

TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BAY

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Press Release

To: All Media and Neighbours of the Township of Georgian Bay

From: Mayor Peter Koetsier

Date: Saturday, April 4, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 – Secondary Homes

Pages: Four

Yesterday the Province declared that we as a society need to do much more to address the challenge presented by COVID-19. They removed many activities from the essential services list and the Township responded to these changes.

Today the OPP noted that staying home means avoiding all non-essential trips. They are prepared to fine people \$750 or more for not complying with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act orders currently in force.

It may be very frustrating for residents to hear that the Province decided that gaining access to their secondary homes via marinas are not essential. It is not a message any cottager wants to hear, but it is a Province-wide mandate.

Very simply, the Province wants everyone to stay at their primary home.

This is consistent with directions from the Federal government and the advice of most experts. All non-essential travel and contact with people must be put on hold until the curve is flattened. You have heard the same news as us. We are not lawyers, nor are we looking for loopholes or alternative interpretations of the law. We are respecting the requests and orders put in place by our Provincial government

We are hearing that some residents are expressing their frustrations at our marina operators, contractors and Township staff. This is unfair and very disappointing. The current restrictions were not their decision; they are obeying the law, and trying to protect everyone. Naturally they want to serve you, but just not yet and they deserve your respect and patience.

This is not discrimination against water access only residents. All seasonal residents are expected to stay at their primary residence. We know that many, especially those with land access, are not following this order.

For those who have asked, there will not be a tax refund issued by the Township if you are not able to go to your cottage. The property tax system was created by the Province and is based on the value of your property, not the amount of time you spend there.

Close to half of your taxes goes to the District of Muskoka, and almost a quarter to the school boards. In regards to the Township portion, our first responders are definitely working and already responding to suspected COVID-19 calls.

Our works crews are doing their work while maintaining physical distancing, and the majority of our office staff are working from home so that distancing can be achieved. The Township is still serving everyone.

Your decisions regarding how you respond to the Provincial orders, requests and recommendations, and what you say to others, or add to social media, are yours. We hope your actions are well informed and supportive of the war against the virus that has attacked our communities. We need to fight together, do all we can, and support each other.

On a more personal note: let's get some perspective on all this.

As your Mayor I have received many responses to the Press Release and video of yesterday. Many have been supportive, and I am appreciative of the overall respectful tone from most of those who are understandably frustrated.

The Province, and much of the world, is restricting contact between people as much as possible to try to minimize the grief caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes significant travel restrictions. We all want to get this behind us as soon and as effectively as possible.

If this means you cannot enjoy your cottage in early April, how much of a sacrifice is that when you think of all the suffering this pandemic has already caused so many families? When did most of you first get to the cottage last year or the year before that? If someone inadvertently starts a cluster of COVID-19 cases in our Township, we might be restricted much longer than anticipated.

We should all want to prevent the spread of this virus. We should all be staying home as much as possible. We should all act as if we are carriers of this virus.

Thank you,
Mayor Peter Koetsier

For municipal information that matters to you, please visit our website at www.gbtownship.ca

We are on Twitter @gbtownship
We are on Facebook @Township of Georgian Bay Muskoka
We are on Instagram @georgianbaytownship
#muskokacovidready

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Ontario Extends Business Closures to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Additional Measures Necessary to Protect the Health and Safety of the People of Ontario

April 3, 2020 2:15 P.M.

TORONTO — Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is reducing the list of businesses classified as essential and ordering more workplaces to close. This measure is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the people of Ontario, while ensuring that necessary goods and services remain available.

The government is ordering all businesses not covered by the updated Emergency Order to close effective as of Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. This closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension as the situation evolves. Teleworking, online commerce and other innovative ways of working remotely are permitted at all times and are strongly encouraged for all businesses. All supply chains necessary for the production of vital food and healthcare supplies are being protected and remain intact.

The updated essential businesses list can be found [here](#).

"We are facing a critical moment in the fight against COVID-19 and we must do everything in our power to keep everyone safe and healthy and prevent our health care system from being overwhelmed," said Premier Ford. "Everyone must do their part to stop the spread and flatten the curve. If you are not an essential business, you need to close your doors, work from home if possible and play a role to help contain this outbreak. This is a matter of life and death."

As a temporary measure the Ontario government has revised the list of essential businesses. The updated list will direct additional businesses to close and restricts specified businesses to providing services by alternate methods such as curbside pick up and delivery, except in exceptional circumstances. This includes stores that sell hardware products, vehicle parts and supplies, pet and animal supplies, office supplies and computer products and repairs and safety supplies.

"We have now reached a critical time in our fight against COVID-19." said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health "Every step taken by the province and every effort made by each of us to avoid close contact with others are the key to our success as a province to stop the spread of this virus."

Only critical construction projects will continue, including industrial projects such as refineries and petrochemical plants and infrastructure projects such as new hospitals, roads and bridges. New starts in residential projects will stop, while residential construction that is near completion will continue. Business-owners with questions concerning their essential business status are encouraged to call the Stop the Spread hotline at 1-888-444-3659. The hotline is available from 8:30 a.m.— 9:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:30 a.m.— 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

"We recognize the toll this outbreak is taking on business owners and workers," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "Ontario businesses are top of mind during this unprecedented time. We know that the only way to ensure the health of our businesses and our economy is to ensure the health of all Ontarians."

The government is implementing additional measures to protect frontline workers in essential businesses by adding more than 60 special consultants and officers and doubling the number of phone agents at its Health and Safety Call Centre to 50 to make it easier for workers to report safety concerns. Workers worried their workplaces are unsafe can phone 1-877-202-0008 to speak with an agent.

"If you're a worker on the frontlines of this outbreak, you should know we're doing everything in our power to keep you safe at work," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "We're beefing up our inspectors and making it easier for you to report your concerns. We're working around the clock."

QUICK FACTS

- Everyone in Ontario should stay home unless absolutely necessary and practice physical distancing to reduce their exposure to other people. Avoid close contact (within 2 metres) with people outside of your immediate families.
- If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care.
- Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health: wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer; sneeze and cough into your sleeve; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; avoid contact with people who are sick; and stay home if you are sick.

LEARN MORE

- Learn more about these [temporary measures and see a list of the essential services](#).
- [See how your organization can help fight COVID-19](#).
- Learn more about [Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19](#).
- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.