

December 22, 2020

For Immediate Release

Elgin County Shutdown in Response to COVID-19

On December 21, 2020, the Province of Ontario announced further measures across the Province to slow the spread of COVID-19 including a *Provincewide Shutdown to Stop Spread of COVID-19 and Save Lives*. The County of Elgin supports all efforts to reduce and eliminate the transmission of COVID-19 in our community to protect the healthcare system and save lives.

The Provincewide Shutdown restrictions start at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, December 26th, 2020 and are anticipated to continue in our region until at least Saturday, January 23, 2021. This shutdown mirrors the provincewide restrictions put in place in the spring in response to the first wave of the pandemic.

Details of the shutdown include, but are not limited to:

- The Shutdown restricts all indoor social gatherings except those with members of the same household. Residents living alone, including seniors, may consider gathering with one other household to help reduce the impact of social isolation.
- The limit for organized religious services and ceremonies including weddings and funeral services is limited to 10 people indoors and 10 people outdoors.
- Restaurant services are limited to takeout options, drive-through and delivery.
- Only essential retail services will be able to remain open for in-person shopping, including: supermarkets, grocery stores, hardware stores, liquor and beer stores, pharmacies, and pet stores. Stores will have limited capacity for in-person shopping.
- The Ministry of Education directed School Boards to prepare students for a pivot to remote learning and a staggered return to in-person learning will take place in 2021.

Residents of Elgin County are strongly encouraged to stay home, except for essential travel, such as groceries and other necessities, like medicine; healthcare appointments; school; child care; and going to work. By reducing the number of people who are out in the community, we reduce the potential exposures to COVID-19, which will help drive down case counts.

Having friends or family who are not members of your household in your home for a social visit is prohibited under provincial orders. Essential support workers and emergency repairpersons are exempt. Outdoor organized public events or social gatherings are limited to a maximum of 10 people. Non-essential travel outside of one's own community is strongly discouraged.

Elgin County parks are open, and residents are encouraged to use them for exercise, including walking, but to do so only with those they live with.

To avoid future or prolonged restrictions following the strict measures announced on December 21, 2020, it is important that Elgin County residents follow the advice and orders of public health experts

and take individual responsibility for saving lives. The County acknowledges how challenging and difficult this is for everyone in our community.

While these restrictions are necessary to reduce contacts and the spread of COVID-19, they must be implemented along with enhanced supports to protect frontline workers and disproportionately affected communities.

Municipalities across Elgin County are working together to plan for the temporary shutdown. This temporary shutdown may impact the delivery of municipal services. For the latest information regarding the impacts of this shutdown in your municipality please visit the following websites or call your local municipal office or the County of Elgin for the latest COVID-19 information.

- Town of Aylmer – (www.aylmer.ca /519-773-3164)
- Municipality of Bayham – (www.bayham.on.ca /519-866-5521)
- Municipality of Central Elgin – (www.centralelgin.org /519-631-4860)
- Municipality of Dutton Dunwich – www.duttondunwich.on.ca / 519-762-2204)
- Township of Malahide – (www.malahide.ca / 519-773-5344)
- Township of Southwold – (www.southwold.ca /519-769-2010)
- Municipality of West Elgin – (www.westelgin.net / 519-785-0560)
- County of Elgin – (www.elgincounty.ca/ 519-631-1460 ext. 104)

Case status data can be found on Southwestern Public Health’s website (www.swpublichealth.ca).

“This is a difficult but critical time in our fight against COVID-19. We all need to stay home as much as possible and follow the rules in order to protect ourselves and each other,” said Warden Tom Marks. “A swift, collective action is needed to contain the current surge before it totally overwhelms our healthcare system. By working together, we can save lives,” Marks continued.

The Provincial government announced a new small-business support grant to help businesses required to close or restrict services under the shutdown. Eligible small businesses can apply for a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000. According to the Province’s plan, \$10,000 will be received by all eligible businesses and businesses can apply for up to \$20,000 in additional dollar-for-dollar funding if they can show their losses exceeded the baseline \$10,000.

For more information, please contact:

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