

COVID-19 UPDATE

March 30, 2020

Federal Government

- The Minister of Transport Marc Garneau announced that the Government of Canada is introducing new domestic transportation measures to support provincial, territorial and local efforts to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spreading from travelling within Canada.

- These new measures include:

Air

- A requirement for all air operators to conduct a health check of travellers before they board a flight within Canada or departing from Canada, based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada. This would include asking health questions, looking for visible signs of illness prior to boarding, and recommending the traveller follow guidance from local health authorities.
- A requirement for air operators to refuse boarding to a passenger that presents COVID-19 symptoms. The denial will remain in effect for a period of 14 days, or until a medical certificate is presented that confirms that the traveller's symptoms are not related to COVID-19. These measures will apply to aircraft with 10 seats or more.
- A requirement for air operators to notify travellers that they may be subject to provincial or territorial measures at their final destination.
- These measures came into effect on March 30, 2020 at noon EDT.

Rail

- A requirement for intercity passenger rail companies to do a health check to screen passengers for COVID-19 symptoms before they board a train, based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada. This will include company representatives asking simple health questions, looking for visible signs of illness prior to boarding, and recommending the passenger follow guidance from local health authorities.
- A requirement for intercity passenger rail companies to refuse boarding to a passenger that presents COVID-19 symptoms. The denial will remain in effect for a period of 14 days, or until a medical certificate is presented that confirms that the traveller's symptoms are not related to COVID-19.
- These measures do not apply to commuter trains.
- These measures came into effect on March 30, 2020 at noon EDT.

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- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced measures to support vulnerable Canadians to help cope with the health, social, and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increase support for Canadians experiencing homelessness, and provide help for women and children fleeing violence. As announced on March 18, 2020, the Government of Canada will provide an additional \$157.5 million to address the needs of Canadians experiencing homelessness. The government will also provide up to \$50 million to women's shelters and sexual assault centres, including facilities in Indigenous communities, to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak.
- Provide support for counselling services to children and youth. As a result of school closures and reduced access to community resources, Kids Help Phone is experiencing increased demand for its 24/7 confidential online, telephone, and text counselling services across Canada. The Government of Canada will give \$7.5 million in funding to Kids Help Phone to provide young people with the mental health support they need during this difficult time.
- Provide immediate essential services to Canadian seniors impacted by COVID-19. The Government of Canada will contribute \$9 million through United Way Canada for local organizations to support practical services to Canadian seniors. These services could include the delivery of groceries, medications, or other needed items, or personal outreach to assess individuals' needs and connect them to community supports.
- National Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan said that the Canadian Forces are gearing up to help the federal government's response to COVID-19 pandemic. Minister Sajjan said there are up to 24,000 regular and reserve forces ready to deploy, and 10 units across the country that could react immediately to any request for assistance whether it be humanitarian, delivering supplies, or other actions.
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau provided more details regarding the federal government's wage subsidy (originally announced last week):
- Any Canadian businesses whose revenue has decreased by 30 per cent or more due to the pandemic will be eligible for the 75 per cent wage subsidy promised, regardless of the number of employees they have.
 - It is retroactive to March 15, 2020
 - Charities and not-for-profit organizations are also able to apply
 - The subsidy will be on the first \$58,700 earned, meaning up to \$847 a week.
 - Trudeau warned businesses not to misuse the program or they'll face "serious consequences." He also encouraged companies who can still afford to pay their employees their full salaries, or the 25 per cent not covered by the government, to do so.

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- A verification program put in place to monitor the use of this aid in the coming weeks

Ontario

- Premier Doug Ford says he will be extending his emergency declaration for another two weeks as the number of new cases continues to rise in the province.
- The Ontario government is investing \$10 million to help community organizations with the coordination of subsidized deliveries of meals, medicines and other necessities to seniors.
- This investment doubles the government's initial commitment in Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19.
- The government is also working with grocers and pharmacists to prioritize seniors' delivery orders and establish senior-only shopping hours
- Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer announced updated guidance on what is needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites. The guidance addresses sector topics including:
 - providing better on-site sanitation, including a focus on high-touch areas like site trailers, door handles and hoists
 - communicating roles, responsibilities, and health & safety policies, by, for example, posting site sanitization schedules and work schedules
 - enabling greater distances between workers by staggering shifts, restricting site numbers and limiting elevator usage
 - protecting public health by tracking and monitoring worker
- The full guidance can be found [here](#)

Quebec

- On Sunday, the Quebec government announced they would be restricting travel to regions that are considered to be more remote and vulnerable. The restrictions apply to the following regions: Bas Saint-Laurent, Saguenay–Lac Saint Jean, Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord, Nord-du-Québec, Nunavik and Cree territories around James Bay. These restrictions are being enforced by police checkpoints.
- Over the weekend, the City of Montreal declared a state of emergency.
- Today, Premier Legault announced that most businesses will be forced to close on Sundays throughout the month of April in order to provide essential service employees with a break. These closures include grocery stores. The following businesses will be permitted to remain open on Sundays: gas stations, dépanneurs, pharmacies, restaurant takeout services.
- Quebec now has 3,430 confirmed cases of COVID-19, however Premier Legault has stated that the province's health care system remains stable.

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British Columbia

- A new ministerial order under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) enables the broader use of communications tools for health-care workers and other public-sector staff who are responding to the COVID-19 state of emergency.
- The ministerial order temporarily permits health-care bodies like the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and health authorities to use communication and collaboration software that may host information outside of Canada. The order also enables B.C. schools and post-secondary institutions to provide online learning for students who have been displaced due to the need for physical distancing.
- The ministerial order is in effect until June 30, 2020. You can read the [full ministerial order here](#)
- The B.C. government recently issued an order prohibiting the gathering of people in excess of 50 people at a place of which a person is the owner, occupier or operator, or for which they are otherwise responsible. Employers in the retail food and grocery store sector are asking for clarity about what this means for them.
- The government clarified that while this order does not directly apply to the retail food and grocery industry, the spirit of the order should be followed. This means that, for example, in large grocery stores where it is feasible to have more than 50 people present at one time, it is permissible to do so provided that appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.
- You can read the [full guidance here](#).

Alberta

- Vehicle access to provincial parks, and parking lots and staging areas on public land has been suspended to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, in addition to facilities that have also been closed.
- AHS has boosted its service to help Albertans should they need to speak with someone about mental health concerns.
- If Albertans call the Mental Health Help Line at 1-877-303-2642 or the Addiction Help Line at 1-866-332-2323 between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week, they will be connected directly to a dedicated team of AHS addiction and mental health staff.
- The list of essential workplaces that can continue to operate in Alberta can be found [online](#).

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New Brunswick

- Public Health confirmed that community transmission is now present in the province.
- Applications for the 2020 Low-Income Seniors' Benefit will be available on April 1. The benefit is an annual \$400 cheque to assist low-income seniors in New Brunswick.
- Those eligible will be able to apply online or by calling a phone number. More information about the program, and on how to apply, is [available online](#).

Federal and Provincial Health Departments

For the latest information and updates, please visit these resources from Canada's different health departments and agencies:

- **Federal**
- **Atlantic:** [Newfoundland & Labrador](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Prince Edward Island](#), [New Brunswick](#)
- **Central:** [Quebec](#), [Ontario](#)
- **West:** [Manitoba](#), [Saskatchewan](#), [Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#)
- **North:** [Nunavut](#), [Northwest Territories](#), [Yukon](#)