

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

March 18, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.

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

Good afternoon.

Yesterday, following the declaration of a Provincial Emergency, the City of Toronto took 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 and all non-essential or critical staff have been assigned to work from home

In addition to the services that we announced would be suspended earlier this week, further service impacts include:

Weddings

The Wedding Chambers at City Hall, North York, Scarborough and York Civic Centres are closed with all permits for the use of these chambers cancelled. New bookings are suspended. As registry services counters are closed at all civic centres are closed, the issuance of marriage licences is suspended.

Inspections

Non-emergency building, bylaw, DineSafe, and BodySafe inspections are suspended. Emergency inspections related to health and safety will continue to be prioritized.

Employment Services

Three Toronto Employment & Social Services locations are providing critical services. Other offices have closed. Clients must call offices first and will be asked COVID-19 screening questions before attending in-person meetings. Payments are not impacted.

Housing Services

Access to Housing offices are closed. Payments and processing continue.

Courts

All Courts Services offices and service counters are closed. Provincial Offences Courts are closed. All scheduled matters are postponed across the province, as per an order by Chief Justice of Ontario.

Public Consultations

All City public consultations have been cancelled. The suspension of consultations will cause delays in the processing of planning applications. City Planning is looking at how this may impact legislated timelines and how to address delays.

Council and other meetings

All Council, Committee, Tribunal and community meetings are cancelled.

Business Licensing

Business licensing issuing and renewing is suspended. In some cases, licences can be renewed online. Enforcement of expired business licences will be suspended.

Just as importantly, many critical City services continue, including:

- 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 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 is operating normally.
- The TTC is operating normally.
- 3-1-1 continues to operate normally.
- The city's infrastructure remains safe and reliable, and the City will ensure that continues for all residents.

All information related to adjusted and suspended City service levels is continually being updated at [Toronto.ca/COVID-19](https://toronto.ca/COVID-19).

As City services change, or are modified to continue to meet residents' needs, we will advise you here each day, as well as update the City's website to reflect those changes

The City is keeping its workforce updated with the latest information about COVID-19 and service impacts, as well.

A number of online tools, an employee hotline, and managers' guide have all been developed for our workforce.

As I have repeatedly explained, our Public Health call centres continue to experience an incredibly 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 this your first point of access for credible information.

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.

I want to thank the Toronto Public Service, our government partners and, especially, the public, for all they are doing to help flatten the curve.

Our collective efforts in following the advice of our Medical Officer of Health will make all the difference in keeping Toronto safe and resilient.

In closing, let me confirm, that as the Fire Chief and General Manager of the Office of Emergency Management for the City of Toronto, I have been leading the City's emergency and operational response to COVID-19 since this virus became a global concern; and I continue to do so.

As the subject matter expert in public health, Dr. de Villa has and continues to lead the public health response to this pandemic situation in Toronto.

I will now ask Dr. de Villa to update you.