

## Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

March 20, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.

Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W

Good afternoon.

As you know, the City of Toronto has taken a number of actions to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

City Hall, Metro Hall and all City of Toronto civic centres were closed to the public earlier this week and remain closed.

Non-essential City staff have either been reassigned to assist with COVID-19 efforts or, where feasible, are working from home.

Employees who are presently working from home will be called in and/or redeployed to support essential and other critical city services as required.

As always, the City of Toronto remains committed to providing safe, effective and efficient work environments for all City staff.

There are many roles and functions that are needed to support our collective efforts in responding to and managing the COVID-19 situation.

The continued function of essential and critical city services is very important. Our City staff are committed to doing all that we can do to help.

City services that continue to deliver normal service levels include:

- All emergency services – including police service, fire service and paramedic service emergency response,
- Toronto Water continues to ensure our drinking water is reliable, safe and remains at the high standard we have all come to expect.
- Shelters and respite sites remain open.
- City-operated Long-Term Care homes will continue to operate, but with no visitors being permitted at this time.
- Garbage and recycling collection will continue as scheduled, but yard waste collection has been suspended.
- If you have put yard waste out for collection this week, please remove it from the curb until further notice.

- Road operations, including snow removal services if required, will continue as normal.
- Toronto Hydro, the TTC and 3-1-1 are all operating normally.

The City of Toronto's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration have initiated a number of proactive measures in support of individuals experiencing homelessness.

These measures have been developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health, in order to ensure that our shelters are safe for both our clients and our staff.

These measures include the following:

- We have opened five new facilities, in order to facilitate effective social distancing, as recommended by Toronto Public Health. It is important to note that this is not net new capacity – it is temporary space to support social distancing recommendations.
- We have established one new isolation site for people undergoing COVID-19 testing.
- We have secured additional hotel capacity for the family sector.
- We have secured one additional site to shelter those who require 14 day self-isolation as a result of travel.
- Screening for both illness and travel history is being conducted as part of the shelter intake process, both by phone and in-person.
- Anyone who is identified as requiring further health assessment through this screening process, is being referred to one of the Province's assessment centres before being admitted to the shelter.
- Routine infection, prevention and control practices are in place and will continue.
  - This includes enhancing cleaning and disinfection to reduce the risk of spread and protect vulnerable residents and the facility's staff.
  - We are engaged with both the Provincial and Federal Governments in making the required PPE available for community agencies.
- As well, additional funding has been provided to each of the community operated 24 hour shelter sites to assist with the procurement of PPE and enhanced cleaning supplies.
- Signage that provides information and instruction on hand washing, along with infection prevention and control is displayed throughout our shelter and respites sites.
- We have identified a location for a new COVID-19 recovery facility for Toronto's homeless population and we are in the process of operationalizing it.
  - The location of this site is not being provided in order to ensure the privacy of individuals is protected.

I want to remind everyone that our Public Health call centres continue to experience a high volume of calls. Many of the questions being asked can quickly be addressed by accessing [Toronto.ca/COVID-19](https://toronto.ca/COVID-19).

I encourage everyone to make the City's website their first point of access for credible information.

All information related City service levels, as well as public health information, is continually updated online.

And again, PLEASE, do not call 911 when seeking information about COVID-19 or city services. 911 is for use in emergency situations, requiring response by Toronto Police, Toronto Paramedics or Toronto Fire Services only.

As I advised yesterday, and officially communicated by the City this morning, Toronto can expect some unsettled weather today and into tomorrow, including the potential for heavy rain, high winds and plummeting temperatures.

City staff from Transportation, Toronto Water, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation, as well as Toronto Hydro are on standby to address any flooding, icy roads, down trees or branches, and downed power lines should that be required.

As always, police, fire and paramedic services are ready to respond to any emergency situations that may arise.

In short, the City is well-prepared, as always, to address emergencies.

If you encounter a downed power line, stay 10 meters back – about the length of a school bus – and call 911.

Our team at the Emergency Operations Centre, as well as the entire corporate leadership team here at the City of Toronto, remains focused on keeping Toronto and its residents safe and well-informed.

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