



# MANITOBA LIFE LEASE OCCUPANTS ASSOCIATION

#605-3590 PORTAGE AVE, WINNIPEG, MB R3K 2J1

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN LIFE LEASE BUILDINGS

In late September 2020, a brief survey was sent to all member buildings regarding current actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Following is a summary of responses received from 20 (91%) of our members. Summary comments are not statements of fact for all respondents but the general circumstances as reported. Individual buildings may have different responses or modifications on the summary comment. The term Tenant Council is intended to include tenant associations by whatever name they use.

### ***Are your programs still running? Any special restrictions such as size or distancing, if they are still happening?***

Early on, almost all of the buildings cancelled all regular programming and special events such as dinners. This is relevant particularly to activities that would normally attract larger numbers of tenants. More recently, for some there has been a relaxing of this decision so that activities with small numbers of participants – 10 or less as per Provincial Health Guidelines – can proceed with masks and social distancing expected.

Multi-purpose rooms and common areas generally are reported to be closed. A couple of areas that have mixed responses are the exercise rooms and card game locations. If exercise rooms are open, then they are restricted to 1 or 2 people at a time and the users are expected to sanitize the equipment after use. Lobbies are open but congregating in them is discouraged in most reported instances; and, at least a couple of buildings have mandated no congregating or loitering in the lobby.

### ***Are masks mandatory, recommended or no restrictions? If required or recommended, is it at all times outside of your suite or only in groups or when returning from out of the building? Other?***

Masks are required for all tenants and visitors in 15 respondent buildings. (*Note: Visitors include home care, tradespersons and anyone that does not live in the building.*) Three buildings require visitors to wear masks and strongly recommended it for tenants also. Two building strongly recommend the use of masks but do not require them for either tenants or visitors. In all instances, the requirement to wear a mask applies to all inside common areas; most include any area outside of the tenant's suite.

Exceptions exist for outdoor areas where social distancing is possible and in a couple of cases, for inside small group gatherings, such as informal coffee groups, so long as social distancing is observed.

A few buildings provide masks for visitors that may not have them.

### ***Is sanitizing still going on?***

In all but a couple of cases sanitizing is occurring. Almost all buildings supply hand sanitizers for use by visitors or tenants returning to the building and many continue to undertake sanitizing of the lobby, elevator buttons, main door handles or other commonly touched locations. A couple of buildings report that very little attention is being given to this protection beyond the supplying of hand sanitizer. The responsibility to undertake sanitizing is carried out most frequently by tenants or tenant groups with the management or caretaking staff doing it for a few buildings.

### ***Are visitors allowed in the building? Special conditions?***

Visitors to our buildings seems to be a difficult factor to control. Service and trades personnel need to have access. Health care workers serve many tenants. Family members are critical supports for some, and social relationships extend beyond our buildings. Yet, health experts keep warning us to stay isolated as much as possible so as not to spread the contagion. Maintain small “bubbles” of contacts at best.

Most respondents indicate that visitors are allowed into their buildings and all are required or encouraged to wear masks. Sanitizing supplies are available at the front door or lobby of most buildings for use by visitors and tenants. Most buildings also restrict visitors to access only the suites of their contacts and not common areas such as multipurpose rooms or activity areas.

### ***How much direction are you getting from Management or Board and/or is the Tenant Council providing the leadership?***

Responses to this question varied from no Board or Management direction to excellent Board/Management cooperation and response to the pandemic. In the majority of instances, the Tenant Council has taken the leadership in directing the response to Covid-19 and in making the decisions regarding opening or closing programs, sanitization practices, masking requirements, allowing visitors or undertaking special activities. In some, the Management Company or personnel on site have supported the tenant's activities with signage and supplies.

Notably, two sites set up a formal Covid Response Team or Covid-19 Response Task Force to develop and implement the response to the pandemic and to keep tenants informed of the issues and decisions made. In others, the Tenant Council provided this leadership.

### ***Other Comments***

Following are representative comments taken as written from the responses.

- Some of our residents are starting to waver because they personally don't know someone with Covid-19 and some still think it is all a hoax.
- Covid-19 has also affected the way in which tenants' matters are handled by the RTB and RTC. There has been quite a long wait in receiving an RTB decision.
- We are in this together but the above [restriction on visitors and program closures] is super hard for seniors, especially for the widows and widowers and some were actually crying when we told them to cut down on the coffee get-togethers.
- A challenge facing the tenant association executive is to try to come up with ways of maintaining morale in the building as we face a winter with most people unable to travel. It is particularly challenging for our older tenants. We are hearing about small gatherings in individual suites which we can only hope are happening safely
- The biggest challenge has been limiting the number of people in the elevator at one time. We restricted it to 2 people. Couples want to be counted as 1 person rather than two so we have posted a special poster to inform people of that.
- Suite reassignments have been seriously delayed by restrictions on showings.