



*City of Sarnia*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

DATE: April 20, 2020                      RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update – April 20

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The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on April 20, 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 has risen to 14 and the number of confirmed cases has increased to 145. 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 inform the public of the fact that Lambton Public Health is currently asking for the public's help with their initiative to contact trace potential exposure of members of the public to COVID-19 after a local Taxi Driver tested positive for the Novel Coronavirus. Anyone who used Greg's Taxi service on April 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 is urged to contact Lambton Public Health at 519-383-8331 so that public health officials can investigate the level of risk of exposure to them and offer guidance as appropriate.

This request from Lambton Public Health is a stark reminder to everyone that, despite the fact that this virus cannot be readily seen by the naked eye, this does not diminish the presence of this threat to public health within our community through what would otherwise be inoffensive exposure to an infected person. Any unnecessary activities you engage in can inadvertently expose our most vulnerable population to a highly contagious and deadly virus and, while we are doing our best to protect you and your loved ones by putting measures into place that we believe is necessary to keep everyone safe, it remains critical that residents take this matter very seriously and

continue respect these measures including avoiding trips that are not essential.

We would like 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.

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, the boat launch at Sarnia Bay within Centennial Park, 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: 575
- Total number of emails received: 498
- 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.

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)

### 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.

We would like to remind the public that Transit is now operating a Saturday bus service during the week:

- 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.

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

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