



The United Church of Canada

Living Skies Regional Council

60A Athabasca St. E.
Moose Jaw, SK S6H 0L2

May 11, 2021

Dear Members and Leaders of Living Skies Regional Council

Greetings friends. Over the last year and a half I have had the responsibility of making sure our communities of faith and their leaders have clear and up to date information regarding pandemic public health orders and guidelines affecting our worship and ministry lives as congregations. So often, the information has been rooted in the hard news that infection and hospitalization rates were increasing and in response restrictions were being added or broadened. The news was not always good or easy to share. Sometimes it felt like for every step forward there were two back. Time and again, the people of this region have shown faithful and resilient response. Today, I am writing in cautious hope that we are now experiencing a movement forward to a new normal. I say cautious hope because there is much that must be taken into consideration by the Government, the Health Authority and each Community of Faith.

As many of you will have heard, the Saskatchewan Government and the Saskatchewan Health Authority have presented their Roadmap to Re-Opening. This plan is presented in three steps directly tied to vaccination rates in the province. I want to walk through the plan and hopefully explain it in a way that makes it a little clearer, especially in relation to places of worship.

The plan looks like this: three weeks after the total vaccinations of people 40 years old and above reaches 70 percent, step one will commence. In this step, places of worship will move from a hard cap of 30 people to a maximum of 150 people or 30% capacity (which ever is lower). Physical distancing and masks are still required. This stage will continue until vaccinations of 30 year olds and older reaches 70%. Three weeks after this percentage is reached, step 2 will commence. The final step relies on vaccination percentage for those folk 18 and above has reached 70%, and starts three weeks after that percentage is achieved. At this point, most restrictions will be lifted. Keep in mind that physical distancing and mask requirements may still be in place. A example timeline for these steps would look like this:

May 10 – 70% of all 40 year olds and older are vaccinated

May 31 – Step One of the re-open plan starts

June 7 – 70% of all 30 year olds and older are vaccinated

June 28 – Step Two starts

July 12 – 70% of all 18 year olds and older are vaccinated

August 2 – Step Three starts.

This is just an example of how the timeline could run. At this point, the time between re-opening steps is directly related to the number of people vaccinated and can be affected by deviations in the infection rates and hospitalizations (if they take a dramatic turn) and the number of vaccinations. The SHA and government officials have confirmed that Step One will commence on May 30, but the time it takes to move from step one to step two, and then step two to step three is dependant on vaccination uptake.

As you can see in the infographic below, step three has most of the health restrictions lifted. However, from the conversation that happened with the Faith Leaders and the Business Response team on May 5th it is clear that the government and the SHA are in conversation regarding what this means for physical distancing and mask wearing. Restrictions and recommendations around such things as sharing food and beverage, celebrating communion, and singing will remain in place into step three until the SHA gives directions otherwise.

We are slowly moving toward our new normal as communities of faith. It is important to remember that this progress can change at any point, but the government is hopeful that we will move forward in this roadmap without any backward steps. A lot of our momentum is dependant on continuing to live into the health mandates and to get vaccinated when you are eligible. Once again, I encourage you, as you are comfortable, to advocate for vaccination and to be open to have conversation with those who are showing vaccination hesitation. Sometimes hesitation is rooted in the unknown, and if you have been vaccinated you can share your experience as a way of easing this unknown. As more information becomes available around step movements and restrictions lifted we will make sure that the information gets to you quickly and clearly!

As always, if you have any questions regarding the pandemic restrictions please feel free to email me (lsrcexecutive@gmail.com) or contact Tracy Murton (tmurton@united-church.ca).

We have great appreciation and deep gratitude for the care and compassion that you have shown throughout the duration of this pandemic. Hope abounds even in the most challenging times, all we need do is keep our hearts and minds open to its presence.

Blessings to you,

Tricia

Re-Opening Roadmap



A three-step plan to gradually lift the current public health orders as Saskatchewan reaches significant vaccination levels.

STEP 1

Three weeks after 70% of people 40+ have received their first dose, and vaccine eligibility is 18+

40 AND OLDER

**TARGET
70%
VACCINATED**

- Restaurants and bars open, maximum six at a table
- 30% capacity or 150 people (*whichever is less*) at places of worship
- Group fitness classes can resume, with three metres between participants
- Limit of 10 people at private indoor, outdoor and household gatherings
- Limit 30 people at public indoor gatherings
- Limit 150 people at public outdoor gatherings

STEP 2

Three weeks after 70% of people 30+ have received their first dose, and three weeks since beginning Step 1

30 AND OLDER

**TARGET
70%
VACCINATED**

- No capacity thresholds on retail and personal care services, must maintain physical distancing
- No table capacity for restaurants and bars, must maintain physical distancing or barriers between tables
- 150 person maximum capacity at event facilities, casinos, bingo halls, theatres, libraries and recreational facilities
- Limit of 15 people at private indoor gatherings and household gatherings
- Remaining restrictions on youth & adult sports will be lifted

STEP 3

Three weeks after 70% of people 18+ have received their first dose, and three weeks since beginning Step 2

18 AND OLDER

**TARGET
70%
VACCINATED**

- Most remaining restrictions will be lifted
- Guidance on gathering sizes and indoor masking is still being developed
- Public health orders from Step Two on gathering sizes and indoor masking will remain in place until that guidance is finalized

Expected Timeline

- STEP 1** Last week in May
- STEP 2** Third week in June
- STEP 3** Second week in July

*Subject to change if vaccination targets are not met