



Bulletin for Manitoba Fire Departments: Department training during COVID-19 Restrictions

Date Issued: March 11, 2021
OFC 21-002

PURPOSE: To provide clear and consistent interpretation of the Provincial Public Health Orders as it relates to a fire departments ability to train under COVID-19 restrictions.

Fire department training is recognized as being critical to ensuring the operational readiness of a fire department and to ensure the safety of members responding to emergencies. Many different approaches to sustaining fire operations have been applied however departments still have many questions surrounding a fire departments ability to train.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner has partnered with members of the Manitoba Fire Service and the Public Health Branch in order to provide the following interpretation of the current Public Health Orders:

- Fire departments can continue to train their members within their firehall or training facility;
- Fire departments must ensure that the applicable protection measures are in place such as:
 - Maintaining a two-metre distance between all members; and
 - The use of masks when distancing is not possible.
- Departments must not extend training to non-employees or outside personnel;
- And departments must complete and adhere to a Safe Work Procedure as required by the Workplace Safety and Health Act.

Fire departments should also consider the following best practices:

- Wash your hands or use alcohol based hand sanitizer frequently;
- Disinfect the fire hall, contents, and equipment;
- Grouping members into smaller work units & review room occupancy; and
- Interactions should be as brief as possible.

Precautions during training should be in place and updated daily and approved by the Fire Chief, Health & Safety Officer, and/or CAO. Risks and benefits are to be considered and a plan to maximize all available public health advice and personal protection measures should be in place.

For further information on how to stay safe during COVID-19, please see the following links:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/updates/prepareandprevent.html#fundamentals>
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/guidance.html>

REFERENCES:

- The Public Health Act (C.C.S.M. c. P210) Orders under *The Public Health Act*
 - No Restriction on Certain Services – Subclauses (e) and (h)
 - Order 10(1)