

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

February 1, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

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

Good afternoon.

Before I provide my formal update this afternoon, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the family, friends and all those impacted by the terrible fire that claimed the lives of four Toronto residents on Friday morning on Gainsborough Road.

This is an unspeakable tragedy that impacts each of us deeply.

I am very thankful that the injuries to our Firefighters were not life threatening and that we expect each to make a full recovery.

Our thoughts are with this family and the community as the investigation into the origin, cause and circumstances continues.

Our coordinated enforcement teams continue to work diligently to enforce the Regulations relating to COVID-19.

The City has taken formal enforcement action 2,110 times to date.

This weekend, our enforcement officers continued to monitor compliance with the Reopening Ontario Act.

As a result, 3 charges were laid and 10 notices were issued, against the owners and operators of a video store and a restaurant.

Our officers also proactively inspected 138 bars and restaurants, with 1 charge being laid, resulting in a 99% compliance rate.

I want to thank the vast majority of residents and businesses, who continue to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in our City, by complying with the public health restrictions and Regulations.

Over the course of the weekend, 47 charges were laid, as a result of the investigation of complaints relating to large gatherings on private property and in private residences.

This weekend Toronto Police also responded to protests and rallies and issued a total of 2 Criminal Code charges as a result.

I would like to extend my thanks to each of our enforcement officers who do their best to meet the challenges associated with COVID-19 regulations each day.

Finally, I would like to bring an important safety concern to your attention this afternoon.

Outdoor skating is a favourite Toronto pastime, but skating on natural and man-made bodies of water, such as ponds and storm water ponds, is very dangerous, and is therefore prohibited in Toronto, with the exception of on Grenadier Pond.

Grenadier Pond is the only natural pond in Toronto, where the City of Toronto tests the ice thickness.

A flag at Grenadier Pond indicates when the pond is not safe for skating. When that is the case, a red flag is posted, alerting potential users to the dangers of thin ice.

When the ice on Grenadier Pond may be used at your own risk, a yellow flag is posted.

Currently, Grenadier Pond is unsafe for skating and the corresponding red flag is posted.

Other natural and manmade bodies of water are not safe for skating, hockey, sledding or any form of recreational activity, because the ice that forms on these bodies of water is unpredictable, unstable and dangerous.

As temperatures fluctuate, pond water and ice levels also fluctuate and may become unstable. Salt run-off can also make the ice dangerous.

Recently, two people have fallen through the ice at Grenadier Pond when it was deemed and posted as unsafe.

Fortunately, our first responders were able to successfully rescue and assist both back to shore, where they were treated by waiting Paramedics.

This is a successful outcome to an immediately life-threatening situation. We are also hearing reports of warning and danger signs on ponds being removed, which is extremely dangerous for any unsuspecting skaters.

The City has more than 50 artificial ice rinks across the city where people can get out and skate, safely.

As someone who has been personally involved in numerous ice and water rescues over the years, I implore you to stay off unverified natural ice and stick to the safety of our network of artificial ice rinks.

Thank you.