
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Emergency Management BC

State of emergency extended to continue B.C.'s COVID-19 response

VICTORIA – The B.C. government has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response.

“The vast majority of British Columbians are following Dr. Henry’s orders of seeing fewer faces in bigger spaces, but we all have to remain committed to flattening the curve,” said Premier John Horgan. “British Columbians have sacrificed a lot to keep transmission rates down, and now unsafe parties and gatherings are eroding that hard work. We’re committed to getting our province back on track and will be announcing enforcement action against those who continue to put others at risk.”

The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on Sept. 1, 2020, to allow government to continue to take the necessary actions to keep British Columbians safe and manage immediate concerns, such as recent outbreaks in some areas of the province.

“We put these orders in place for a reason, and they are not optional,” Farnworth said. “Public health orders must be followed to ensure public safety, and I will be bringing in new measures later this week to address the actions of those who demonstrate their indifference to the health and safety of others.”

Actions taken in the previous two weeks to support British Columbians include:

- appointing Sandra Banister, QC, to conduct a review of layoff and recall rights of unionized workers in B.C.'s hotel sector as a result of COVID-19;
- working with the federal government to ensure that BC Ferries is eligible for the transit funding envelope of the Safe Restart Agreement;
- ensuring schools are ready to welcome students into classrooms by putting an orientation week in place to allow extra time to orient students and staff on the new health and safety measures in place;
- updated operational guidelines on wearing masks in schools to help ensure a consistent provincewide approach to keep schools safe for all students, teachers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- announcing plans to hire approximately 500 additional health professionals to increase contact tracing around B.C.,
- announcing more people in B.C. will have access to life-saving overdose prevention, treatment and supports, part of \$10.5 million to accelerate the response to an increasingly toxic illicit drug supply due to COVID-19;
- giving renters until July 2021 to pay arrears per a new repayment framework for renters

with outstanding rent from April to August 2020, posted to Residential Tenancy Branch website; and

- extending emergency support for vulnerable people during COVID-19 through the temporary COVID-19 Crisis Supplement. The supplement will be extended for four months and will continue to be provided to low-income seniors receiving the B.C. Senior's Supplement and income assistance and disability recipients residing in special care facilities.

On July 10, the COVID-19 Related Measures Act came into force. The legislation enables provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue as needed, should the provincial state of emergency end.

The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. Farnworth made the original declaration on March 18, 2020, the day after Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, declared a public health emergency.

Quick Facts:

- Declarations of provincial states of emergency may be issued by the minister responsible under the Emergency Program Act.
- The provincial government can extend the period of a declaration made by the minister responsible for further periods of up to 14 days at a time.
- During the 2017 wildfire season, the province was in a provincial state of emergency for 10 weeks from July 7 to Sept. 15.

Learn More:

Learn more about B.C.'s economic recovery planning: <http://gov.bc.ca/recoveryideas>

For information on BC's Restart Plan, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/RestartBC

For information on non-medical issues like travel recommendations and how to manage social isolation, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVID-19

For information on federal and provincial government supports available to individuals, families, businesses and organizations, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/covidgovernmentbenefits

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, including for employers, businesses and schools, visit:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

For more information and latest medical updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit its website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

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