

Frequently Asked Questions

What you need to know about COVID-19 and its impacts on you and our community

Why are Town of Ladysmith offices and facilities closed to the public?

The Town took the precautionary step on Wednesday, March 18 to ask employees stay at home with their families to follow two weeks of self-isolation. We took these steps out of concern for our community and its residents as we do our part to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those employees who could work from home during that time did so. On April 2, staff started coming back to work, following strict protocols to maintain physical distancing, both indoors and outside.

We have an Exposure Control Plan in place that provides guidance to staff. This includes not travelling together in Town vehicles (which may look inefficient but we put safety of our staff first), limiting the number of staff in any work place so that they can observe physical distancing, and remaining closed to the public while we carry on our work.

All Town staff are now at work. Most are in their regular jobs, although some of our Community Centre staff have been reassigned to other duties while the facility is closed.

How do I contact staff while your facilities are closed?

The City Hall main switchboard at 250.245.6400 is staffed during regular work hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. You can also call our Public Works main office at 250.245.6445. Contact information including email addresses and cell phone numbers are all on our [COVID-19 contact page](#) on the Town's website.

What about fitness programs, aquatics, lessons and camps?

Although the Frank Jameson Community Centre is closed, our staff have created a series of virtual Isolation Recreation activities and fitness programs to keep you active while you are self-isolating and physical distancing. Check their [website page](#) frequently, because new offerings are added each week.

Who do I call to report an emergency such as a water main break?

To report a water, sewer or road emergency, residents should phone the Town's Infrastructure Services Department at 250-245-6445. The emergency number for evenings and weekends is 1.833.888.1086.

Will my garbage, recycling and organics pickup schedule be changing?

Garbage collection will continue to be carried out by our contractor, Waste Connections. Please refer to their website for all information concerning future impacts or delays to collection schedules: <https://www.wasteconnectionsCanada.com/>. The Town will also keep residents updated about any changes to collection schedules.

The CVRD recycling centres, including Peerless Road, continue to operate with minor modifications to protect the public and staff. The Town will keep residents updated on any changes. Please refer to the CVRD's website for hours and the latest on any changes: <https://www.cvrD.bc.ca/>

However, please be aware that physical distancing requirements mean a limit on the number of vehicles allowed in the Peerless facility at one time. Be prepared for lineups at peak times, especially on weekends. If you can hold onto yard waste and other items for disposal until the facility is fully operational again, we encourage you to do so.

Will Council continue meeting?

Yes! 'Virtual' Council meetings are being held electronically for the foreseeable future so that Council can deal with Town business. The meetings take place via Zoom and are live streamed on YouTube. The link to join the meeting is included with the agenda package, highlighted in our weekly Council meeting newsletter, and posted on our website. We encourage you to watch the meetings online from home, and welcome your questions as always – to ask a question of Council during the question period at the end of the meeting, email it any time to info@ladysmith.ca and we will read it for the Mayor to answer.

Council meetings generally take place on the first and third Tuesday of each month, but during these times, this schedule could change, so check our website for the latest meeting information.

Does the Town have an Emergency Operations Centre?

Recognizing the rapid global spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) launched a Regional Emergency Operations Centre on March 13. Senior staff and elected officials from the Region's member municipalities, including Ladysmith, are holding regular meetings to ensure a coordinated response to help limit the impact of the virus and address related issues. You can visit the CVRD's website to read the most recent news releases on the response effort at the following link: <https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/CivicAlerts.aspx>

What is physical, or social, distancing and how do I know if I'm following the recommendations?

Scientists know that the best way to help stop the spread of COVID-19 is to limit close contact with others. Even if you are not sick, you may come into contact with others who are, and by doing so you risk passing the illness on to others.

The most important thing you can do right now is to stay at home, only leaving to get essential supplies such as food and medications. If you do have to leave the house, you must stay at least 2 metres away from other people. Two metres, or six feet, is about the length of your bed, or two shopping carts, or the width of two doorways, or two adult arms outstretched.

Physical or social distancing also means not gathering with others. You might be staying home, but if you invite friends over, you run the risk of coming into contact with someone who could have the virus.

We cannot emphasize this enough: **stay at home to help stop the spread of the virus.**

Why did the Town close all of its playgrounds, as well as the Transfer Beach and Holland Creek Trail parking lots?

On March 21st, the Town made the difficult but necessary decision to close all local playgrounds in our parks to make sure we continue to follow the recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer to promote safe physical distancing in our community.

Because our neighbourhood playgrounds are a popular gathering place where children are in close contact, often touching the same recreational equipment, these

spaces do not support the recommended two metres for physical distancing and may increase the exposure and spread of the COVID-19 virus.

We also closed the parking lots at Transfer Beach and the Holland Creek Trail to limit the number of people using the beach and trails at any one time, to ensure users are complying with the physical distancing order from the Provincial Health Officer.

Is backyard burning allowed in the Town boundary?

Backyard burning of yard or garden waste is never allowed in Ladysmith. Please, for the sake of your neighbours and to avoid undue pressure on our health care system at this critical time, do not burn waste in your backyard. You can drop garden waste off at the Peerless Road Recycling Centre if you can't keep it for the time being. Your neighbours with breathing difficulties will thank you for this.

While small campfires no more than .5 metre in diameter and .5 metre high are still permitted, please make sure that you burn only clean, dry wood or charcoal briquettes in them. But again, we encourage you to be considerate of your neighbours who may have health issues affected by smoke.

I had to close my business and need help!

The Government of Canada and the Province of BC have taken significant steps to assist Canadians facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Please follow the links below for information about assistance for small business owners.

I've been laid off/my hours have been cut back, what help is there for me?

The governments of BC and Canada have put in place a number of measures to help workers who have been laid off or had their hours of work cut back. They include direct payments to individuals, reduced wait times for Employment Insurance, tax breaks and rent assistance.

Visit the government of Canada COVID-19 Economic Response Plan page <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>, and check back frequently as more supports are put in place.

The Province of BC has a very comprehensive COVID-19 page at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>



Who do I notify if someone that tested positive for COVID-19, or recently returned from an international trip, is not following the recommendation to self-quarantine?

If you have a strong reason to believe that someone in the community is not following the 14-day quarantine order issued by the federal government, or you believe they have COVID-19 and are supposed to be self-isolating, do not approach them in public.

Instead, call 1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319 daily from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. to access support and resources from the provincial and federal government.

We all have a responsibility to avoid gossiping about other residents, including publishing misinformation about them online, during these uncertain times.

Where can I receive accurate and up-to-date information on COVID-19?

We recommend checking our website for the latest information from the Town, CVRD and Island Health along with a list of website links to trusted resources from public health agencies and government. You can also watch for daily updates from the Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry which are being published daily, with the exception of weekends, on the [Province's YouTube page](#).

Visit www.ladysmith.ca/covid-19 for more information. Communications is an essential service and the Town will continue to update this dedicated COVID-19 page along with our website with important information for residents.

The Province of BC has a very comprehensive COVID-19 page at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

The Province of BC has also developed an app that you can download from the APP Store, or access as a website. Here you will find information about everything related to COVID-19, from information about the illness itself, to links to all the support programs being provided by the province for individuals and businesses.

Look for the *Province of BC COVID-19 Support App* at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19app/home> and through the app stores on your smart phone or tablet.

For information on the federal government response and the support they are offering to individuals and businesses, e-stop information site at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

Updates and additional information can also be found on the Town's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

You can also receive weekly up-to-date information bulletins, news releases and other Town news in your email inbox by [subscribing to the Town's email newsletter](#).

Do you have other questions? Email us at info@ladysmith.ca. The mailbox is monitored regularly and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

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