



*City of Sarnia*

***MEDIA RELEASE***

DATE: April 19, 2020 RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update – April 19

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The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on April 19, 2020 at 9:00 am regarding developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and, as of that time, received confirmation that the number of deaths connected to the COVID-19 pandemic within the Sarnia-Lambton area remains at 13 and the number of confirmed cases has increased to 132. The number of confirmed institutional outbreaks remains at 2 with Landmark Village located in Sarnia and Lambton Meadowview Villa located in Petrolia.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind the community that a state of emergency is still in effect, both locally and provincially, and that we are all required to make the necessary sacrifices needed to adequately respond to legitimate public health goals and stop the spread of a deadly and contagious virus.

Through community collaboration and respect of the emergency measures currently in place, we expect that the sacrifices asked of all of us will intrude in the least manner possible in our daily activities and will allow us to return to a normal life within a shorter period of time.

While the state of emergency remains in effect, we remind you the closure of all non-essential workplaces, outdoor amenities such as parks and recreational areas, public places, bars and restaurants, as well as restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and prohibitions against price-gouging will continue to be enforced by both the City of Sarnia and Sarnia Police Services.

The City has had great success with the COVID-19 reporting hotline, and by continuing to work together through these difficult times, we will stop the spread of COVID-19. By-Law Enforcement has received the following number of complaints and concerns lodged through the COVID-19 reporting system to date:

- Total number of complaints received: 567
- Total number of emails received: 490
- Total number of phone calls received: 77
- Total number of charges laid: 3

Please note the above numbers do not include calls that were received through the Sarnia Police Services and dispatched to By-Law Staff or investigated by the Sarnia Police Services.

On April 17, 2020, the City of Sarnia was required to lay charges under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* against a local business for failure to comply with an order issued during an emergency in contravention of the legal requirement to avoid operating a business that is not deemed to be an essential business. We remind the community that it remains very important that we all continue to respect the orders currently in place if we are to stop the spread of COVID-19 within our community and that individuals who deliberately ignore these directives will reduce the effectiveness of the measures and cause an unnecessary prolonging of these emergency directives.

Effective Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Transit will begin operating a Sunday level bus service from Monday to Saturday. The modified weekday bus schedule will still begin at 6:30am and evening service will continue to operate. No changes are being made to existing Sunday bus service or start time.

The main differences between the new weekday schedule and existing Sunday schedule are:

- One Route 9 Bus will cease operating at 7:30pm
- Route 10 and 12 will continue to operate
- Route 15 (specific hours to be posted online and at the terminal)
- Route 14 (No Walmart Service – nearest stop will be at Barclay/Quinn)

Transit will continue 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 continue to by-pass stops. Efforts will be made to

accommodate passengers who are unable to board due to ridership limits. 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.

We would like to remind the community that, in full compliance with Ontario Regulation 119/20 adopted pursuant to Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act which requires the closure of businesses that have not been deemed to be essential, the boat launch at Sarnia Bay within Centennial Park is now closed until further notice.

While we understand the frustration that some members of the community may feel about this closure, the City believes that this is a necessary response to people not respecting physical distancing rules required to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please note Signage has been posted on the site to advise community members of this change in status for the boat launch.

#### COVID-19 Community Concerns:

The service allows the public to file anonymous concerns or provide tips relating to businesses or individuals who may be in violation of Provincial Orders regarding a range of COVID-19 concerns, including:

- Physical distancing relating to private property;
- Non-essential businesses operating in contravention of Provincial Orders;
- Individuals returning to Ontario from outside the Country that are failing to follow Quarantine or self-isolation measures;
- Businesses not taking the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials regarding physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting; and/or
- Individuals and families using park spaces and trails throughout the City.

#### Contact Us:

The COVID-19 email reporting service is monitored daily including nights and weekends to provide the best available response to public concerns and we continue to encourage residents to email us at [covid@sarnia.ca](mailto:covid@sarnia.ca)

The phone line is available Monday to Friday, excluding holidays, from 8:30am – 4:30pm and all messages received after hours are cleared the next business day. The number is 1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642).

Key Reminders:

- Physical distancing measures by keeping a safe distance of at least 2 metres from others are recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and are only enforceable where there are social gatherings of more than 5 people in a public or private place. This does not apply to a gathering of members of a single household;
- Physical distancing is an essential way to slow down the spread of COVID-19. It's important that we all continue to follow the physical distancing recommendations of The Chief Medical Officer of Health, whether you're in one of the high-risk groups or not;
- Adopting safe hygiene practices such as regularly washing our hands, and not touching our faces will significantly help reduce the impact and spread of this pandemic;
- The Provincial Order does not preclude individuals from walking through or using portions of park and recreational areas that are not otherwise closed and that do not contain outdoor recreational amenities including; 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; and
- On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Ontario and with the approval of the Ontario Legislature, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 189, the *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Protection Act*, to extend the State of Emergency for a further period of 28 days, ensuring that all emergency orders issued by the Province that are currently in effect will remain in effect until May 12, 2020.

The City of Sarnia and Sarnia Police Services will continue to enforce these orders and directives and those who are found to violate these risk having charges laid against them.

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](http://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

Andrea Lane, Customer Service Manager

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