

Mayor Watson declares state of emergency for Ottawa due to COVID-19

Ottawa – Mayor Jim Watson today declared a state of emergency for the City of Ottawa due to the spread of COVID-19 in Ottawa. This aligns with Ontario Premier Doug Ford’s announcement on Monday, March 23 that he is expanding Ontario’s state of emergency to shut down all non-essential services.

Declaring a state of emergency will help the City deploy its emergency operations and staff in a more nimble fashion. It will also enable a more flexible procurement process, which will help purchase equipment required by frontline workers and first responders as it becomes available in the coming weeks.

Ottawa Public Health now has laboratory confirmation of the community spread of COVID-19 in Ottawa. We are also starting to see cases among health care workers who have not traveled or been a close contact of a confirmed case. Ottawa Public Health recommends all residents practise physical (social) distancing or self-isolate, if applicable, to help stop the spread of the virus. Information about laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 is available on [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/coronavirus).

Following the declaration, the City formally requested the Province of Ontario to give the City flexibility to manage movement of staff, to redeploy resources, to support essential services and to be adaptable as this situation continues to evolve rapidly.

The most current information will be shared with residents on ottawa.ca and the City’s social media channels. Ottawa Public Health will continue to provide updates on COVID-19 in Ottawa on [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/coronavirus).

What you can do

If you have respiratory symptoms, such as a fever or cough:

- You must self-isolate for 14 days, or 24 hours after your symptoms have fully resolved, whichever is longer.
- You must not leave your home.
- If your symptoms are worsening to a point where you cannot manage at home, please visit your nearest emergency department.

If you are returning from travel:

- You must self-isolate for 14 days. Do not go to community settings, including the grocery store. If you need groceries or other essential items, have a family member, friend or neighbour get them for you and leave the items at your door.
- If you have respiratory symptoms, follow the guidance in the section above.
- If you do not have symptoms, practice physical (social) distancing as outlined below.

All Ottawa residents, except those listed above, should:

- Practice physical (social) distancing.
 - Household contacts (people you live with) do not need to distance from each other unless they are sick or have travelled within the past 14 days.
 - Avoid all non-essential trips in the community.
 - Cancel all group gatherings.
 - Connect via phone, video chat or social media instead of in person.
 - Talk to your employer about working from home, if possible.
 - Avoid visiting elderly friends or relatives unless the visit is essential.
 - Avoid crowds and maintain a distance of two metres from other people when you go outside, like to take a walk.
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Jim Watson
Mayor / Maire

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Declaration of Emergency in the City of Ottawa

WHEREAS the outbreak of a communicable disease, namely COVID-19 coronavirus disease, constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to residents of the City of Ottawa; and

WHEREAS as of 2:15 pm on March 24, 2020, Ottawa Public Health was investigating 25 confirmed cases and 13 indeterminate cases in the City of Ottawa and the Medical Officer of Health has cautioned that the number of people infected with COVID-19 in the city is likely to be greater; and

WHEREAS the Medical Officer of Health has advised residents to practice social distancing to help slow the spread of novel coronavirus; and

WHEREAS on March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario made an order declaring an emergency under s 7.0.1(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and issued associated orders requiring certain establishments legally be required to close immediately; and

WHEREAS on March 23, 2020 the Government of Ontario further announced that all non-essential businesses were required to close throughout Ontario by March 24, 11:59 p.m.; and

WHEREAS the risk of seasonal flooding may further impact the City's ability to focus its resources on addressing the COVID-19 response; and

AND WHEREAS the criteria set out in subsection 4(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, R.S.O. 1990, chapter E.9 (the "Act") have been satisfied;

NOW THEREFORE, an emergency is hereby declared pursuant to subsection 4(1) of the Act in **the whole of the City of Ottawa, in the Province of Ontario.**

Jim Watson

Mayor of the City of Ottawa

Date: March 25, 2020

