



April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Hon. Lisa Demspter  
Minister, Children, Seniors and Social Development  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL

RE: Request to Maintain Golf Properties

Via E-mail: [CSSDMinister@gov.nl.ca](mailto:CSSDMinister@gov.nl.ca)

Dear Minister Demspter,

Golf Newfoundland Labrador (Golf NL), and its members are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our golfers, staff, volunteers and industry stakeholders as well as every member of our global community.

The COVID-19 crisis is an unprecedented and difficult time for all Canadians. Golf NL and its members fully supports the recommendations and guidelines of Health Canada, the World Health Organization and regional public health experts to stop the community spread of this virus.

As leaders in an industry that employs more than 700 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and includes nearly 15,000 golfers, our priority above all else is the health and safety of our people and our communities.

While our members continue to take bookings, schedule events and plan for the eventual return to normalcy, the decision to include golf activities as a non-essential service is understandable. We anticipate that the opening of golf courses to the public will be determined on the progress of the pandemic and Government's and NL's Joint Public Health Response Committee's direction on course opening timelines.

Although, the golf courses may be closed to the public, the grass does not stop growing and basic property maintenance must be conducted during this period of temporary closure. Similar to other businesses that have been required to close to the public during COVID-19, golf courses have essential maintenance needs that must continue for the preservation of the property's agronomic health.

Spring is a critical time for turfgrass. If turfgrass is lost, many courses may face permanent closure. Turfgrass cannot be neglected for extended periods of time. Maintenance should be

allowed to proceed while a golf course is closed. If minimal maintenance is not allowed, the landscape and property of a golf course could become compromised, damaged, or unsafe. The potential for damage to critical golf course infrastructure, including pump stations and irrigation lines, will also be avoided by allowing routine operations, testing, and inspection.

An average golf course encompasses 150 acres of property, most of which is a living ecosystem requiring continued maintenance. If a course cannot be maintained, turf grass and plant life will decline, and the community will lose a vital asset. Environmental health of the property can be achieved with appropriate changes to maintenance staff functions that put the greatest emphasis on safety.

Golf NL and its members have taken a leadership role to establish health and safety protocols to provide a safe environment on the golf course to enable maintenance staff to fulfill their duties. . The below safety protocols are just some of the steps our members are prepared to implement in conjunction and accordance with guidelines issued by the Provincial Government and NL's Joint Public Health Response Committee.

These protocols include, but are not limited to:

- ! Increasing communication with owners, green committees, members, golfers, and staff regarding altered golf course management practices
- ! Keeping 6 ft social distancing at all times throughout the day
- ! Staggering of staff starting times to reduce employee contact points
- ! Eliminating time clocks or assigning one individual the responsibility of punching employees in/out to reduce touch points
- ! Increased sanitizing of all workspaces and bathrooms
- ! Mandatory wearing of protective gloves at all times
- ! No sharing of utility vehicles
- ! Sanitizing all hand tools
- ! Removal of ball washers, rakes and water coolers from the golf course to minimize touch points
- ! Educating staff on hygiene, sanitation, and food handling to learn about disease prevention and control.
- ! Educating staff to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and to act responsibly if they detect or exhibit symptoms.
- ! Designate employee to work in a specific area while practicing social distancing
- ! Providing clear and professional signage informing staff of operational changes and recommended sanitation practices.

Golf NL and its members appreciate your consideration of this request. In the meantime if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 709.631.3102 or e-mail [golf@sportnl.ca](mailto:golf@sportnl.ca)

Sincerely,

Greg Hillier  
Executive Director

cc: Hon. Bernard Davies, Minister Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation  
Susan Walsh, Deputy Minister, CSSD  
Craig Foley, Executive Director, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador  
Bill Taggart, Sport Consultant, CSSD  
Ken Casey, President Golf Newfoundland Labrador