

COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for Strata Corporations



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Prelude:

The following is an operational guideline for Strata Corporations developed by the Commission of Strata Corporations, as a response to the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic. The Guidelines are effective from March 18, 2020 until further advised. It provides preventative and operational suggestions for strata corporations on how they may operate during this time. Corporations will use and tailor the information provided herein, as it applies to their individual circumstances and general mode of operations.



Image: unodc.org

Interacting with The Commission of Strata Corporations

The Commission, for the protection of its Inspectors and you our valued clients, has temporarily curtailed some of its administrative functions. The functions are as follows: inspection of strata corporations and physical attendance at Corporation meetings including Annual General Meetings. The Commission will instead be available via video conferencing, upon request.

For more information or to make arrangements to make contact with a specific officer, please call our customer service numbers at 876-391-9937 or 876-312-8971 or email us at info@reb.gov.jm. You may also visit the homepage of our website at www.reb.gov.jm for our Protocol of Service. This outlines how specific services may be accessed at this time, such as, applications for Status Certificates, Certificate of Power of Sale, submission of Annual Returns and Waiver from filing Annual Returns. The protocol also outlines the online and electronic bill payment methods available to pay fees to the Commission. A list of specific officers for specific service areas is also available from the homepage of the website.

All administrative services, except meeting attendance and inspections, are still being offered but with limited to no physical contact.

GUIDELINES >>>**Communication**

Communication is critical during this time. It is advisable to clearly identify who is mandated to communicate on behalf of the administration of the Corporation. It is also important that a clear medium of communication is established if one is not already in place. This may be for example, a WhatsApp Group. One person should be an administrator- this should be a 'Broadcast' group where only designated persons may post messages, and a general group where others may post and correspond.



Proprietors will look for guidance and feel more comfortable knowing that the administration of the Corporation is prepared. Communication should be calm and fact-based, with consistent frequency in real-time that aids proprietors in understanding the current situation. New developments and directives by the Government and the Commission should also be shared in a timely manner. Administrators are therefore expected to keep abreast of these developments locally, and to some extent, internationally.

Administrative Office

Encourage and notify residents to avoid physically visiting administrative offices. Please therefore widely publicize phone numbers and email addresses for remote contact. This should also be made available to the persons at the access points to pass on to visitors who should also be discouraged from office attendance. The office staff should be limited to as-needed staff and rotated where possible.

The office itself should undergo regular cleaning and adhere to strict sanitary protocols as commonly established e.g. cleaning of commonly handled areas such as door knobs. The wearing of masks, regular hand washing and the use of cleaning agents such as hand sanitizers, Lysol etc should be encouraged.

If not already in place, corporations should provide banking information to arrange for payment via direct bank deposit. This will alleviate at least one reason for visiting the administrative office. A secure dropbox or other method for money collection should be available as an alternative where necessary.

Meetings

Face-to-face meetings of any kind should be discouraged or otherwise prohibited. Encourage proprietors to utilize virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom.



This platform can also be used for Annual General Meetings (AGM) and Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM). These meetings must however, still be minuted and the rules and guidelines for voted items maintained. There should therefore be a designated secretary to record the decisions of such meetings. When things return to normal an AGM or EGM such be held to ratify all minuted decisions.

Public Spaces

To protect proprietors from further exposure, administrators may consider closing certain common areas such as pools, gyms, courts and other recreational areas and green spaces. Executive Committees should pay special attention to the various orders made by the Ministry of Health and the Prime Minister to guide their policy as it relates to closing certain common areas such as pools, gyms, courts and other recreational areas and green spaces. Common areas that are open to the use of the general body of proprietors should undergo regular cleaning and adhere to

strict sanitary protocol as commonly established e.g. cleaning of commonly handled areas such as door knobs, railings, elevators etc.

Special Needs

It is recommended that special attention be given to those with special needs, specifically the elderly, persons with comorbidities (e.g. hypertension, asthma, diabetes) and the physically challenged. Administrators should make an effort to identify said persons, especially where they may be living alone or have little or no help. Proprietors/residents should be encouraged to identify themselves as such, and an assessment made as to how they can be assisted in, for example, acquiring food/groceries and medication.

Administrators are encouraged, particularly where the corporation is a large one, to engage particularly large food suppliers/manufacturers to make visits to the property to sell directly to proprietors/residents. In the event your strata is located in an area under a no-movement order, as is the case with St Catherine, the delivery dates should coincide with the dates identified for shopping. If successful, detailed arrangements should be made for delivery dates and times, and protocols for engagement so as to minimize contact between proprietors. Orders from individual proprietors may be passed on to designated persons for example. Either way, strict precautionary measures must be

taken to maintain social distancing and the use of protective gear such as masks is encouraged upon visits or delivery.

Service and Maintenance

Maintenance and general servicing should be considered with regard for the safety of service providers and proprietors alike. To limit exposure, defer non-essential maintenance, resulting in only handling emergency or urgent issues.

Packages

Packages and other deliveries may be placed in a safe/monitored receptacle, or holding area, where they are too large for the standard mail boxes. These should be sanitized before further handling. Proprietors/residents should be encouraged to exercise judgement in ordering items for delivery at this time, where these can be deferred for a more suitable time.

Resident Infection

Administrators should encourage proprietors/residents to notify the Ministry or Health immediately if they are symptomatic i.e. coughing, sneezing, having difficulty breathing, or if someone has reason to believe that he or she may have contracted the virus. The administrator may also be notified, who would then notify the Ministry of Health (using the contact information provided) as soon as practical and the protocols as established by the ministry/government would then follow.

Extreme caution should be used in such cases in deciding how much information to share with residents, considering the possible stigmatization of proprietors/residents. In any case, the person's identity to include name or unit number should not be disclosed at any time.

General Information/Recommendations

- A strong focus should be placed on sanitizing public areas and commonly touched areas (door handles, elevator buttons, etc.) and placing hand sanitizers in common areas.
- Proprietors/residents should be consistently encouraged to be responsible for their own well-being. This includes following basic hygienic and social-distancing precautions, which includes staying home if they are ill, washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoiding touching their face, avoiding shaking hands and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (phones, computers, desks, doorknobs etc).
- Face masks, of any kind, must be worn in public. Face masks are designed to use a seal to the skin around the face to prevent small particulates, specifically droplets exhaled when coughing or talking, from gaining access to the respiratory system.
- Where the property has a designated person at access points, those persons should administer the necessary cleaning agents to visitors and proprietors upon entry.
- Encourage proprietors/residents to remain physically active during this period of confinement by recommending daily physical activity and provide information for online fitness apps or YouTube workout videos.
- Try to come up with creative ways to keep persons engaged electronically such as book clubs, online 'game nights' and 'movie nights'
- Use online/electronic media for daily/regular check-ins. People like to feel important and a part of their community. Check in on how everyone is doing and keep them updated on current events and neighbourhood information. Also encourage them to share whatever challenges they are having and how best they may be addressed.
- The following is contact information for the Ministry of Health, including Hotline numbers and contact information: website – www.moh.gov.jm; phone numbers: 888-663-5683, 888-754-7792, 876-542-5998, 876-542-6006, 876-542-6007 and email: covid19@moh.gov.jm, jacovid@gmail.com. Please circulate this information widely among proprietors, electronically and otherwise.