

## From EARNSCLIFFE

### B.C. COVID-19 Update – April 8, 2020

#### New updates:

In today's public health update, Dr. Henry said that we must "ensure that we do not have gaps in our firewall" and ensure that everyone who comes back to BC has an isolation plan. She added that the Province would be doing regular check-ins with those that are in self-isolation.

- As we lead up to a long-weekend, Dr. Henry and Minister Dix stressed that this is not the time to take unnecessary travel and consider the impact that this could have on our communities.
- Dr. Henry says they are still trying to figure out the key pieces of evidence to inform decisions around issues like in classroom learning.

This morning Minister of Environment and Climate Change, George Heyman [announced the closure of BC Parks](#).

- "Because physical distancing works, it is critical that we take every action needed to restrict the spread of COVID-19. This applies to British Columbians and out-of-province visitors who were planning to visit or stay at our provincial parks. The message is clear: stay home, avoid travel, do not put yourself or others at risk," said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

Minister of Child and Family Services, Katrine Conroy, announced a new [Emergency Relief Support Fund](#) and [has added service flexibility for parents of children with special needs to help during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The Emergency Relief Support Fund is sustained by a \$900,000 investment. This is part of government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan to provide income supports, tax relief and direct funding for people, businesses and services.

The Province announced that it will be [introducing new measures](#) to make sure those returning home from international destinations have the support they need to self-isolate.

- **Effective immediately**, international travellers (including from the United States) coming 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.
  - Beginning April 10, provincial officials will be on hand at the YVR and major land border crossings to make sure self-isolation plans are complete and to assist those who need it.
  - Emergency Management BC, through a network of community supports and volunteer organizations, will help travellers with necessary food deliveries, prescription drugs and other supplies so people can safely self-isolate for 14 days.
  - The Province, through Service BC, will follow up with travellers in self-isolation with telephone calls and text messages to make sure people have the support they need to self-isolate.

Parliamentary Secretary Dean [released a statement](#) regarding the Province's support for women and children experiencing violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- PS Dean noted, "if you reach out for help, we will make sure there is a safe space during this emergency – no matter where you live in B.C." She added, "BC Housing is already working with our partner organizations to support women and children who would otherwise be trapped at home in dangerous situations."

Today, City of Vancouver Mayor, Kennedy Stewart, [gave an update](#) with regards to the City's COVID-19 response efforts.

- With regards to support for vulnerable communities (DTES specifically), Mayor Stewart acknowledged that residents and the Downtown Eastside are not only dealing with COVID-19, but also a devastating overdose crisis.
- Mayor Stewart said that the City is continuing to take additional measures to support vulnerable populations by, for example, delivering meals directly into SRO rooms. He added that they are also providing increased sanitation and cleaning services in 21 SROs so residents can stay safe and self-isolate.
- Mayor Stewart reported that there are no confirmed outbreaks of COVID-19 in the Downtown Eastside.
- Finally, Mayor Stewart announced put forth three asks to the BC Provincial Government:
  - *Defer property taxes for residents, businesses and non-profits*
  - *Delay payment of non-city property taxes*
  - *Provide an initial direct grant of up to \$200 million for the City to continue to provide essential services.*

#### Upcoming announcements:

- More modelling data to be released by Dr. Henry next week.

#### Stakeholder comments:

- **ITAC Challenges and Stimulus Solutions** (News Release, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada: [indigenoustourism.ca](http://indigenoustourism.ca))
- **Bus services taking extra measures because of COVID-19** (R. Link, BC Local News: [bclocalnews.com](http://bclocalnews.com))
- **COVID-19 pandemic: Rest stops must remain open, trucking stakeholders contend** (No byline, National Safety Council: [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com))
- **‘Give it to those in need,’ says BC paramedic of COVID-19 discounts, donations** (E. Lazatin, Global News: [globalnews.ca](http://globalnews.ca))
- **B.C.’s Sea to Sky region wants no long-weekend visits during COVID-19 pandemic** (E. Currie, CTV News - Vancouver: [bc.ctvnews.ca](http://bc.ctvnews.ca))
- **NATIONS Cannabis freezes work on construction due to COVID-19 scare** (No byline, BC Local News: [bclocalnews.com](http://bclocalnews.com))

#### Existing measures:

- 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](#)
- [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