



Message from the Mayor and Council re: Covid-19 Update #2

April 3, 2020

On behalf of Council I want to thank all our residents who continue to work together to respect social distancing requirements and physical distancing practices. Together we can all do our part to keep ourselves and the community as safe as possible.

The municipality continues to follow the advice and directives from public health authorities. I would like to update the community on several fronts:

- The municipal office remains closed to the public until further notice - we have staff available and, on the job, to ensure that essential municipal services are provided
- Council has decided to provide an additional 30 days for payment of any water and sewer bills. We will get back on track once this public health crises are over. Council will reassess this decision in May and may decide to further extend payment deadlines.
- Council has ordered that ALL public play structures and equipment be closed until further notice. Parks, trails and public spaces will remain open and available to the public for now, however play structures are off limits. We feel that it is important for residents to be able to recreate and get some fresh air but please respect the physical distancing requirements and remember that as of now no more than 10 persons may congregate – enjoy the outdoors but at a safe distance.
- Finally, I would like to address concerns from several residents regarding use of seasonal homes for self-isolation. The municipality's position on this is to support the advice given from provincial and federal public health officials. At this time both are recommending that folks not travel for any reason – even within the province. Both have suggested that seasonal cottagers avoid travel to rural areas. We support this advice and hope that residents heed the recommendation from our public health authorities. Health care facilities in this region are scarce and can become quickly overwhelmed – the province has issued the following bulletin on the matter:

“Public health is also advising that people remain within or close to their home communities. This includes limiting travel, even within Manitoba, to essential trips only. Services at smaller health centres could be strained if seasonal visitors become ill.”

- Anyone who has returned from travel should be self-isolating for 14 days. This includes travel abroad as well as domestically – self-isolation means that you should not be leaving your home for any reason.
- Anyone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 or has had contact with someone diagnosed must self-isolate.
- That said, please understand that this is one community and we are all in this together. There is no “us” and “them”. We are one community and we will get through this together as one community. If seasonal residents choose to self-isolate in the community, we trust that they will respect the rules for self-isolation and work together with all of us to ensure that the community remains safe.

Please remain safe and keep following the recommendations and regulations provided by our health care authorities.

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March 25, 2020

Greetings from the Municipality of Alexander; we hope that you are all staying safe and healthy! To all who have traveled outside of Canada, please do your part in keeping our communities safe by self-isolating!

With all of the uncertainty that is happening around us, we wanted to put some information together for our residents to stay informed. The following is information that we have gathered from credible sources including the Province of Manitoba, the Government of Canada, the World Health Organization and our local Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority. We will also start a folder on our website for all things COVID-19 under Files and Downloads. If you haven't yet checked us out on Facebook, please do as we try to post useful information on a regular basis.

Administration Office and Public Works Department closed to the public.

Please be advised that the Administration Office and the Public Works Department remains closed to the public. Staff are on-site and can be reached via telephone or email. The situation will be reassessed on April 1, 2020.

Council Meetings

The Council Meeting scheduled for April 7th has been cancelled and is rescheduled for April 15th. The April 21st meeting is cancelled. The annual financial plan public hearing will be scheduled for May 12th.

Please note that Delegations to Council Meetings have been suspended until further notice.

Waste Disposal Grounds

In response to the COVID-19, please note that the RM of Alexander has implemented new procedures at the Waste Disposal Grounds. To comply with the social distancing order and to protect staff and public at our landfills, please be advised that until further notice all persons entering the Waste Disposal Grounds must remain in their vehicle at the entrance gate. If there is a need for paperwork, the landfill attendant will be responsible for entering the pertinent information. In order to eliminate the need for sharing of pens and paper, no documents will need to be signed.

Together, we will strive to keep our community safe and healthy. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 204.367.6170 or info@rmalexander.com

Province of Manitoba – State of Emergency

The Province of Manitoba has declared a State of Emergency as of March 20, 2020 for a period of 30 days. What does this mean?

- Limiting public gatherings of more than 50 people at any indoor or outdoor place or premises. This includes places of worship, gatherings and family events such as weddings and funerals. This does not apply to a facility where health care or social services are provided. Retail businesses including grocery or food stores, shopping centers, pharmacies or gas stations must ensure separation of one to two meters between patrons assembling in the business. Public transportation facilities must also ensure that people assembling at the facility are reasonably able to maintain a separation of one to two meters from others assembling at the facility.
- Limiting hospitality premises where food or alcohol is served or any theatres offering live performances of music, dance and other art forms as movies theatres to 50 people or 50 per cent of the capacity of the premises, whichever is lesser. These establishments must be able to ensure social distance of one to two meters between customers.

- Immediate closures of all bingo and gaming events.
- All wellness centers offering physical activities, gyms, fitness centers and athletic clubs and training facilities.

You can view the News Release in its entirety here:

<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=47117&posted=2020-03-19>

Social Distancing - What is it? (from the Province of Manitoba website)

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. It is used to reduce the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. Health officials in Manitoba already recommend some kinds of social distancing, such as self-isolation (keeping away from others) for people who are showing symptoms of respiratory illness. Other examples include school closures, changes at workplaces and the cancellation of public gatherings. In addition, public health officials are recommending the cancellation of gatherings of more than 50 people, consistent with the announcement made by the federal government.

Strategies for social distancing are as follows:

- Minimize prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/six feet) contact between other individuals in public,
- Avoid greetings that involve touching such as handshakes,
- Disinfect frequently used surfaces,
- Follow public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus, and
- Avoid travel, crowded places and events, especially if you are at higher risk (e.g. seniors and those with underlying medical conditions)

To read more on social distancing visit the Province of Manitoba website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/socialdistancing/index.html>

Self-Isolating (from the Province of Manitoba Website)

Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This can help prevent the spread of infections. DO NOT attend activities or gatherings where you may come in close contact with other people. This includes work, school and university, public transport (plane/bus/taxi/carpool), health-care facilities, faith-based facilities (church), grocery stores or restaurants, shopping malls, sporting events, concerts and birthday parties.

You should limit contact with people other than family members or individuals you travelled with. If you are in a home where other people have not been exposed, minimize close contact with the other members of your household by avoiding situations where you may have close contact. Ask friends to drop off groceries and supplies, or use a delivery or pick-up service.

You can view the document in its entirety here:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/coronavirus_selfisolation.pdf

Travelers Returning to Canada (From the Government of Canada)

Federal and provincial public health leaders have recommended that all travelers from outside of Canada self-isolate for 14 days. These efforts will contribute to slow the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in Canada.

Upon return to Canada, you will be asked if you have a cough, difficulty breathing or fever. If you have any of these symptoms, you will be given instructions on the next steps you are required to take. If you do not have any of these symptoms, you will be asked to:

- Self-isolate for 14 days after your return to Canada. Some provinces and territories may have specific recommendations for certain groups such as health care workers. Self-isolate means:
 - Stay home and keep your distance from others
 - Do not have visitors, especially older adults, or those with medical conditions who are at a higher risk of developing serious illness
- Monitor your health for cough, fever or difficulty breathing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing.

If you develop a cough, fever or difficulty breathing within 14 days:

- Continue to isolate yourself from others.
- Immediately call a health care professional or public health authority and:
 - Describe your symptoms and travel history
 - Follow their instructions carefully.

Please note that our small businesses are really stepping up during these times of uncertainty by offering delivery services for any supplies that may be required. Please remember to **STAY HOME!** The health of our residents depends on it!

If you are concerned about someone that has returned from travel and is not self-isolating please contact healthprotection@gov.mb.ca.

Travel is not recommended outside of Manitoba!

Stay home, wash your hands, practice social distancing and stay healthy!

Symptoms of COVID-19

Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are similar to a cold or flu.

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is the longest known incubation period for this disease. We are currently investigating if the virus can be transmitted to others if someone is not showing symptoms. While experts believe that it is possible, it is considered less common.

Symptoms have included:

- Cough
 - Fever
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Pneumonia in both lungs
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Screening Tool

Shared Health Manitoba has developed a COVID-19 Screening Tool to help assess whether you should be tested. Please be sure to complete the assessment prior to calling Health Links. Check it out here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

If you need to contact Health Links they can be reached at 1-888-315-9257.

Community Test Sites

A Community Test site has opened in Selkirk and one is to come to Powerview - Pine Falls. Prior to contacting Health Links or obtaining medical advice, please be sure to complete the screening tool.

Interlake-Eastern RHA's first COVID-19 community testing site opens the afternoon of Wednesday, March 18

Interlake-Eastern RHA is opening its first drive-through COVID-19 community screening/testing site in Selkirk. It will open the afternoon of Wednesday, March 18 and then adhere to the following hours:

COVID-19 Community Screening Site

622 Superior Avenue, Selkirk

Open 9 to 4 daily

Screening and testing at this site is ONLY for:

- individuals experiencing upper respiratory cold or flu like symptoms (cough, fever, runny nose, headache, sore throat, weakness) **AND**
- who have traveled internationally in the past 14 days before onset of symptoms **OR**
- those who have these symptoms and have had direct contact with individuals who have a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 within 14 days before onset of illness **OR**
- have these symptoms and have been exposed to laboratory samples known to contain COVID-19

The staff at these sites will screen for individuals who specifically meet these criteria and will not administer testing if criteria are not met. There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 tests and limited resources to determine test results. Health care staff are being directed to test **only** people who meet the criteria outlined above.

The criteria for testing may change in the days ahead and we will advise you of any updates to share with your community members.

What does "drive through" mean?

People with symptoms will be expected to remain in their cars unless directed otherwise. Testing typically requires a swab of the inside of the nose - this is a test that can be administered by a health care provider while an individual remains seated in their car.

Additional drive through community testing sites coming soon!

We are also planning for drive through screening sites in Powerview - Pine Falls and Eriksdale that we anticipate will be operational by next week. More information will be provided as details are confirmed.

Help Next Door MB

The Province of Manitoba in partnership with North Forge Technology Exchange has launched an online tool called Help Next Door MB to connect those that need assistance during these uncertain times with those that want to help. If you are in need of help or if you want to provide assistance, please check out the site at <https://www.helpnextdoormb.ca/> and the Province of Manitoba News Release here: <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html...>

Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba

If you or someone you know is experiencing anxiety due to the COVID-19, the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM) has established a helpline.

You can read about it here: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/anxiety-tools-manitoba-covid-19-1.5506797?fbclid=IwAR0mxWq7fuMcUS-J0XySAv3332fnzNG00g_X7XkBTDGpncOq3EpP568NzNo

For more about ADAM, please check out their website <http://www.adam.mb.ca/>

Your Mental Health & COVID-19 (From Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority)

Emergencies are always stressful and, in a pandemic, it is common for individuals to feel stressed and worried. Some common responses but specific stressors particular to the COVID-19 outbreak may include:

- Risk of being infected and infecting others, especially if the transmission mode of COVID-19 is not 100% clear.
- Common symptoms of other health problems (e.g. a fever) can be mistaken for COVID-19 and lead to fear of being infected.
- **Caregivers** may feel increasingly worried for their children being home alone (due to school closures) without appropriate care and support.
- Risk deterioration of physical and mental health of vulnerable individuals, for example **older adults**, and **people with disabilities**, if care givers are placed in quarantine if other care and support is not in place.

It is normal to feel sad, distressed, worried, confused, scared or angry during any crisis and some common responses might include:

- Fear of falling ill and dying
- Avoiding approaching health facilities due to fear of becoming infected while in care
- Fear of losing livelihoods, not being able to work during isolation, and of being dismissed from work
- Fear of being socially excluded/placed in quarantine because of being associated with the disease (e.g. racism against persons who are from, or perceived to be from, affected areas)
- Feeling powerless in protecting loved ones and fear of losing loved ones because of the virus
- Fear of being separated from loved ones and caregivers due to quarantine regime
- Feelings of helplessness, boredom, loneliness and depression due to being isolated
- Fear of reliving the experience of a previous epidemic

Some suggestions to support your mental health during this time:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle (including a proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contact with loved ones at home). Keep in touch with family and friends through email, phone calls and making use of social media platforms.
- If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a counsellor or another trusted person in your community (e.g., religious leader or community elder). Some resources that are readily available to you are:

IERHA Crisis Line
1.866.427.8628
204.482.5419

Klinic Crisis Line
1.888.322.3019
204.786.8686

Kids Helpline
1.800.668.6868
<https://kidshelpphone.ca>

Employment Insurance During COVID-19

The Government of Canada has eliminated the waiting period for EI Benefits due to COVID-19.

You can find additional information here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

You can find information including instructions on applying for EI Benefits here:

file:///C:/Users/EDO/Downloads/How%20to%20Apply%20for%20EI%20during%20COVID.pdf