

From EARNSCLIFFE

B.C. COVID-19 Update – May 13, 2020

BC Premier John Horgan (1:30 PM)

COVID-19 Update:

- Cabinet met and renewed BC's state of emergency for the next two weeks. It will continued to be renewed for the coming weeks and months.
- Horgan has been clear with the PM on the need to keep a non-essential travel ban. This is also supported by Quebec and Ontario.
- One of the hardest industries is tourism, BC government will be focussing on aggressive marketing and staycations in BC moving forward. But we are not there yet.
- Food inspection is federal responsibility now, BC thinks that they should be also looking for illness as well.
- We are beginning Phase 2 of the restart next week, it is not starting right away. PHO and WorkSafeBC are releasing guidance. It is the start of a process, Dr. Henry's orders will be revised at the appropriate time, but it is not happening all at once.
- PJH call had a call with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman yesterday, BC is ready to look at a plan brought forward by the NHL.
- On support for PPE for businesses: PPE hub has been created through Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness to deliver PPE to essential workers, looking at how to use that for businesses more broadly.

BC health update from Health Minister Dix and PHO Dr. Henry (3 PM)

[Joint statement on Province of BC's COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)

General update:

- Order limiting gatherings to less than 50 people remain in place. Says the order also ensures other provisions are in place and people can physically distance.
- Minister Dix says every step towards our social and economic renewal begins with the commitment to continuing to follow the rules, in order for BC's Going Forward plan, we must continue to be 100% committed to stopping the spread of COVID-19 and following all measures.

Reopening of business/services:

- Potential date for reopening of personal services, restaurants etc. is May 19, and we are working on guidance in consultation with different sectors (Work Safe BC leading with Public Health) and each individual owner needs to look at their own circumstances. Going to be a progression over a period of time. Dr. Henry will be amending the orders, which could mean compliant establishments could open as early as May 19.
- Dr. Henry says retail stores can have more than 50 people. But people need to be efficient shopping and they aren't gathering. Says physical distance spacing is important.
- Dr. Henry says she has heard from faith leaders about challenges. Says starting next week religious services can take place under the physical distancing guidelines and crowd size.

Domestic/international travel:

- Asking British Columbians to limit non-essential travel this long weekend, and if you do deem travel as being essential this weekend, bring your own foods stuff, belongings – limit exposure at stores.
 - Next week and the coming weeks, travel within BC is something we will want to do, to support communities

City of Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart (12 PM)

- Based on the early feedback from my industry roundtables, Mayor Stewart is bringing forward a motion to cut red tape and enhance democracy when it comes to development in the city, which will help speed up the application process and get more rental and social/supportive housing built.
- Says it is vitally important that we continue to practice physical distancing for at least the next two weeks.
- “We also need to do all we can to get people back to work, help business reopen, and get our economy back on track — when the time is right.”
- “As the Premier said, there is no return to the way things were. We are in a new normal and we need to think differently, if we are to succeed.”

Stakeholder comments:

- Tudor Gold launches drill campaign in British Columbia (No byline, Mining.com: mining.com)
- COVID-19: B.C. hotels see shaky future, hope locals fill in for missing tourists this summer (R. Shaw, The Province: theprovince.com)
- Private clinics won't help backlog of B.C. surgeries, health coalition says (No byline, The Canadian Press: bc.ctvnews.ca)
- COVID-19: Vernon emergency shelter first in B.C. to add sleeping pods (C. Clow, Kelowna Capital News: kelownacapnews.com)
- Victoria gym owners eager to reopen amid COVID-19 (A. Kelly, CTV News Vancouver Island: vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca)

Existing measures:

- 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 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