

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Guidance on Travel to Cottages and Secondary Residences

May 1, 2020

Background

- During this unprecedented period where a public health emergency has been declared, residents have been encouraged to stay home as much as possible. This means staying at your **primary residence** – and not travelling to a secondary residence (e.g. cottage) – to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Resources needed to support the health care system and other essential services like grocery stores and pharmacies in smaller communities and rural areas are calculated based on the permanent population, not the seasonally expanded population of a given area.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has put added pressure and constraints on food and pharmaceutical supply chains and, in some areas, stock of certain supplies has been reduced.
- Visiting cottages and seasonal residences in smaller rural communities puts added pressure on the local resources available. Grocery stores and pharmacies may only have enough supply for permanent residents.
- Hospitals and clinics in smaller communities and rural areas do not have the health care resources or supplies to handle an influx of patients should you become sick and need to go to seek care. Therefore, it is best to remain in your home city or community where you primarily reside.

Emergency Orders, Statements and Reopening Issued in Ontario

There are several emergency orders in effect that may influence your typical experience at the cottage. On April 27th, the Province of Ontario released a [Framework to Reopening our Province](#). This framework provides guiding principles and criteria that need to be met for facilities and businesses to reopen. The Province has confirmed there will be a gradual and thoughtful reopening of select businesses and public places as it is determined safe to do so, based on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

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- Ontario provincial parks and conservation reserves remain closed until May 31, 2020. Please visit [OntarioParks.com](https://ontarioparks.com) and Ontario Parks social media channels for the most up to date information on the reopening of provincial parks and conservation reserves.
- On May 1, the Province of Ontario announced that marinas may *begin preparations for the recreational boating season* by servicing boats and other watercraft and placing boats in the water, but not open to the public. Boats and watercraft must be secured to a dock in the marina until public access is allowed.
- On the list of [essential workplaces](#), marinas are considered a transportation service and have not been permitted to operate during the COVID-19 outbreak unless necessary for the purpose of enabling individuals to access their *primary place of residence*. Therefore, if you normally require a marina to access your cottage or secondary residence, or you expect to use your boat at the marina, you will not be able to access the cottage or use your boat or watercraft until the Province decides that it is safe to reopen marinas for public use.
- Outdoor recreational amenities including all outdoor playgrounds, structures, equipment, sports facilities and multi-use fields, off leash dog areas, outdoor picnic sites, and shelters remain closed under provincial order.
- Recreational camping on public lands with tents, trailers, tent-trailers, recreational vehicles, camper back and any watercraft equipped for overnight accommodation is also prohibited under provincial order.

For the most up to date information on emergency orders and service changes in effect, please visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

What you should do

- You are permitted to go to your cottage but only for the purpose of ensuring maintenance, repair and property management services strictly necessary to manage and maintain the safety, security, sanitation and essential operation of your residential property or building.
- Please consider bringing your own food and provisions with you to limit contact with others in the community.
- Once the property maintenance tasks are complete, you should return home to your primary residence.

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We all have the responsibility to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and protect our families and neighbours. Doing your part means respecting the emergency orders and closures in effect as well as the recommendations issued by public health officials. Ignoring the recommendations by continuing to visit your cottage for recreation and leisure puts added pressure on the local resources available to permanent residents including health care, groceries, medications and more.

We all have a role to play to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Protect yourself, your family and your neighbours by staying home and refrain from visiting the cottage for recreation and leisure until such time when the declaration of emergency is over, and it is safe to visit the cottage again.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during this unprecedented time.

For official COVID-19 information visit: www.swpublichealth.ca