

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County of Simcoe declares COVID-19 emergency

Midhurst/March 18, 2020 - Today, March 18, 2020 at 3 p.m., County of Simcoe Warden George Cornell has declared an emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic developments in our region.

Declaring an emergency affords the County additional powers to protect the health and safety of all individuals, families and businesses as well as the vulnerable populations that we serve. This declaration also aligns with the Government of Ontario's Declaration of Emergency made March 17, 2020.

"The County of Simcoe is taking the important step of declaring an emergency through the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*," said Warden George Cornell. "Recognizing these extraordinary circumstances, we need to ensure we can use all available resources to protect the health and well-being of our residents. We thank front-line staff who are working diligently to ensure our most vulnerable residents remain safe."

The declaration also supports Public Health recommendations that reinforce the importance of acting now to help flatten the curve of the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Avoid gatherings
- Practice adequate social distancing
- Wash your hands for 15-20 seconds with soap and sanitize
- Cough or sneeze into your arm
- If you have any symptoms, self-monitor and self-isolate and contact a healthcare professional if symptoms persist
- If you have travelled outside Canada recently, ensure you self isolate for 14 days
- If you have, or suspect you have COVID-19, contact healthcare authorities and please do all you can to self-isolate and avoid contact with people

The County of Simcoe strongly reminds our residents that the risks of COVID-19 are very real and in our region. It is paramount that residents undertake all public health recommendations and the directions of our health care facilities and assessment centres to not exceed the capacity of our local health-care system.

As a reminder, the following County public contact services and facilities remain closed to the public until further notice:

- Simcoe County Archives
- Simcoe County Museum
- Simcoe County Library Co-operative
- Tourism Simcoe County Information Kiosk
- County Administration Centre – including the Service Simcoe Desk (phone lines and other means of contact remain open)
- County of Simcoe Landfills and Transfer Stations – closed to the public.
(Industrial, Commercial and Institutional customers who have no alternative disposal options are encouraged to contact Service Simcoe at service@simcoe.ca or 1-800-263-3199)
- All County events and gatherings, including in-person Council and Committees are cancelled for March and into April

The County will continue to provide regular public updates through social media, website content and press releases to ensure residents are well informed. For up-to-date information on the status of County services, residents can visit simcoe.ca, or call **1-800-263-3199** or **705-726-9300**. For health-related information, go to simcoemuskokahealth.org, or call the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit directly.

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