
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020PSSG0049-001631
Sept. 1, 2020

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.

“It’s encouraging to see the vast majority of British Columbians following public health rules to stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep each other safe,” said Premier John Horgan. “However, there remains a small group of people ignoring Dr. Henry’s orders and threatening our hard work over the past several months to flatten the curve. This pandemic is not over, and whether it’s an end-of-summer gathering or hockey celebration, this is not the time to bend or break the rules. To those few who are not complying, there will be consequences.”

On Friday, Aug. 21, police and other provincial enforcement officers were given the ability to issue \$2,000 violation tickets for owners or organizers contravening the provincial health officer’s (PHO) order on gatherings and events. For individuals, \$200 violation tickets can be issued to those not following the direction of police or enforcement staff at events, or who refuse to comply with requests to follow safe operating procedures of a restaurant, bar or other licensed establishment, or respond with abusive behaviour towards employees.

In the first week of these new enforcement measures (Aug. 21-28), 10 violation tickets were issued. This includes six \$2,000 violation tickets for contraventions of the PHO’s order on gatherings and events, and four \$200 violation tickets issued to individuals.

“Since we announced the new enforcement measures, we’ve seen several examples of violation tickets being issued to people breaking the law,” said Farnworth. “It’s disappointing to see behaviour that shows a blatant disregard for the safety of citizens. It’s time to stop breaking the rules. It’s time to do better. It’s my hope that these enforcement measures will result in a change in behaviour and fewer violation tickets will be needed in the future.”

The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on Sept. 15, 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.

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

- introducing new measures to enforce COVID-19 public safety by giving police and other provincial enforcement officers the ability to issue violation tickets for people contravening the PHO order on gatherings and events;
- posting back-to-school plans for K-12 families for all 60 school districts, so parents and families can prepare to support their children for a safe return to classrooms. Each school

- district plan follows the same strict provincial health and safety measures co-developed with the PHO, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Ministry of Education;
- helping organizations and agencies in B.C.'s community social services sector to be better able to build capacity, support recruitment and retention, and improve occupational health and safety training programs for staff, thanks to \$10 million in one-time funding from the Province. The funding supports training programs to organizations across the sector, including training and development for Indigenous agencies and Indigenous staff, foundational training and development opportunities, and occupational health and safety;
 - supporting arts and culture venues deeply impacted by COVID-19 by creating a new, \$2-million Arts Infrastructure Program to help improve spaces for artists and cultural activities; and
 - supporting a safe and progressive return to sports by moving to Phase 3 of the Return to Sport Guidelines. The BCCDC has reviewed viaSport's guidelines that contain recommendations for how to train, play and compete safely while following public health recommendations.

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 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

News release on measures to enforce COVID-19 public safety:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PSSG0046-001568>

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 BCCDC on Twitter @CDCofBC

Or visit its website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For non-medical information relating to COVID-19:

Visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19

Email: servicebc@gov.bc.ca

Or call: 1 888 COVID-19

Contact:

Jordan Turner

Media Relations

Emergency Management BC

250 952-5062

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect