

From EARNSCLIFFE

B.C. COVID-19 Update – May 21, 2020

New Updates:

Dr. Henry and Minister Dix Public Health Update

- On beginning Phase 2 this week, Dr. Henry said "we need to be slow and thoughtful as we move through this," adding that "kinks" would be worked out over the coming weeks as businesses gradually reopen.
- Dr. Henry says second wave of COVID-19 is very likely in Canada, but that the lessons learned over the past few months will help inform future responses
 - "Now is our time to regroup, learn as much as we can over the coming weeks and months, and prepare," Henry said.
- 40,000 travellers have been screened coming into BC and had self-isolation plans approved

Hon. Harry Bains, Minister of Labour – Presser (notes from Q&A)

- WorkSafeBC has put together guidelines, businesses need to make modifications to suit their businesses – consumer confidence and safety of workers is key.
 - Guidelines are available on WorkSafeBC, hotline also available for questions for businesses who need help.
 - Businesses are required to build safety plans based on guidelines and post those plans to be available for consumers and workers, so people can feel safe entering a businesses.
 - Inspections for personal services and restaurants reopen, WorkSafeBC has developed a reviewing and inspection regime and are doing spot inspections to ensure the PHO and WorkSafeBC guidelines are being followed.
 - Spot checks inspections are for all businesses that are reopened or opened.
 - There are provisions for penalties, but government is prioritizing working with businesses over penalties, recognizing we are in extraordinary circumstances.
- Minister emphasized that consumer confidence will be key to success for businesses, safety plans are a critically important part of this.
- Minimum wage increase schedule will continue. Next bump on June 1st.
- On 4-day work week – leaving it up to businesses and workers, government wants to protect worker's rights and give businesses the supports they need on the road to economic recovery.
- Slow, science based approach restart is the goal, they don't want to restart and stop again.
- On paid sick leave, BC continues to push for a national solution, perhaps reforming EI.
 - If the feds do not step up, BC will step in a find our own way to deal with paid sick leave.
- On PPE costs and supply concerns, medical PPE should be left for medical system, different businesses have different PPE requirements.
 - Economic recovery task force will be looking at these issues as we move forward.
- Government is looking at moving into phase 3 in June. TBD

Stakeholder comments:

- BC has an historic opportunity to build an economy that works for everyone (Press Release, BCFED: bcfed.ca)
- Non-partisan commission needed to plan for BC's recovery (J. Finlayson, Business in Vancouver: biv.com)

- As B.C. businesses reopen, some charge COVID-19 fees to cover costs (A. McCarthur, Global News: globalnews.ca)
- Campaign launched to Support PG business during COVID-19 (No byline, CKPG Today: ckpgtoday.ca)
- Nurses to receive pandemic pay (News release, BC Nurses' Union: bcnu.org)
- The Doctor is In: supporting physicians in re-opening offices (Press Release, Doctors of BC: doctorsofbc.ca)
- Back to work toolkit (Press Release, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade: boardoftrade.com)

Existing measures:

- Update on K-12 in-class instruction – Premier Horgan, Minister Fleming, Minister Chen and Dr. Bonnie Henry ([news release](#))
- New WorkSafeBC guidelines for re-opening of businesses ([news release](#))
- BC launches province-wide survey – [COVID-19 Survey: Your story, our future](#) – to gather your feedback and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in BC
- “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 waved 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