



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2020

HAIDA GWAII DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY

As All-Island leaders, we are working in coordination to reduce the potential impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the communities of Haida Gwaii. COVID-19 poses an imminent threat to local people and public health, and the global pandemic requires bold action. We are all working together to ensure the ongoing safety and health of local residents.

Yesterday, March 23, 2020 the Council of the Haida Nation, Skidegate Band Council, Old Massett Village Council, Village of Masset, Village of Port Clements, Village of Queen Charlotte, and the North Coast Regional District – officially declared a Local State of Emergency within our jurisdictions.

- **Travel to and from communities on Haida Gwaii will be limited to essential services only. Essential services are listed on pages 4-5.**
- **Anyone who is not working in essential services should stay home and shelter in place at this time. Additional emergency measures are in place to limit social gatherings and activities to protect you and others from the COVID-19 pandemic. Emergency measures are listed below and further information will be available through our respective communities and councils.**

Strong preventative measures are the most effective way to save lives. This is a historic decision made to protect all people of Haida Gwaii.

Haawa / haw'aa / thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Haida Gwaii COVID-19 RESPONSE

State of Emergency Declared

Haida and municipal leadership on Haida Gwaii are acting to reduce the potential impact of COVID-19 in our communities, which is why on Monday, March 23, 2020, the Council of the Haida Nation, Skidegate Band Council, Old Massett Village Council, Village of Masset, Village of Port Clements, Village of Queen Charlotte, and the North Coast Regional District declared a State of Emergency in their respective jurisdictions. Under the Constitution of the Haida Nation (Article 6 Section 10), the CHN has declared a state of emergency for Haida Gwaii and is working with All-Island leadership and their Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). Under the Indian Act and B.C.'s Emergency Program Act, when a State of Emergency is declared, it fully activates each municipal community's EOC and gives these key personnel greater flexibility to access resources and respond efficiently to emergent circumstances.

We are continuing to offer essential services and are taking a proactive role in helping citizens to heed the advice of the Haida Health EOCs, our other local health authorities and Provincial Health Officer to practice social distancing. By taking these keys steps early, we are all doing what we can to keep everyone safe, especially those who are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. We are all in this together.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Haida Nation and BC's Emergency Program Act, travel to and from Haida Gwaii will be limited to essential travel and essential services only.

Emergency measure recommendations of the Haida Nation, and under the Indian Act and the British Columbia Health Act are now in place throughout Haida Gwaii:

1. All residents who are not working in essential services should stay home and shelter in place. Those who must travel to and from work for essential services are asked to do so quickly and efficiently, respecting social distancing of 2 meters/6 feet.
2. Residents may only have physical contact with individuals within the same household, except in workplaces that continue to operate for essential service provision. Individuals who continue to attend physical workspaces out of necessity must practice social distancing of 2 meters/6 feet and follow recommended practices with respect to hygiene and disinfection of shared spaces. Health recommendations for businesses are available via the BC Centre for Disease Control, here: bccdc.ca.
3. Except for those essential services in outdoor environments, residents may only go outside with members of your household and must keep your distance from anyone outside of your household, respecting social distancing.

4. Areas that typically attract larger groups of people where a separation of 2 meters/6 feet is difficult to maintain are now closed to the public. This includes recreation centres and facilities, libraries and playgrounds.
 - a. Any outdoor sporting activity that cannot keep a 2 meter/6 feet separation is not permitted.
5. Children under 12 must be supervised or within communication distance of an adult when outside.
6. All residents who are returning from travel to a community within Haida Gwaii from any mode of transportation from any location either internationally or domestically are strongly recommended to self-isolate for 14 days upon returning. Those who are coming to Haida Gwaii communities for the purpose of conducting essential service work (and do not show symptoms) are exempt (please follow all Provincial social distancing guidelines of 2 meters/6 feet).
7. Residents are strongly discouraged from leaving their community during this time. For those who MUST travel for essential services are to adhere to Provincial and local health regulations.

If necessary, further local measures may be established to protect public health under the guidance of emergency personnel and health care professionals. These emergency measures are issued on a temporary basis. Each Council/Board will follow their legislative process to extend or terminate this state of local emergency as required.

Helping Residents & Businesses Access Supports

Resident Supports

Employment Insurance & Emergency Care Benefit

If you are sick or are forced to stay home, the federal government has waived the one-week waiting period for EI and has also waived the requirement for a doctor's note. For more information about how to apply, call 1-800-531-7555.

Starting in early April, the federal government will launch the Emergency Care Benefit to provide you with up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. When applications are made available in the coming weeks, they will be administered through the Canada Revenue Agency. To make yourself ready, it is strongly recommended if you have already to create a My CRA online account.

Other Programs

- Pause on repayments of Canada Student Loan and Canada Apprentice Loan debt with no interest accruing until September 30, 2020.
- CMHC mortgage deferral options (contact your lender for more information).
- Income tax payment deferral amounts owing (until August 2020).
- Increased Childcare Benefit Amount.

For more information on these programs, type the names into the search bars of the Federal and Provincial websites at canada.gc.ca and gov.bc.ca.

Business Supports

Deferred Business Tax Filing

The Canada Revenue Agency will allow all business to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after today and before September 2020.

Federal Wage Subsidy

The federal government is proposing to provide eligible small employers a temporary wage subsidy for a period of three (3) months.

Business Credit Availability Program

The Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) will allow the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC) to provide more than \$10 billion of additional support, largely targeted to small and medium-sized businesses. Additional business credit is also available through the BDC and EDC.

For more information on all of these supports, go to: canada.gc.ca.

For the purpose of this Declaration of a Local State of Emergency, “essential service” means:

1. Essential Health Care Operations, Including:

- research and laboratory services
- hospitals
- walk-in-care health facilities
- emergency veterinary and livestock services
- elder care
- medical wholesale and distribution
- home health care workers or aides for the elderly
- doctor and emergency dental
- nursing homes, or residential health care facilities or congregate care facilities
- medical supplies and equipment manufacturers and providers
- ambulance service

2. Essential Infrastructure, Including:

- utilities including power generation, fuel supply and transmission
- public water and wastewater
- telecommunications and data centers
- airports/airlines

6. Financial Institutions, Including:

- banks
- insurance
- payroll
- accounting

7. Providers of Basic Necessities to Economically Disadvantaged Populations, Including:

- homeless shelters and congregate care facilities
- food banks
- human services providers whose function includes the direct care of patients in licensed or funded voluntary programs; the care, protection, custody and oversight of individuals both in the community and in licensed residential facilities; those operating community shelters and other critical human services agencies providing direct care or support

8. Construction, Including:

- skilled trades such as electricians, plumbers

- transportation infrastructure such as or for-hire vehicles, garages, BC Ferries
 - hotels, and places of accommodation
- 3. Essential Manufacturing, Including:**
- food processing, manufacturing agents, including all foods and beverages
 - agriculture/farms
- 4. Essential Retail, Including:**
- grocery stores including all food and beverage stores
 - pharmacies
 - convenience stores
 - farmer's markets
 - gas stations
 - restaurants/bars (but only for take-out/delivery)
 - hardware and building material stores
- 5. Essential Services, Including:**
- trash collection, processing and disposal
 - mail and shipping services
 - laundromats
 - building cleaning and maintenance
 - child care services for essential service providers
 - auto repair
 - warehouse/distribution and fulfillment
 - funeral homes and cemeteries
 - storage for essential businesses
 - animal shelters
- other related construction firms and professionals for essential infrastructure **or for emergency repair and safety purposes**
- 9. Essential Services Necessary to Maintain the Safety, Sanitation and Essential Operations of Residences or Other Essential Businesses, Including:**
- law enforcement
 - fire prevention and response
 - security
 - emergency management and response
 - building cleaners or janitors
 - general maintenance whether employed by the entity directly or a vendor
 - automotive repair
 - disinfection
 - municipal governance
- 10. Vendors that Provide Essential Services or Products, Including Technology Support, Child Care and Services:**
- technology support for online services
 - child care programs and services
 - government owned or leased buildings
 - essential government services

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY COMMUNITY?

For updates specific to your community, go to:

Skidegate Band Council < skidegate.ca >
Old Massett Village Council < oldmassettvillagecouncil.com >
Village of Masset < massetbc.com >
Village of Port Clements < portclements.ca >
Village of Queen Charlotte < queencharlotte.ca >
North Coast Regional District < ncrdbc.com >

For Haida Nation and Island-wide COVID-19 updates, go to:

Council of the Haida Nation < haidanation.ca >