



City of Sarnia

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: April 5, 2020 RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update – April 5

The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on April 5, 2020 at 9:00 am regarding developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We received confirmation that, as of that time, the number of deaths connected to the COVID-19 pandemic within the Sarnia-Lambton area remains at 7 and that there are now 79 confirmed cases within this area.

We remind the public that it remains very important that all community members work together, and strictly adhere to all the directives and orders that have been issued to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus. This collective effort is the only way we can beat the COVID-19 virus.

We remind you that the City of Sarnia has established an Email and telephone Hotline contact for members of the public to report their concerns regarding people who do not comply with the directives and orders that were adopted to stop the COVID-19 Pandemic. The time for education is now over and you can contact the City in the following ways to report activities that violate the directives and orders that have been adopted for our collection protection:

- By Email: covid@sarnia.ca
 - By Phone: 1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642) or 519-332-0330

The hotline will be monitored between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Please be sure to include as much detail as available to you when you report an activity so that we may properly investigate including your name, the date of the incident, the non-compliance event, time and location when making a report.

On April 3rd, 2020 the Government of Ontario designated "Restricted Fire Zones" throughout the Province within its legislated area. Because the legislated area designated did not include the City of Sarnia, based on the advice and recommendation of the Sarnia Fire Chief, in consultation with the Sarnia Chief of Police, the City of Sarnia issued a complementary Emergency Order on April 3, 2020 which effectively served to prohibit the setting of any type of open burn fires within the boundaries of the City including activities such as the burning of grass or debris, campfires, or the use of an outdoor fire grate, fireplace or fire pit and also extends to rural burn permits.

Following the issuance of Emergency Order No. 1 implementing a general prohibition on open burn activities within the City of Sarnia, we would like to clarify that the Emergency Order only covers burn activities that may cause sparks that produce hazards that place the safety of our first responders at risk. As such, regular controlled burn activities that are based on natural gas or propane appliances, such as outdoor heaters and BBQs, remain permissible. In relation to Emergency Order No. 1, Sarnia Fire Chief Brian Arnold said:

"While I understand the frustration that some members of the community feel with what appears to be further restrictions on their activities by government, I can assure you that we would not be asking our community members to make these short term sacrifices if we did not believe that these temporary measures are absolutely necessary for the protection of our first responders and our community during these trying times."

Sarnia Police Chief Norm Hansen issued the following statement in support of the emergency measures currently in place:

"After a month of increasing restrictions, we are still faced with tough decisions to try to beat this pandemic. Your Fire Service is trying to do what they can to limit exposure of their staff and for people who would gather in excess of the Provincially mandated five persons. None of the restrictions that have been placed on us are enjoyable, but certainly are worth it if it can save a life. To Mayor Bradley and Chief Arnold, the Sarnia Police Service has your back. Thanks to all the citizens who are helping to beat Covid-19."

Transit

Effective Monday, April 6th, Transit will begin operating a Saturday bus service during the week. This modified weekday bus schedule will still begin at 6:30 am. This change is being made due to a decline in ridership and current staffing shortages. No changes are being made to existing weekend bus service or start times.

The main differences between the regular weekday schedule and the Saturday schedule are:

- Route 9 Exmouth frequency reduction
- Routes 4/3 Wellington Maxwell are combined
- Route 6 Mitton does not operate
- Routes with increased frequency during peak hours have less frequency or, Peak-hour bus frequency on certain routes will be reduced
- Route 10 Vidal will continue to operate to provide travel to essential employment during the week.

Transit will also begin limiting the total number of passengers permitted on each bus, at one time, to ensure social distancing is achieved. Once the limit is reached operators will by-pass stops. Efforts will be made to accommodate passengers who are unable to board due to ridership limits as quickly as possible. Transit riders should be prepared to have to wait for the next scheduled bus. Passengers are also encouraged to leave earlier to ensure they reach their essential trip destinations at their desired times.

Transit continues to operate as it is the only essential means of travel for many in our community. We again emphasize the critical importance of using transit only for essential trips. Essential travel trips are limited to attending essential employment and medical appointments, and to purchase groceries. With the need to limit the number of passengers on each bus, if you are using the Transit system for non-essential travel, you could be limiting another person's ability to access bus service who needs it for an essential purpose.

The City of Sarnia would like to remind the public that, based on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, all outdoor facilities and their associated parking lots will remain closed until further notice including all of the following:

- sports fields, playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts, off-leash dog parks, beaches, skateboard and BMX parks, picnic areas, park

shelters, outdoor exercise equipment, condo parks and community gardens.

Please note that people who do not comply with emergency orders issued under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act may be charged under the Provincial Offenses Act and be subject to fines.

The advice of Lambton County's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Ranade remains that adopting safe hygiene practices such as physical distancing by keeping a safe distance of at least 2 metres from others and not gathering in groups of more than 5, regularly washing our hands, and not touching our faces will significantly help reduce the impact and spread of this pandemic.

We sincerely thank those who are taking the matter seriously. We acknowledge that this is a difficult and unusual time and ask that we all adhere to the recommended advice and orders related to the required safety measures and respect the closures, posted signage and barricades because these actions are the only things that will help us return to normal faster.

Given the rapidly changing situation, we would like to refer concerned community members to the websites for Bluewater Health and for Lambton Public Health for up to date information on the COVID-19 Virus, including the number of active cases within our community:

Bluewater Health:

- <https://www.bluewaterhealth.ca/covid-19-information>

Lambton Public Health:

- <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with someone who you believe may have been infected, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care.

To listen to a detailed listing of City of Sarnia closures and disruptions, you are encouraged to call our City of Sarnia Services Update Line at 226-778-4611 which will be updated daily.

Lambton Public Health Information:

If you are experiencing symptoms and have traveled internationally, please call your health care provider or Lambton Public Health (519-383-8331) or <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/> (Please do not call 9-1-1 unless it is an emergency).

The Primary Control Group will continue to meet daily to ensure that all new and relevant information is being taken into consideration going forward. Daily public notifications will be issued. Please visit the City's website www.sarnia.ca, Facebook, and/or Twitter for updates.

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For further information, please contact:

City of Sarnia COVID-19 Hotline

1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642) or 519-332-0932

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City of Sarnia, Customer Service

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