

---

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
2020EMBC0014-000555  
March 24, 2020

COVID-19 Joint Information Centre  
Emergency Management BC  
Ministry of Health

### **B.C. COVID-19 response update**

VICTORIA – The COVID-19 situation in British Columbia is continually evolving and the information below is current as of 3 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

#### **Cases:**

- Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 617
- New cases since March 22, 2020: 145 (March 23 - 67; March 24 - 78)
- Hospitalized cases: 59
- Intensive care: 23
- Deaths: 13
- Recovered: 173

#### **Confirmed cases by region:**

- Vancouver Coastal Health: 330
- Fraser Health: 194
- Island Health: 44
- Interior Health: 41
- Northern Health: 8

#### **Testing:**

- Testing capacity has increased to approximately 3,500 tests per day.
- 26,681 individuals tested as of March 23, 2020.
- Testing is available for all who need it, but not everyone requires a test.
  - If you have no symptoms, mild symptoms or you are a returning traveller self-isolating at home, you do not require a test.
  - For each of these situations, the public health advice remains the same, regardless of test results: self-isolate for 14 days to monitor for the development of symptoms or until your symptoms are completely gone.
- Those who have severe illness, require hospitalization, are residents of long-term care facilities or are health-care workers will continue to be tested.
  - Anyone part of an active investigation or outbreak cluster will be tested so they can be appropriately monitored.
- If symptoms appear, call your health-care provider, call 811 for guidance or check your symptoms online: <https://covid19.thrive.health>

#### **Provincial advice and measures:**

- NEW: Non-essential travel advisory from B.C. Ferries: [https://www.bcferrries.com/current\\_conditions/travel-advisory.html](https://www.bcferrries.com/current_conditions/travel-advisory.html)
- NEW: BC Parks moving to close certain parks, recreation areas: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020ENV0014-000553>
- Along with being able to check symptoms online, British Columbians can now download a new self-assessment app: <https://bc.thrive.health/>
- In the last 24 hours 18,800 users have downloaded the self-assessment app.
- B.C.'s first steps to support people, businesses: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0013-000545>
- List of provincial tax changes announced by government: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/tax-changes/covid-19-tax-changes>
- Guidance to construction sites operating during COVID-19: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020EMBC0002-000542>
- Restaurants allowed to use servers to deliver liquor products: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AG0027-000541>
- Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, has ordered personal service establishments, such as but not limited to: nail salons, tattoo parlours, barbershops, beauty parlours, health spas and massage parlours are ordered to close until further notice. These services require direct, personal contact with other people - and that is impossible to deliver while maintaining appropriate distancing.
- The B.C. government support and relief for the province's most vulnerable and those living in BC Housing: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MAH0013-000536>
- The B.C. government is taking steps to support the child care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020CFD0041-000530>
- Henry has ordered all restaurants must move to take-out or delivery model only or close.
- BC Liquor Stores clarifies working hours, extra steps taken during COVID-19 pandemic: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AG0025-000528>
- BC Parks to remain open with new COVID-19 protocols: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020ENV0005-000519>
- Henry clarifies direction on physical distancing relating to going outside:
  - It is safe to go outside to get fresh air, walk pets, ride a bike and exercise while maintaining safe physical distances.
- The B.C. government is waiving the MSP coverage wait period for people moving back to B.C. from COVID-19 impacted areas. In addition, the B.C. government is planning to provide health coverage to British Columbians who are out of province and unable to return: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents>
- Long-term care facilities are to restrict visitors to essential visitors only.
- Rear door, free boarding on all BC Transit, Translink buses: <https://www.bctransit.com/victoria/news?nid=1529708533639>
- Resource for managing COVID-19 related stress, anxiety and depression: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health-safety/covid19\\_stressmanagement\\_5\\_accessible.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health-safety/covid19_stressmanagement_5_accessible.pdf)
- WorkSafeBC resources available for employers and workers: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates>
- Provincial state of emergency has been declared: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/21826>
- BC Ferries has reduced food and retail services to minimal levels on board ships and at

ferry terminals, effective March 18, 2020:

[https://www.bcferries.com/about/media\\_room/newsreleases.html](https://www.bcferries.com/about/media_room/newsreleases.html)

- Henry has reminded employers that they must excuse workers for sickness without requiring a doctor's note.
- All public universities and colleges have switched to online classes for the rest of the term.
- Henry has issued an order providing criteria for exempting essential service workers from self-isolation protocols: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics>
- B.C. government has suspended K-12 learning in all classrooms. A decision on when and how to return will be made in partnership with school districts and independent schools.
- Businesses with liquor primary licenses (bars, pubs, night clubs, etc.) ordered to close: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/covid-19-pho-order-nightclubs-food-drink-services.pdf>
- Henry has issued the following order for travellers: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics>
- The B.C. government will make changes to the Employment Standards Act to protect workers and prevent layoffs.
- On March 16, 2020, Henry announced new measures related to mass gatherings: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/covid-19-pho-class-order-mass-gatherings.pdf>
- Measures related to hospital operations, long-term care facilities, casinos and gatherings over 50 people are here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020HLTH0086-000499>

### **Media availability schedule:**

Upcoming scheduled media availabilities with Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Henry will be held:

Wednesday, March 25, 2020 – 3 p.m., Victoria (Henry only)

Thursday, March 26, 2020 – 3 p.m., Victoria

Friday, March 27, 2020 – 3 p.m., Victoria

Saturday, March 28, 2020 – TBA

### **Public health emergency:**

- Under a provincial health emergency, a provincial health officer, among other emergency powers, may:
  - do orally what must otherwise be done in writing;
  - serve an order in any manner;
  - act in a shorter or longer time period than is otherwise required; and
  - compel any peace officer to enforce an order.

### **Travel/federal measures:**

- The federal government's plan to mobilize science to fight COVID-19:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/23/canadas-plan-mobilize-science-fight-covid-19>

- The federal government's financial package for farmers and agri-food business: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/23/prime-minister-announces-support-farmers-and-agri-food-businesses>
- On March 21, 2020, the federal government announced new measures to provide support for Canadians at home or abroad, as well as support for international students, seasonal agricultural workers and other temporary foreign workers: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/21/prime-minister-announces-efforts-bring-canadians-home-abroad>
- Provincial health officer's order for travellers: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics>
- On March 17, 2020, the federal government announced new measures relating to travel, including:
  - Closure of the Canada-U.S. border to all non-essential traffic going into effect Saturday, March 21, midnight: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/news/2020/03/us-canada-joint-initiative-temporary-restriction-of-travelers-crossing-the-us-canada-border-for-non-essential-purposes.html>
- On March 16, 2020, the federal government announced new measures relating to travel, including:
  - banning entry of all foreign nationals by air travel from all countries;
  - consolidating international inbound flights to four major hubs only, including Vancouver International Airport (YVR);
  - preventing symptomatic passengers from boarding a plane to Canada;
  - strengthening in-flight medical procedures and medical screening immediately upon landing, with enhanced cleaning and disinfection at airports;
  - support for impacted Canadians abroad; and
  - 14-day self-isolation for all arrivals except for essential work.
- Global Affairs Canada has set up an emergency loan program for people abroad attempting to return to Canada.
- Public health officials require anyone arriving in B.C. from a foreign country to self-isolate for 14 days, staying away from work or school. Guidance for self-isolation is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing-isolation>

#### **Resources:**

- Help flatten the curve by checking symptoms online or downloading the app: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>
- If you or a family member have symptoms or need medical advice, call 811.
- Latest COVID-19 updates and statements: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/Search?q=COVID-19>
- Latest orders and directives from the provincial health officer can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics>

#### **Learn More:**

For the latest videos and livestreaming of COVID-19 media availabilities, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/BCProvincialGovernment/>

Or: <https://twitter.com/BCGovNews>

For up-to-date non-medical information, including the latest travel restrictions and provincial and federal programs, call 1 888 COVID-19 or visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, including for employers and businesses, visit: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

For common questions about COVID-19 and terminology, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions>

For the COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and planning materials, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza>

For more information and latest updates on the #COVID19 pandemic, follow the BCCDC on Twitter: @CDCofBC or visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

**Contact:**

COVID-19 Joint Information Centre  
Media Relations  
[embc.covid19jic@gov.bc.ca](mailto:embc.covid19jic@gov.bc.ca)  
236 478-1336

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)