

From EARNSCLIFFE

B.C. COVID-19 Update – May 7, 2020

New updates:

12:15 PM City of Vancouver Mayor – Kennedy Stewart ([release here](#))

- Today in a press conference, Mayor Kennedy Stewart addressed British Columbia’s role in ensuring workers and customers feel safe in newly re-opened businesses and facilities.
- He said “that’s why my office is working on another round of public opinion research to find out how residents feel about the opening up of various sectors and how ready they are to get back into certain areas with other customers” he added, “we need to prioritize those sectors that the public has the most desire and comfort to see re-opened.”
- Mayor Stewart said that he will be looking to work with the province to innovate and update regulations to ensure the City emerges from this crisis in better shape than it started.
- He said “so if you are in a sector with a more uncertain timeline, I want to hear from you.”
- Based on the early feedback from the industry roundtables, Mayor Stewart said he is bringing forward a motion to cut red tape and enhance democracy when it comes to development in the city.
- He said this motion “will help speed up the application process and get more rental and social/supportive housing built — housing that we badly need in the City.”

3PM – BC health update from Health Minister Dix and PHO Dr. Henry (Q&A below)

- Today, the Province announced the renewal plan for elective surgeries. Beginning this month, the Province will launch an extensive surgical renewal plan that will include calling patients, adding new capacity, and hiring and training staff.
- Dr. Henry said that while people are looking for a set of rules on where to go from here, we have to recognize that everyone's situations are unique
- For businesses the Province is working with WorkSafeBC for guidelines, template plans and checklists are being developed as we speak for businesses
 - Businesses will need to make decisions on your ability to meet requirements
 - Ie: some hair salons and restaurants may choose to not reopen depending on the physical setup of their business
- Dr. Henry said that they are considering sports with no crowds – “definitely no large crowds happening this year.”
- Dr. Henry says restrictions religious gatherings will be in place through the summer and into the fall. She added, the limit is at 50 and only if physical distancing can be ensured.
- Dr. Henry said that restrictions on conventions, clubs, concerts and sports events with crowds, she says these big events can lead to spread very quickly

Q&A

- Q: Can you provide more guidance on get togethers? Is it the same group of people, or different groups of people? Are we allowed to hug at family gatherings?

- A: We need to think about starting small. In New Zealand they use the phrase "double your bubble" - it doesn't have to be the same group of people each time, but we have to be mindful. Absolutely hug the people that you want to be in your bubble.
- Q: On concerts and festivals - when can we see those restrictions listed?
A: This one is tricky because we can trace transmission to these kinds of events - here in BC, and across the world. These types of environments where we know that this virus can take off. Unlikely that this type of mass gathering will happen this summer - there aren't any groups in the world that are looking at opening this up. It's likely that we can go back next summer. There is talk about sporting events coming back - but that would be *without* the audience.
- Q: What is happening with religious gatherings and opening up gyms?
A: Restrictions on religious gatherings will be in place through the summer and into the fall. On gyms and fitness clubs, Dr. Henry says they will be part of the third phase. Says they have seen spread there. Says there will be a number of restrictions around congregating and spacing.
- Q: What can you tell us about the second wave?
A: Most pandemics have had two waves - we just don't know how big or small - or when we can expect this. We do know that we can't expand our circles too much.
- Q: Who will be monitoring business compliance on worker protection and public health?
A: There will be proactive assessments and a complaint space for employees, though WorkSafeBC and through the public space. We need these in place because it helps build confidence.
- Q: Are you worried that the public will take a mile instead of an inch? Especially come May 19? What will the Province do if so?
A: We have shown that we take this seriously and we know our responsibilities to our communities

Stakeholder comments:

- What comes next: Message from CEO (News Release, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade: boardoftrade.com)
- BC Chamber Applauds Provincial Restart Plan (News Release, BC Chamber of Commerce: bcchamber.ca)
- How museums around the world are reopening during COVID-19 (News Release, BC Museums Association: museumassn.bc.ca)
- Retarting BC - your rights and union news (News Release, BCGEU: bcgeu.ca)
- Child and Youth Mental Health Day: Physicians say 'I Care About You' (News Release, Doctors of BC: doctorsofbc.ca)
- B.C. health-care workers using loaned car-share vehicles to travel safely during COVID-19 (K. Ingram, Electric Autonomy Canada: electricautonomy.ca)
- B.C. sees 60% more overdose deaths in March compared to first two months of 2020 (A. Wadhvani, The Abbotsford News: abbynews.com)
- BC Ferries adding sailings to Victoria-Vancouver route (No byline, CTV News: vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca)

- Nanaimo mayor creates task force to tackle COVID-19 economic recovery (A. Garland, CTV News: vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca)

Existing measures:

- “Go Forward Plan” Announced by Premier Horgan, May 6, 2020 ([release here](#))
- British Columbia COVID-19 Modeling Update, 1:30 pm PT May 4, 2020 ([release here](#))
- Minister Carole James presented the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers ([News Release](#))
- On April 23, 2020, Dr. Henry [issued an order](#) for industrial camps that applies to workers in the agricultural, aquacultural, forestry and resource sectors, as well as those who provide accommodation for these workers. This order sets out prevention, control and inspection protocols for workers and employers. Additional guidelines were released for silviculture operators and employees.
- Up to \$35.6M of BC’s \$5B COVID-19 Action Plan will be distributed through Community Living BC (CLBC) to ensure people with developmental disabilities remain supported during the pandemic.
- Premier Horgan and Minister Fraser announced [new collaborative framework](#) for healthcare in rural, remote Indigenous communities.
- Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister Adrian Dix [presented](#) an update on modelling Friday, April 17.
- Minister James and Minister Robinson [announced](#) that the school property tax rate for commercial properties will be reduced by an average of 25 per cent in the total property tax bill for most businesses. This is on top of the previously announced 50 per cent reduction to the provincial school property tax rate. Provincial school tax remittances delayed until the end of the year.
- Minister Darcy and Minister Mark announced ([Release here](#)) a \$1.5M investment per year (over three years) in *Here to Talk* – a 24/7 accessible app available to over 50,000 post-secondary students across British Columbia
- The province [announced \\$5 million to expand existing mental health programs](#) to ensure British Columbians have increased access to vital mental health supports during the pandemic, with a focus on adults and youth and front-line care workers.
- BC Health Minister Adrian Dix issued a [joint statement](#) with Alberta Health Minister Tyler Shandro discouraging border crossings between the two provinces during the long weekend.
- The order is now official to make it possible for care workers to each only be able to work at one care home. The *Single Site Transition Program*, which is still underway and is described by Minister Dix as a “significant logistical challenge,” will apply to all health care workers, including community organizations and non-profits.
- Effective April 8, international travellers (including from the United States) returning to the province are required to provide a [14-day self-isolation plan](#) before or upon arrival to B.C., regardless of their point of entry to Canada. This document can be submitted online or completed in person on arrival. BC is the first jurisdiction to legally enforce this measure.
- BC Parks [announces](#) the closure of all provincial parks until further notice.
- Addressing upcoming religious celebrations (Easter, Passover, Ramadan), Dr. Henry asks people to start thinking about ways to recognize these holidays without in-person gatherings.

- Social Development and Poverty Reduction Minister Shane Simpson announced that the province is [implementing a series of temporary supports and supplements](#) for the province's most vulnerable.
- The province's new [Economic Recovery Task Force](#) to support the B.C. economy during and after COVID-19 kicked off its work today.
- The BC government also released [further action to support essential service providers](#) during pandemic by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities.
- Premier John Horgan extends BC state of emergency to April 14, 2020.
- The Province announces BC Hydro's new, [targeted bill relief](#) in response to COVID-19.
- [COVID-19 Supply Hub](#) unveiled on April 1.
- [Compliance and Enforcement Guidance about Public Health Orders with respect to Physical Distancing](#) published.
- [COVID-19 Ethical Decision-Making Framework](#) published.
- [Guidance provided to industrial camps during COVID-19](#) published.
- All episodic vending markets (i.e. farmers markets, community markets) mandated to only sell food, prohibiting the sale of all other merchandise.
- Ministerial orders [issued March 26](#) to secure supply chain; list of essential services.
- As part of the government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan, Minister Dix and B.C. seniors advocate Isobel Mackenzie announced new funding for the United Way's Better at Home and bc211 services to further support seniors. Full release [found here](#).
- As part of the government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson and Premier Horgan announced [support for renters and landlords](#) – now open for applications.
- [The Province closes certain parks, recreation areas](#), which is in addition to a previous suspension of services and facilities in provincial parks, including visitor centres, nature houses, washrooms and day-use areas. In alignment with Parks Canada, all campgrounds are closed until April 30, 2020.
- BC Legislature passed two new pieces of legislation: Bill 15, Supply Act (No. 2), which provides funding for ministry operations for the first nine months of the 2020-21 fiscal year, set to begin on April 1; and
- Bill 16, Employment Standards Amendment Act (No. 2), which allows workers to immediately take unpaid, job-protected leave if they are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19.
- Minister James announces \$5-billion [BC COVID-19 Action Plan](#) to support people, essential services, businesses, and the economy
- Restaurants temporarily permitted to use unemployed servers to deliver liquor products
- BC public health order issued to close all personal service businesses
- Dine-in service prohibited at all restaurants across BC; mandating take-out and delivery only
- MSP wait times waived for those returning to BC from outside of province or outside the country who have been out longer than allowed.
- Community level initiatives in place to support women's shelters and all of our shelter systems

- The Minister of Public Services and Solicitor General declares a provincial state of emergency
- The Province declares a public health emergency under the [Emergency Health Services Act](#)
- Bars and clubs instructed to close; restaurants may remain open if they abide by crowd size rules and distancing measures
- K1-12 classes suspended until further notice
- Now available online: BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool (Available [here](#))
- B.C. health authorities move to outbreak response Phase 2, postponing all non-urgent surgeries/procedures, which will result in the cancellation of thousands of elected surgeries; staff who provide scheduled surgeries to be moved over to assist with critical care
- Lions Gate Hospital moves to Phase 3, only accepting emergency cases
- B.C. pharmacists permitted to refill prescriptions without requiring an additional physician's note
- Physicians to receive compensation for providing virtual care services
- Restricting visitors in long-term care facilities to essential visitors only
- Prohibition on gatherings larger than 50 people
- All casinos across B.C. remain closed; effective 11:59pm March 16
- Dedicated phone service for updated COVID-19 information 1-888-COVID19, info available in over 100 languages