14. This stage allows "some businesses and services to reopen and resume operations with 2-metre physical distancing requirements and other public health guidance in place."[1] Given the rapid timeline and the unique circumstances faced by museums and heritage organizations, the Alberta Museums Association (AMA), has created this advisory document to help clarify museum-specific considerations and requirements to reopen safely.

The overall guidance presented here draws heavily on the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document for businesses reopening or continuing operations, published after May 1, 2020, as well as discussions with members of the AMA and review of the recommendations and procedures put in place in other jurisdictions.

In reviewing the Government of Alberta legal requirements and business guidance, as well as the museum-specific considerations below, **museums should strongly consider if, how, and when they should reopen to the public** in any form. The reopening of sites and renewed offering of services must ensure minimal risk to the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors and may require modifying plans, staggering relaunch activities, or even postponing opening or launch dates entirely as circumstances evolve. Museums must ensure they are considering all the factors when making the decision to reopen.

It is important to recognize that while many businesses and staff may desire to return to pre-COVID-19 normal routines and operations, museums and cultural sites will require adaptations. **A return to normal is not the goal.** Museums are also encouraged to consider new methods of operation and to continue successful engagement programs started during closure.

Ensuring the safety of museum staff, volunteers, visitors, and members of the larger community is of utmost importance when evaluating options for reopening and plans for renewed operations. This includes preventing the risk of transmission of infection by screening for symptoms, maintaining high levels of hygiene, regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and workspaces, using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as necessary, and following physical distancing requirements. For a full list of requirements and suggestions on the prevention of transmission of infection including screening protocols, hygiene guidance, cleaning and disinfecting, the use of PPE, human resources implications, and other procedures, please see the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document.

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[1] Government of Alberta, "Opening Soon: Alberta's Relaunch Strategy," p. 9. Accessed May 11, 2020. https://www.alberta.ca/external/covid19-alberta-relaunch-strategy.pdf.

Disclaimer and Liabilities

This advisory resource is intended to serve as a guide to considerations for museums and related institutions as they plan to reopen sites to staff, volunteers, and the visiting public, and to restart programmatic activities. It includes information specific to the museum sector compiled and developed from documents released by the Government of Alberta, including noting legal requirements where applicable.

This advisory resource is not meant to supersede any regulations, requirements, or advice given by the Government of Alberta or additional municipal bylaws and requirements. Should any additional regulations, requirements, or guidelines be made available that conflict with this document, that guidance should be followed over the advice contained here.

Museums are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the current legislation and advice from all levels of government, and to seek legal and other expert advice on their specific circumstances as needed. For full information, including public health orders currently in place as well as the latest information on restrictions or relaunch stages, please visit the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 website (www.alberta.ca/covid19).

This document also provides best practice information compiled from AMA resources and learning opportunities, as well as from other associations, organizations, or museums around the world, that specifically addresses common needs and areas within museum work. The examples, suggestions, and samples are presented as is, without any guarantee or warranty of any kind, expressed or implied. Museums should not rely wholly or substantially on the contents of samples provided here other than as a basis for their original work, and should develop original materials based on their unique circumstances.

This is a living document. It was last updated on **June 5, 2020**.

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Reopening Considerations for Museums

The Government of Alberta has provided planning tools for businesses reopening to the public to assist them in developing and implementing policies and procedures to address COVID-19, including developing plans to reduce the risk of transmission among staff and visitors. A voluntary planning template is available to assist in outlining relaunch considerations and actions taken to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This resource is available through the Alberta Biz Connect website, and you can download it directly here.

The completed plan does not need to be submitted to the government; however, it is recommended that the plan be posted in places of business or online **within 14 days of the public being able to attend the business**. For example, if your museum opened on May 14, the plan must be available to the public and posted by May 28. The AMA recommends using the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document, the *Guidance for Museums and Art Galleries* document, and the additional considerations presented in this document to complete the Relaunch Considerations template.

The following are considerations for museum-specific functions and areas of operation, or suggestions for adopting the Government of Alberta guidelines for use in museum spaces. In addition to the considerations below, tools to help respond to these considerations can be found through the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 website (www.alberta.ca/covid19) and through AMA resources such as *Standard Practices Handbook for Museums,* 3rd Edition, and *HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museums*, 2nd Edition, which has associated online tear-out pages and templates available on the AMA website (www.museums.ab.ca).

In considering and planning for the guidelines below, museums should maintain and regularly review their Emergency Response Team structures and processes in case of an outbreak or a non-COVID-19 emergency.[2] This team may also serve (in total or in part) as your museum's Re-entry or Reopening Team, if you choose to create one.

Review and Prepare Museum Space

Conduct a review of your space including performing a full Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) hazard assessment in light of OHS changes due to COVID-19. The AMA also has museum-specific resources available for hazard assessment and other response solutions.

> *HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museum*s, 2nd Ed., has a chapter on response (Chapter 3) including identifying hazards (3.5) and re-entering the museum (3.4), and a tear-out resource for an Emergency Preparedness Team Contact Form (Tear-Out 1.2).

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[2] The Alberta Museums Association has a variety of emergency response tear-out resources from the *HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museums, 2nd Ed.,* available on our website including Tear-Out 1.2: Emergency Response Team Contact Form template. You can also access Part 1 and Part 2 of the AMA Membership Advisory resource for managing your museum's pandemic response.

Ensure an adequate supply of hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) is available onsite for museum staff, volunteers, and visitors. Hand sanitizer should be supplied for visitor use at facility entrances and exits and throughout the venue.[3]

At points of regular contact between visitors and staff, Plexiglass shields or guards should be considered. Key locations may include admissions, retail, and interpretive areas.[4]

Physical Distancing Requirements

Museum spaces, both workspaces and those that are accessible to the public, must meet conditions that allow for physical distancing requirements. Conditions must allow for a **minimum physical distance of 2 metres** to be maintained in all interactions, whether among staff, among visitors, or between staff and visitors. Spaces where lines can form or where people gather should be regulated to ensure minimum physical distancing is maintained. When establishing your facility and gallery capacity limits, the best practice is to allow for **10 square metres of space per person**.[5]

Consider spaces where visitors may naturally congregate, such as seating areas or feedback stations. At a minimum, limit the potential for congregating by marking off areas to allow for appropriate physical distancing. Consider removing these places altogether.

Signage and Wayfinding

Clear and prominent signage outlining the steps your museum is taking to limit the risk of transmission should be available to the public and staff at points of entry, in common spaces, and in high traffic areas such as washrooms. Transparency in what steps your museum is taking will help visitors feel more comfortable with what is expected of them and the ways you are working to keep them safe.

Informational signage, instructional signage, and wayfinding signage should be used throughout your space.

Examples of informational signage:

- Outlining the steps staff are taking to clean and disinfect spaces
- Outlining changes to museum areas or programming to help limit the risk of transmission
- Self-screening instructions to ensure visitors or staff do not enter if feeling unwell

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[3] Government of Alberta, "Guidance for Museums and Art Galleries." Accessed May 13, 2020.
https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-museums-art-galleries.pdf.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

Sample:

COVID-19 INFORMATION

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD

Prevention starts with awareness. Be informed on how you can protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

- Now mandatory to self-isolate for 10 days if you're feeling sick
- Now mandatory to self-isolate for 14 days if you're returning from international travel, or in close contact with people confirmed to have COVID-19
- When you leave home, maintain physical distancing of 2 metres
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and avoid touching your face

Examples of instructional signage:

- Outlining physical distancing requirements
- Outlining health and safety requirements
- Instructions for timed ticketing (made available both online and onsite)
- "Do Not Enter" or "Closed" signs on areas or interactive displays that cannot be disinfected or where physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Codes of conduct for behaviour in museum spaces or for museum program activities
  - Signage instructing visitors to ask before passing in narrow areas where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
  - "Do Not Touch" reminders throughout the museum space
  - Information stating that visitors will be asked to leave the museum space if they do not comply with new processes

Sample:

SORRY, I'M DIFFICULT TO CLEAN

PLEASE NO TOUCHING
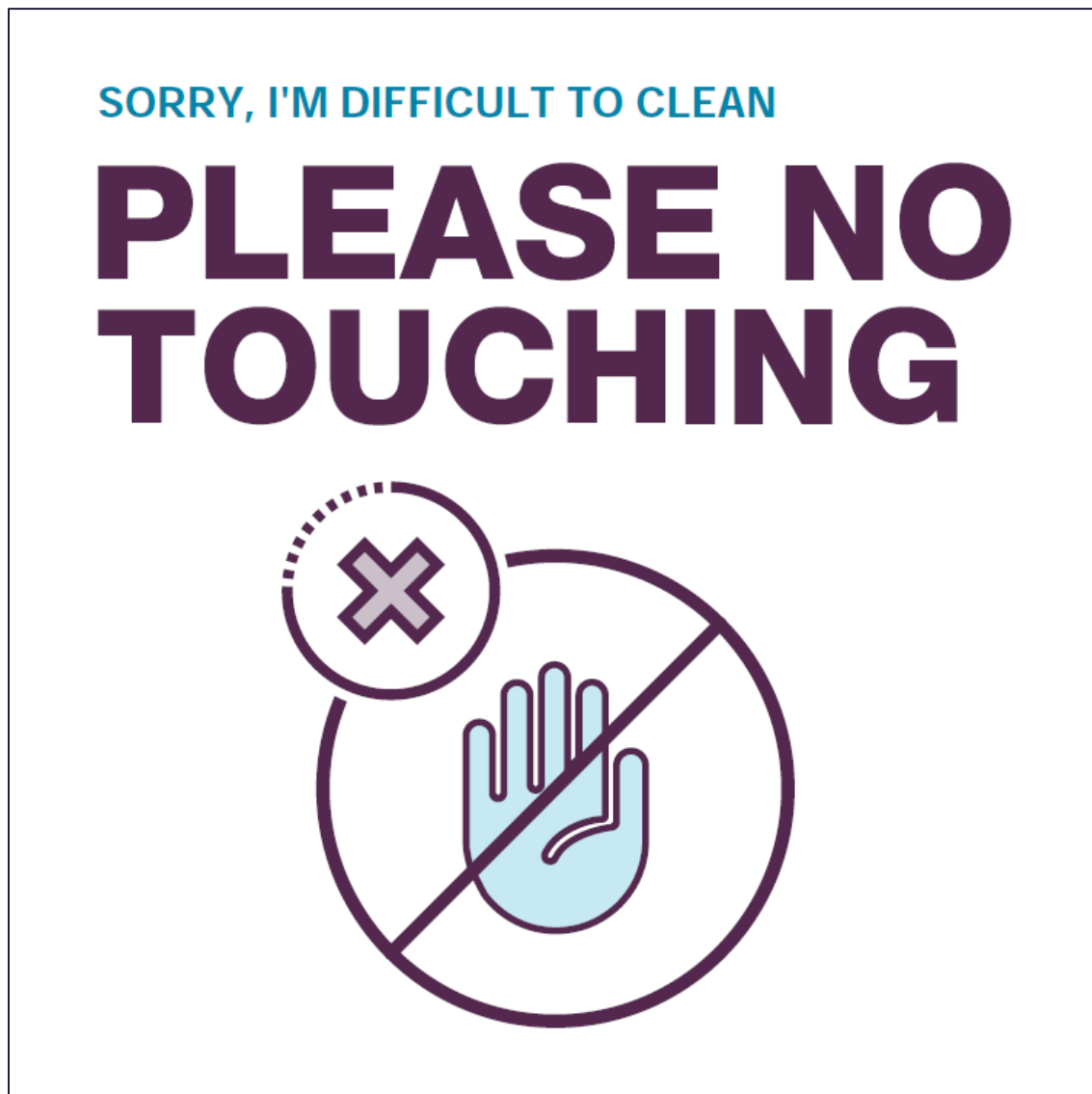
Examples of wayfinding signage:

- Taped arrows or vinyl signage directing visitor flow through museum spaces
- Floor signs demarcating 2-metre distance in line up areas or high traffic spaces
- Diagrams of flow through one-way areas or narrow corridors / spaces
- Instructions to wait until a person has exited in narrow or confined spaces
- Information on queuing process for gift shop or program areas

Sample:

Resources

- [Alberta Health Services posters](#) (hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, etc.)
- [Government of Alberta, "COVID-19: Help prevent the spread" information posters](#)

Attendance Limits: Advance Ticketing, Timed Entry, and Crowd Control

Attendance limits should be implemented to ensure that your museum can maintain conditions that allow for physical distancing of **10 square metres per person**. Procedures and products that can assist with managing visitor attendance and distancing in museum spaces include advance ticketing options, timed entry, and crowd control.

Advance ticketing allows for limits to the total number of guests attending your site in a day. Ticketing platforms may already be available through municipal governments, and a variety of low-cost options – from online ticketing platforms to customizable software providers – may be sourced. The total numbers of tickets sold per day should reflect your museum's space and occupancy capacity based on 10 square metres per person. Additional considerations to help you determine ticketing include visitors' regular length of stay, space requirements for modified directional flow through exhibit areas, and the ability to maintain a minimum of 2 metres of distance at all times. Advance ticketing will most often require online purchasing, though some platforms may allow visitors to pay upon arrival.

Timed entry, which can usually be applied within most advance ticketing options, allows you to prearrange when guests arrive onsite and enter your space. This may help limit the number of people congregating in entryways, stagger movement throughout the space, and allow for regularly timed cleaning processes by staff and volunteers. Timed entry does not, however, guarantee visitors will arrive on time or move through the space at the same speed.

Additional methods of **crowd control** may be used to limit people in museum spaces or to direct traffic flow. These include:

- Limiting visitors to a set number within a space that has a common entrance and exit.
- Modifying visitor flow by creating one-way movement from a dedicated entrance to a dedicated exit.
- Using wayfinding signage, especially in confined spaces and high traffic areas (see above).
- Remove seating or other areas where visitors may congregate or dwell for extended periods of time.

These methods of crowd control may require additional staff or volunteers to supervise or manage, such as one person counting visitor entry and opening doors at set times. Additional personnel may also be required to supervise visitors within museum spaces, including to monitor for consistent 2-metre physical distancing between individuals or small groups.

Payment Methods

Museums are encouraged to develop robust and secure online payment options, particularly for use with advance ticketing options where possible. If advance ticketing is not available, museums are encouraged to offer contactless payment options for visitors onsite to limit the amount of cash handling required.

> Debit machine PIN pads are difficult to clean thoroughly. One practice to assist with cleaning is to wrap PIN pads in cling film and using heavy duty cleaning products on the film after each use. The film should be replaced multiple times per day.

Donation bins should be cleaned and sanitized regularly. Money collected from donation bins should be handled following proper hand hygiene protocols. Museums are encouraged to check with their financial institutions on proper cash handling and deposit processes for each institution. If financial institutions are not allowing deposits or if money cannot be stored securely onsite, museums are encouraged to find alternate donation methods or to remove cash donation bins entirely.

Interacting with Visitors

Museum Tours

Museum programming activities should only be conducted after a thorough hazard review process, and with adequate staff training.

Museum tours are discouraged as they generally require distinct groups of visitors to congregate together. If your museum conducts tours, limit attendees to one family group or an appropriate number of attendees for your space. Maintain at least 2 metres of physical distance and adhere to gathering restrictions at all times for visitors and staff / volunteers. Guides must be trained in distancing policies and have comfort addressing other visitors attempting to join the tour in progress. It may be more practical to conduct outdoor tours.

Group tours may be replaced by self-guided tours or audio guides. If your museum provides handheld audio guides, staff should be trained in cleaning and disinfecting the guides immediately upon return and before they are placed in charging stations – and preferably, before the guides are placed on a counter or in a return bin.

If your museum provides or is transitioning to app-based or online audio tours, consider your public WIFI capabilities. There are a variety of free, low-cost, and high-cost audio guide platforms and providers available.

If your museum does continue with in-person tours and normally provides seating aids (small stools, chairs, or wheelchairs for people who cannot stand for the duration of the tour), ensure these are contained within your altered cleaning procedures or consider not providing them.

Educational Programming

Docents and gallery attendants remain a good option for in-person programming and interpretation in museum spaces; however adequate steps must be taken to ensure their safety and that of the visitor. Using barriers or tape markings may assist in keeping visitors

and attendants separate in set areas. Removing or modifying education stations to be "look" and not "touch" activities may also be applicable.

> If your museum has circulating education kits that remained in the community during your museum closure, CCI recommends ensuring items such as these are isolated for a week to nine days and / or thoroughly cleaned and disinfected upon their return.[6]

Educational programming, such as for schools or community groups, is not currently feasible or permitted. Schools remain closed in Stage One of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy and large gatherings are discouraged. Daycares are operating with limits on occupancy and currently must not participate in field trips or related activities.[7]

Summer Day Camps

While summer day camps are permitted under Stage One of the Government of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy, specific and strict requirements are in place which may significantly limit options for camp activities. Official guidelines include regular screening requirements, contact logs, isolation requirements, and closure instructions to mitigate the risk of exposure. Please review the *Guidance for Day Camps* information published by the Government of Alberta for the full guidelines, along with the information below, in order to determine if holding summer day camps is feasible for your museum.

Summer day camps are limited to 10 people, including staff and children. When determining if a camp can operate with a limited cohort 10 people, consider activity spaces (including washroom availability), activity types, and staff capacity for regular cleaning and disinfecting. If running multiple camps, you must be able to ensure there is absolutely no crossover between cohorts, or the equipment and spaces they use. Field trips and group transportation are prohibited.[8]

The *Guidance for Day Camps* also includes strict cleaning requirements for shared spaces used by the camp. The requirements state that "programs that utilize a space that has other user groups … must ensure the space is cleaned before and after using the space. It is recommended that cleaning be done by one person within the cohort directly before the group enters the space and after it exits the space. A cleaning log must be posted and used

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[6] Canadian Conservation Institute, "Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Accessed May 15, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html. CCI recommends isolating incoming materials for a week to nine days for heritage collections items and materials that cannot be easily cleaned or disinfected (Question 15). Materials that are non-historic or that do not contact collections surfaces may be cleaned and disinfected according to proper guidelines and Health Canada product recommendations (Question 9).

[7] Government of Alberta, "Guidance for Licensed Child Care Centres (Daycares and Out-of-School care)," point 30. Accessed May 15, 2020. https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-daycare-out-of-school-care.pdf

[8] Government of Alberta, "Guidance for Day Camps." Accessed May 15, 2020. https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-day-camps.pdf

to track cleaning."[9] Therefore, accessible museum areas such as gallery spaces or food areas **must be cleaned before and after camp use**.

> One camp staff member from the allowed 10-person cohort should be responsible for cleaning before the camp, and no public entrance is permitted until a second cleaning is conducted after the camp.

Camp activities must account for requirements to maintain physical distancing and limit contact with frequently used or shared items. Suggestions for activities that limit shared materials or spaces include:

- Individual material kits unique to each camper that are given at the start of each week and that contain all the supplies required. Kits should be left onsite and sanitized at the end of each day.
- Activities that do not require touch, shared objects, or congregating around one object.
- Individual desks for each camper instead of shared activity tables to allow a minimum of 2 metres of distance.
- Meals outside on personal picnic blankets.

Contingency and response plans must be in place in case a camper or staff member displays symptoms of COVID-19 at any point in the day. This includes protocols for immediate isolation, child supervision (both for the child(ren) requiring isolation or if a staff member must leave immediately), and emergency parental contact.[10]

Facility Rentals

Facility rental programs, such as for weddings, conferences, and parties, should be suspended if the delivery of and attendance at events cannot adhere to distancing and gathering restrictions.[11]

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[9] Government of Alberta, "Guidance for Day Camps."
[10] Ibid.
[11] Government of Alberta, "Guidance for Museums and Art Galleries."

Cleaning and Sanitizing Museum Spaces and Interactives

Regularly cleaning and disinfecting objects, surfaces, and workspaces is necessary to minimize the risk of transmission of infection. General requirements and suggestions on cleaning and disinfecting procedures can be found in the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document. However, museums face unique challenges in following these protocols and must take additional considerations into account.

When applying the guidance in this document, consider the frequency of use of objects, surfaces, and spaces, as well as your staff and volunteer capacity for regular cleaning. The risk of transmission may be offset by requiring the use of hand sanitizer before and after use; however, **this is only practical if such protocols are enforced**. Ensure that altered cleaning procedures are included in your museum's collections management and emergency planning policy and procedure documents.

If there are areas of your museum where physical distancing or regular cleaning is not practical or cannot be maintained with the guidance in this document or from the Government of Alberta, those spaces should be closed. This may include theatre spaces, children's play or discovery areas, small display areas or rooms, and areas accessible only by opening doors. This may also include seating areas and soft surfaces.

Interactive features should be removed or covered if they cannot be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Examples of interactive features may include touchscreens, video play buttons, answer-reveal tabs or covers, drawers, toys, headsets, and touchable models or reproductions. Video and film stations normally triggered by touch may be played on a loop, if possible, with the touch buttons covered.

Museums should also consider whether Braille panels or other accessibility features for visitors with limited vision should be cleaned or covered. If they continue to be available, these features should be included in highest frequency cleaning procedures. If covered, they should be replaced with other accessible options such as interpreters trained in low-vision tour practices.

Collections objects or heritage materials should not be cleaned or disinfected. However, collections workspaces and non-heritage surfaces, such as tables, desks, shelves, and carts that are used for work with collection artifacts or archival records, may be safely disinfected using well-controlled methods. Test first and consider the effects of overspray or dripping on any nearby collection items. For more detailed information on safely disinfecting non-historic surfaces and collection workspaces, see Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the Canadian Conservation Institute reference document, *Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

Please see the next section for considerations specific to the care of collections and heritage materials.

Resource

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility*

Care of Collections and Heritage Materials

Do not clean your collections or heritage materials. The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) has created a detailed reference document specific to the care of heritage collections during the pandemic. The CCI document outlines the risk of spread of infection on collections surfaces, steps for mitigating risk, guidelines for object quarantine if necessary, and instructions for cleaning and disinfecting collections spaces.

Using Isolation to Prevent Contamination

CCI recommends using isolation to prevent or deal with contamination of collection spaces and objects whenever possible. The following provides an overview of CCI guidance:

- A minimum **isolation period of a week to nine days** is recommended for collections, objects, or heritage spaces that may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- The isolation period is longer for collections with significantly drier or colder conditions. See Questions 2 and 3 of the CCI document.
- If you must close and isolate your building, ensure that nobody enters the building(s) once isolation has started.
  - o If faster access is required, maintain isolation for 24 hours to allow aerosols to settle, followed by cleaning and disinfecting of high touch, non-heritage surfaces using well-controlled methods. See Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the CCI document for more detailed information.
- If it has been more than seven days since the infected person was in the building, further cleaning and disinfecting is not required.
- After the isolation period of spaces with collections objects or heritage finishes, follow with a thorough regular cleaning to control viral spread.[12]

If your museum remains closed with no staff onsite, minimize risk to collections by ensuring items are stored correctly, security systems are in place, pest management protocols and materials are up to date, and staff are following regular collections storage practices similar to CCI guidelines for seasonal museum closures.[13,14]

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[12] Canadian Conservation Institute, "Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Accessed May 15, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html

[13] Ibid.

[14] Canadian Conservation Institution, "Closing a Museum for the Winter." Accessed May 15, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/closing-museum-winter.html

Precautions when Handling Collections Objects and Heritage Materials

As collections cannot be cleaned, special care must be taken when handling objects to minimize the risk of contamination due to exposure to COVID-19. The following provides an overview of CCI guidance:

- **Disinfecting collection objects or heritage materials is NOT recommended.** Isolate materials instead.
- Use appropriate PPE (such as gloves and masks) when handling materials. Where gloves may not be appropriate, ensure staff follow proper hand washing protocols (using water and soap) prior to handling objects and records as an alternative.
  - If handling materials, hand washing or use of disposable gloves is preferred over the use of hand sanitizers. Heritage conservation and best practice considerations note that hand sanitizers may leave residues on objects or records that could lead to damage.
- Maintain a collections interaction log where staff track every item they work with. This will facilitate isolation and contact tracing if a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not remove or relocate objects due to COVID-19 concerns as this may increase risk of damage. Also, objects themselves may be contaminated and could potentially increase the risk of spread.
- For incoming materials such as donations or loans, isolate materials for a week to nine days in a dedicated isolation room or space (see below).
- Develop a tracking method for determining when objects can be removed from isolation.
- Clean and disinfect carts each time they are used to transport potentially contaminated material.[15]

Responding to COVID-19 Exposure

If a person infected with COVID-19 has been in collection spaces and there is a concern of exposure to COVID-19, first ensure that you follow current public health guidelines for people who were in close contact with the infected person or who shared workspaces.

CCI has provided steps for heritage protection in addition to official public health guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting when someone with COVID-19 has been working in collection spaces. The following provides an overview of CCI guidance:

- **Disinfecting collection objects or heritage materials is NOT recommended.** Isolate collections spaces and materials instead.
- Close off areas used by the infected person and increase air circulation.
- Isolate spaces with collections objects or heritage finishes **for a week to nine days**.
  - The isolation period is longer for collections with significantly drier or colder conditions. See Questions 2 and 3 of the CCI document.

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[15] Canadian Conservation Institute, "Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic."

- Collections workspaces and non-heritage surfaces, such as tables, desks, shelves, and carts that are used for work with collection artifacts or archival records, may be safely disinfected using well-controlled methods.
  - Test first and consider the effects of overspray or dripping on any nearby collection items.
  - See Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the CCI document for more detailed information on safely disinfecting non-historic surfaces and collection workspaces.
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting all areas accessed by the infected person to allow aerosols to settle.
- Do not remove or relocate objects due to COVID-19 concerns as this may increase risk of damage. Also, objects themselves may be contaminated and could potentially increase the risk of spread.
- Use appropriate PPE (such as gloves and masks) when handling materials. Where gloves may not be appropriate, ensure staff follow proper hand washing protocols (using water and soap) prior to handling objects and records as an alternative.
  - If handling materials, hand washing or use of disposable gloves is preferred over the use of hand sanitizers. Heritage conservation and best practice considerations note that hand sanitizers may leave residues on objects or records that could lead to damage.
- If you must close and isolate your building, ensure that nobody enters the building(s) once isolation has started.
- If your museum remains closed or is closed with no staff on site, ensure items are stored correctly, security systems are in place, pest management protocols and materials are up to date, and staff are following regular collections storage practices similar to seasonal museum closures.
- Follow isolation with a thorough regular cleaning to control viral spread.
- If it has been more than seven days since the infected person was in the building, further cleaning and disinfecting is not required.[16]

Museums should continue best practices of keeping a collections interaction log where staff track the items they work with to facilitate isolation and contact tracing if a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19. Ensure staff have all materials or tools to work remotely for nine days when possible if your collections space must be isolated.

Collecting and Accepting Donations

Museums are continuing to accept donations or have actively requested items for their collections while closed. Review your collecting policies and procedures to ensure this activity can continue while meeting staff capacity and physical distancing guidelines. Modify procedures or temporarily suspend activities as needed.

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[16] Canadian Conservation Institute, "Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic."

If your museum has actively sought donations from your community relating to COVID-19 (such as artwork, journals, social media posts, or photographs), ensure you review your collecting and acquisition policies and procedures to determine how and what you will collect, and provide clear communication to potential donors about how and when your museum will collect items safely.

Some considerations for collecting include:

- Ensure you have the proper collections and usage rights for digital content.[17]
- Ensure you have the ability and capacity to store digital content, including metadata.
- Ensure staff have the capacity and ability to review and receive donations given other work duties that may have changed as a result of reopening.
- Ensure clear communication that your museum does not and will not accept unsolicited items dropped off outside of your collecting structure.
- Consider accepting donations on a day when your museum is not open to the public in order to limit people onsite.
- Consider traffic flow and limiting donors from having access to staff areas or collections areas.

When handling donated materials, apply the following guidance from CCI:

- **Do not use cleaning supplies on heritage materials.**
- Isolate incoming materials for a week to nine days. Create a dedicated temporary isolation room or space to ensure you have adequate room to quarantine accepted items for a minimum of nine days.
- Use PPE (such as gloves and masks) when handling incoming materials.
- Develop a tracking method for determining when objects can be removed from isolation.[18]

Museums should continue best practices of keeping a collections interaction log where staff track the items they work with to facilitate isolation and contact tracing if a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19. For additional guidance relating to handling collections, review the CCI guidelines for caring for heritage collections, and the section above.

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[17] The Copyright Office at the University of Alberta has a Canadian Copyright Term and Public Domain Flowchart for easy reference available here: https://www.ualberta.ca/media-library/ualberta/faculty-and-staff/copyright-office/can-pd-flowchart-14jan2020.pdf. The Canadian Intellectual Property Office has a Guide to Copyright available here: https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr02281.html. Usage of social media posts are governed by the platform's terms of reference and are generally free to use; however this may result in perception issues if museums do not ask permission to use content first. A born-digital work's copyright is dependent on what copyright is implemented by its creator and generally falls under regulations guiding physical artifacts. Museums should continue abiding by the Canadian Copyright Act (RSC 1985 C-42, as amended) and Alberta Personal Information Protection Act (SA 2003, c P-6.5).
[18] Canadian Conservation Institute, "Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic."

Other Considerations

There are a variety of other considerations that are not specific to museums but that may affect museum operations. Consult the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document for overall guidelines for all businesses reopening or continuing operations.

Some key considerations museums should be aware of are noted below.

Internal Communications

Internal communications are especially important when considering reopening your museum. Museum leaders should communicate regularly with their staff and volunteers, including to outline new requirements, changes to the museum space and operations, and plans for reopening. For a full list of communications considerations relating to COVID-19, see page 2 of the Government of Alberta's *Workplace Guidance for Business Owners* document.

Internal communications may also include staff-wide progress reports from your Reopening or Re-entry Team (if applicable). Staff should be updated regularly about the reopening plan, including timelines associated with reopening and new procedures when back onsite.

Be mindful of including those who should receive updates but who may not otherwise be receiving regular internal communications. Depending on your communications practices, this may include volunteers or those who have been temporarily laid off.

Thank all staff and volunteers who have continued to provide valuable service under unique circumstances while the museum is closed and as you move to reopen. Acknowledging the challenges you have endured and recognizing the contributions of all members of your team will help to ensure there is a culture in the museum that focusses on strong staff morale, team building, and the health and well-being of all.

External Communications

External communications are also an important element of reopening your museum. Sharing the ways you are working to ensure the health and safety of all who enter your museum will allow you to reassure the visiting public and establish clear codes of conduct. As Albertans learn more about reopening plans across all sectors, museums should communicate their individual reopening plans, changes to operations, and expectations for visitors.

Considerations or examples of potential communications include:

- Outlining of steps taken to ensure visitor safety (cleaning, physical distancing, signage, staff protocols, temporary closure of spaces, etc.)
- Opening hours (regardless if changed from pre-closure hours)

- Changes at the museum, particularly as they affect the visitor experience, to provide visitors with an understanding of what to expect when they arrive
    - Changes to payment options
    - Crowd control measures
    - Changes to amenities or accessibility
- Code of conduct or expectations for visitors attending the site, provided in advance of the visit if possible (e.g., in an email and / or on the museum's website)
    - Presence of hand sanitizer
    - Required advance ticketing, if applicable
    - No large groups or gatherings permitted

External communications may also provide opportunities to determine your visitors' interest or comfort in returning to your museum given the current restrictions on movement or perceived risk of transmission. Sourcing this information on a sector level or within your unique community will help you determine business case scenarios for reopening.

Museums are encouraged to continue the transparent and personable communications initiatives and styles seen during closure. Communications about reopening provide opportunities to let visitors see "behind the curtain" at how their favourite museum operates, how it needs support, how it is a vital contributor to the community, and how it is working to keep the community safe.

> The Government of Alberta recommends that businesses **post information about their relaunch considerations within 14 days of reopening to the public**. The Relaunch Considerations plan outlines the policies and procedures implemented by the museum to reduce the risk of transmission among staff and customers. Using the Government of Alberta template is optional, but recommended. You can access the template through the Alberta Biz Connect site or download it directly here.

Considerations for Business Continuity and Long-term Sustainability

The impact COVID-19 has already had on business operations and revenue is significant, but the impact of reduced visitation and altered operations once a museum has reopened should also be considered.

Museums are encouraged to conduct their own business continuity scenario simulations, including best case, worst case, and probable case assessments of revenue based on the restrictions and considerations above. For example, conduct revenue scenario simulations for your museum from potential reopening dates but operating at 50% or 25% visitation from the same period last year, having no large group visits or programs, having reduced membership renewals, and other metrics. Models should also include the risk of additional extended closures or closure for a full season. These forecasts should be weighed against

increased operational costs associated with staffing, PPE and disinfectant supply purchases, and other costs of your COVID-19 response.[19]

It is likely that some museums may be faced with one of two situations: having too many visitors as people seek a return to regular life, or having too few visitors to justify regular operations. Ensure your planning, as well as relevant policy and procedure documents, reflect these potential scenarios.

Opening Hours and Ticketing Rates

Scenario simulations should also **consider changes in ticketing prices or donation revenue** based on lower offerings or price sensitivity. Ensure that your ticketing models reflect any changes to gallery availability, temporary exhibitions, visitor programs, or children's areas. Review if changes to operations and availability of museum spaces, programs, and experiences justify lowering ticket prices.

Opening hours may also be affected by staff availability, increased cleaning requirements, and changes to museum operations. Some galleries may need to be closed at different times based on staff availability, museums may choose to open only for peak visitation days, or some may wish to offer extended hours or special hours specifically for high risk groups. Review any external influences, such as changes to public transit hours, in this decision-making process.

Staffing

Staff and volunteers should have a clear understanding of new requirements, changes to the museum space and operations, and plans for reopening before they return onsite when your museum reopens.

Retraining sessions may also be necessary once staff and volunteers are back onsite. Depending on the size of your organization, you may need to stagger training schedules to maintain physical distancing conditions that accommodate the number of staff you need to retrain before reopening. See the section above for physical distancing requirements.

Consider that the capacity for some staff or volunteers to return to work onsite may be impacted. Some may be in vulnerable categories and therefore may be unable to return to work or may not feel safe doing so. Other factors impacting capacity to work onsite at the museum may include the suitability of current work environments, availability of public transit, cohabitating with high risk individuals, or responsibilities caring for others. When considering what accommodations can be made, consult the Government of Alberta's Temporary

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[19] Judge, Angie, Pip Gilbert, and Diana Pan, "Scenario Simulation – planning for an uncertain future." Webinar, Leading in Crisis, New Zealand / United States of America, May 8, 2020. Dexibit is a software company supporting visitor attractions around the world, including offering free scenario planning tools during COVID-19. Their webinar on scenario planning can be accessed here: https://dexibit.com/covid19/webinars/.

Workplace Rule Changes, as well as the Occupational Health and Safety resources specific to COVID-19 found here.

The shifting circumstances of the pandemic may require your museum to close or staff to work remotely for an extended period. Ensuring staff can continue their work offsite if required is vital to the continued operation of museums. It will also be important to communicate with volunteers who can work remotely to develop new ways for them to contribute to the museum. If you have not already done so, develop policies and procedures for work-from-home situations, and ensure that training is provided for all staff and volunteers. When developing plans, consult the Government of Alberta's resource outlining best practice guidelines for working from home during a pandemic.

Consider the policies and procedures that must be implemented at your museum should an individual member of your team need to self-isolate for a period of 10 days or more. Such plans should consider how integral an individual is to day-to-day operations or program offerings such as summer camps. These considerations may have a larger impact on the ability of small museums to provide programming or maintain regular open hours.

In addition, contingency plans should be in place to account for any sudden operational changes associated with staff or volunteers showing symptoms of COVID-19. If there is a concern that a person with COVID-19 has been in the museum, please see the section "Responding to COVID-19 Exposure," above.

Conclusion

There are many requirements to be met and museum-specific elements to be considered when planning for reopening. In addition to the guidelines above, reopening may be further impacted by regional or local guidelines and requirements, changes to the scheduled timelines for lifting restrictions, or the introduction of revised guidance.

Stay up to date on the current legislation and advice from all levels of government, including public health orders currently in place as well as the latest information on restrictions or relaunch stages. For current information, see the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 website (www.alberta.ca/covid19).

Reopening will look different for every museum. Museums are encouraged to approach reopening by emphasizing safety and minimizing risk rather than focussing on visitor numbers or attempting to return to normal operations and revenue.

The reopening of museum spaces, buildings, and offerings in stages where possible may ease the transition to public operations. Some museums may decide to remain closed, either for some weeks until more restrictions are lifted or for the season until regular operations can resume.

Staying closed or having an incremental reopening plan can allow more time to plan operations, train staff, and build stockpiles of supplies to ensure your site does not need to roll back services unnecessarily in the future.

If your museum chooses to remain closed or keep some areas closed, ensure collections remain safe and secure by following CCI guidelines for caring for collections during COVID-19 and for closing a seasonal museum.

Contact Information

If you have questions about this document or further reopening guidelines, please contact the Alberta Museums Association by emailing Ben Fast, Program Lead, at bfast@museums.ab.ca.

Appendix A: Sample Plan for Reopening

Reopening your museum with the considerations presented earlier in this document require significant planning. The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing and evolving situation, with a longer immediate presence than most other natural disasters museums in Alberta may have dealt with. Given the continued risk of transmission of infection, the way precautionary measures affect all areas of museum operation, and the changing nature of government requirements and public health restrictions, plans should be detailed, adaptable, and communicated to all employees.

The following sample plan template is adapted from the AMA's natural disaster recovery tools, as well as plans shared by a group of Quebec art museums (shared through the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization), the Government of Connecticut, The National Archives (UK), the American Association for State and Local History, and the American Alliance of Museums. Museums are encouraged to adapt the tool for use in their local circumstances and for their size of staff. Additional sample plans are available through the American Association for State and Local History and the American Alliance of Museums.

Museum COVID-19 Reopening Plan

Date: *The final date or most recent revision date.*

Emergency Response or Re-Entry Team

Use this section to outline your Emergency Response Team and your Re-Entry Team if you have created one. These staff and their designated roles on the team represent the museum's main contacts in case of a COVID-19 outbreak or other emergency such as flooding or fire.[20]

Current Museum Status

Use this section to outline your museum's current operational status, noting steps taken to close the museum. For example:

> *As a result of the COVID-109 pandemic and in line with direction provided by public health experts and government officials, The Example Museum and its grounds closed on March 15, 2020. All public areas and staff areas have been closed, with access only by the Executive Director to maintain basic business functions. The grounds have been accessed daily by a Security Guard for the purposes of reviewing the security*

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[20] The Alberta Museums Association has a variety of emergency response tear-out resources from the *HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museums, 2nd Ed.* available on our website including the Tear-Out 1.2 Emergency Response Team Contact Form template. You can also access Part 1 and Part 2 of a Membership Advisory resource for managing your museum's pandemic response.

and integrity of the buildings and grounds. The Example Museum and its grounds will remain closed [to the public] until further notice.

The Government of Alberta has announced that museums can develop plans to reopen no earlier than May 14, 2020. The Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Staff are developing a plan to reopen and resume operations.

This section may also outline the general purpose of your re-entry or reopening plan, though you may wish to provide this as its own section.

Current Priorities

Use this section to outline the main priorities of the Board of Directors and senior leadership staff. This includes steps taken to ensure the protection of your museum. For example:

The Board of Directors shall take steps to ensure:

- *The protection of The Example Museum's physical assets, artifact collections, and intellectual property.*
- *The financial and economic viability of The Example Museum until such time as the museum can reopen.*
- *Strategic direction is provided to ensure the Senior Leadership Team can reopen the museum. Effective crisis response will require prompt, decisive action, effective communication, and teamwork between the Board and Senior Leadership Team in order for the Board to fulfil its oversight role.*

The Senior Leadership Team shall take steps to ensure:

- *The development of specific steps to be undertaken to maintain the safety and well-being of our guests, employees, and volunteers upon and after reopening the museum to the public.*
- *Continuity of operations and customer engagement in the near-term until the museum reopens.*
- *The development of training programs as necessary to implement new policies and procedures. Training should be provided as necessary to contractors and subcontractors.*

Timeframe to Reopen

Use this section to outline the timeframe decided by the Board and senior leadership staff for the stages of the reopening plan and the estimated date for reopening the museum to the public. Make note that the earliest reopening date shall be solely dependent on provincial and local government orders and guidelines put in place to limit and mitigate the risk of transmission and the effects of the COVID-19 virus.

You may also wish to use this section to outline in more detail your museum's position within the Government of Alberta's staged Reopening Plan; link to relevant municipal, regional, or provincial reopening initiatives or taskforces;

Ensure this section notes that the museum may not reopen at the earliest date allowable (as set by the Government of Alberta) but that the determination of the actual reopening date remains with the Board of Directors and senior leadership staff. This determination should consider the unique operating circumstances and availability of staff and volunteers prior to the Board of Directors voting on when to reopen public operations.

Board and Staff Priority Actions <u>PRIOR</u> to Reopening

If you have a set re-entry team or committee, list them prior to this section. Ultimately, it is the Executive Director with the guidance from the Board of Directors that is responsible for making decisions on when to reopen and when to allow staff to work in museum areas. Some museum boards may be more active in day-to-day operations or operate only with volunteer staff, so listing decision makers is important.

Use this section to outline priorities for while your museum remains closed to the public through to your reopening date, as well as how these priorities will be accomplished. This may include time before any actions are taken to reopen the museum or before staff are regularly accessing the site.

Priorities for prior to reopening may include:

- *Protection of physical assets (buildings, grounds, collections, etc.)*
- *Protection of financial posture*
- *Continuity of operations*
- *Continuity of customer engagement*
- *Development of strategic staff actions (including for reopening or for changed operations after reopening)*
- *Development of specific steps to maintain the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors (see above for considerations)*
- *Development of signage or materials for use in the museum after reopening*

You may choose to list items in a general list or narrative structure but may find a table such as the example below allows more detail and can be easily adapted to internal communications or team structures.

Objective and Tasks	Responsible Supervisory Staff	Effective Date	Status at Revised Date

Board and Staff Priority Actions When Reopened

Use this section to outline ongoing priorities for your museum after the reopening date but while COVID-19 restrictions remain in place, as well as how these priorities will be accomplished. This section may include ongoing actions with no final date as well as items for staggered reopening activities.

Objective and Tasks	Responsible Supervisory Staff	Effective Date	Status at Revised Date

General Guidelines

Outline general guidelines for staff, volunteers, and contractors in this section. Where applicable, note that more detailed guidelines for specific staff roles, museum areas, or operations are available and where they can be found.

COVID-19, Associated Symptoms, and Potential Transmission

Use this section to outline your response to a potential transmission event or outbreak at your museum. This includes listing the symptoms of COVID-19 or linking to Government of Alberta health documents that contain this information. Outline the steps taken to ensure that all staff are aware of symptoms and the methods of transmission for their own ongoing personal screening or for correctly monitoring visitors.

Include the steps of your response, including notifying Alberta Health Services and immediately disinfecting areas of concern.

PPE and Hand Hygiene

Use this section to outline specific steps taken or procedures implemented surrounding the use of PPE, hand hygiene, or engineering controls for staff and within the museum space. This may include plastic guards, face coverings, gloves, and general hand hygiene.

If there is specific training required for products or cleaning procedures, those opportunities should be outlined here.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Use this section to outline specific procedures, requirements, and instructions for cleaning and disinfecting museum spaces. This should include sub-sections on general cleaning, non-historic assets, and historic assets, as well as general definitions for clarity.

You may wish to detail how procedures have changed but be wary of creating confusion by listing both old and new sets of instructions.

Operating Guidelines

Use this section to detail any changes to operational guidelines, including general operations within the museum and specific public facing roles and tasks (ticketing, retail, programming, food service, etc.).

Communications Procedures and Reopening Plan Updates

Use this section to detail how this plan will be distributed, how staff and volunteers will access this and additional information (including required training), and how updates to this plan will be communicated.

Use this section to also detail how the reopening of the museum will be communicated to the public, including changes to planned operations or reopening dates.

List onsite communications information including the primary contact for emergencies or potential transmission outbreaks, local AHS contact information, and signage inventories.

Attachments

This section may include pictorial instructions for PPE use, floor / site plans, or signage examples.

Appendix B: Ticketing Service Providers

As Alberta museums begin reopening to the public, many are considering the use of online ticketing platforms to limit the amount of person-to-person contact at admissions desks and to help schedule visitor entry as a means of crowd control.

The following service providers or platforms will facilitate online purchasing and / or timed entry. The Alberta Museums Association does not endorse or recommend any product, but is providing this list as a resource to help you determine available options and choose the right platform for your museum's circumstances. Availability and cost of features should be verified with the platform provider.

This list is not exhaustive. If your museum uses a platform and you would recommend it to the Alberta museum community, please email Ben Fast, Program Lead, at bfast@museums.ab.ca.

Click the platform name to view the website for further details. Full options and costs are available by directly contacting the platform provider.

Platform Name	Online Ticket	Timed Entry	Price	Other Features	Comments
Aluvii	✔	✔	Inquire directly with provider.	All-in-one cloud-based platform for bookings, analytics, mobile access, POS, and payments. Hardware options for POS and payments.	Marketed at zoos and aquariums within broader amusement and leisure sectors.
AudienceView	✔	Inquire directly with provider.	Inquire directly with provider.	-	Live events-focussed platform.
Blackbaud Altru	✔	Inquire directly with provider.	Inquire directly with provider.	Cloud-based platform including options for gift shop POS, grant management, membership management, and event management tools.	-
CanadaHelps	✔	Can arrange times as different tickets.	5% transaction fee, including credit card processing costs.	-	Live events-focussed platform part of CanadaHelps' full fundraising account.
Doubleknot	✔	✔	Inquire directly with provider.	Includes options for event management, membership, and fundraising databases, and full customer relationship management options.	Capacity feature allows scheduling cleaning and disinfecting times between visitors.

Eventbee	✔		Tickets can be structured through venue seating options.	Flat fee structure dependent on platform, range: $1.50 - $4.50. $0.25 / ticket discount for non-profit events using Business, Advanced, or Pro levels.	-	Similar to Eventbrite, but aimed at live events. Supports all major credit card processing companies in Canada.
Eventbrite	✔		Tickets can be structured by entry time.	Free for free tickets; packages for Essentials and Professional levels have fees applied to each ticket.	-	Connects to PayPal accounts or has built in payment processing. Primarily aimed at live events.
FocusPoint360	✔	✔	Inquire directly with platform provider.	Integrated software for museums, including options for ticketing, membership, education, group sales, field trip reservations, eCommerce, retail and inventory, and food service management tools.	-
Gatemaster	✔	✔	Starts at $59.99 USD / month / user.	Full platform suite with multiple add-ons at an enterprise level. Starting level includes options for gift shop POS and membership management tools.	-
Korona	✔	✔	Starts at $49.00 USD / month / POS terminal.	POS platform that includes options for collections management, exhibit management, membership management, event management tools.	Aimed at the retail market but provides scalable ticketing and other museum-specific features.
Maxim	✔	✔	Inquire directly with platform provider.	Cloud-based platform including options for gift shop POS, collections, event, and membership management tools.	UK-based platform.

RocketRez	✔	✔	Starts at $15,000 / year.	Includes options for mobile ticketing, membership management, event management, and gift shop POS tools.	Located in Canada. For museums and attractions with annual revenues above $1 million.
Veevart	✔	✔	Customized. Inquire directly with platform provider.	Full platform suite including options for customer relationship management, collection management, gift shop POS, and visitor engagement tools.	-
Versai	-	✔	Starts at $199 USD / month.	Includes options for grant management, membership management, event management, and gift shop POS tools.	This platform is for onsite sales only.