

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

INFORMATION RELEASE

April 9, 2020

Long Weekend COVID-19 Information



RDOS Parks and Trails Remain Open

With the long weekend here and sunny skies in the forecast, many people will be looking for recreational opportunities. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) is reminding residents to follow provincial directives and avoid all non-essential travel to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Health Minister Adrian Dix is asking residents to stay home, stay in our communities and stay at a safe physical distance from others when outside. In addition, residents are asked to avoid unnecessary travel, particularly to smaller communities where they may be unable to support you if you get sick and where they have fewer resources.

While all provincial parks remain closed until further notice, the RDOS parks and trails owned by the province that are operated by the RDOS are currently open. This includes sections of the KVR Trail operated by the RDOS. Playground equipment and park washrooms remain closed.

It is your responsibility to follow provincial directives and maintain physical distancing at all times. If this is not possible, please leave the area.

RDOS Parks and Recreation staff have compiled a list of recreation resources that support physical distancing and staying active. Please visit <https://www.rdos.bc.ca/community-services/regional-recreation/covid-resources> to learn more.

West Bench Water Payments

Water bills are due May 8, 2020. Recognizing the current economic situation may make paying the full balance difficult for some, installment payments can be made up until December 31, 2020. Payments can be made at your financial institution or directly on the RDOS website.

Any outstanding balances as of December 31, 2020 will be transferred to your property tax bill. The RDOS is currently exploring other payment relief or deferral options for residents.

Fire Halls Closed to the Public

Local fire departments are responsible for providing fire and emergency protection services across our communities. Local fire halls are adjusting to new COVID-19 safety measures as recommended by the Provincial Health Officer. Public access to fire halls has been restricted until further notice. New hygiene requirements are in place including disinfecting all response gear, equipment, apparatus, and door handles after each use. Cleaning contractors are also performing additional high-risk area cleaning.

Local fire departments are continuing to develop COVID-19 staffing adjustments and business continuity plans. Efforts to source Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is ongoing.



Open Burning Ban

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy in collaboration with provincial public health partners has issued [open burning restrictions](#) for all High Smoke Sensitivity Zones across the province, including the RDOS until Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development has advised that effective at noon (PST) on Thursday, April 16, 2020, [most open burning activities will be prohibited throughout BC](#) to reduce the likelihood of human-caused wildfires, although campfires are permitted at this time. The following restrictions apply to all public and private land across BC unless specified differently, and will remain in effect until the public is notified otherwise:

- Category 2 open fires;
- Category 3 open fires;
- Resource Management open fires;
- the use of fireworks;
- the use of sky lanterns; and
- the use of burn barrels or burn cages of any size or description (except when used for a campfire).

These measures will help reduce excess air pollution across the province to help prevent complications related to or the spread of COVID-19. These prohibitions will also reduce demands on firefighting resources, reduce the impact of wildfire smoke on air quality and public health.

Larger burns pose an unnecessary risk and are in support of the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) recommendation to help reduce excess air pollution in airsheds throughout the province. The BCCDC is strongly recommending that the open burning of biomass fuels also be restricted in areas with high or moderate risk of population exposure to the resulting smoke.

RDOS Fire Chief Denis Gaudry is reminding residents that although campfires are currently permitted, it is important to be mindful of smoke affecting your neighbours. All campfires must be kept under control and properly extinguished.

Please visit the BC Wildfire Service website for open fire regulations and details about campfires: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions/ofr_poster - email distribution 72dpi no bleeds.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions/ofr_poster_-_email_distribution_72dpi_no_bleeds.pdf)

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For further information, please call 250-492-0237 or email info@rdos.bc.ca.



Karla Kozakevich, Chair
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

CivicReady® Mass Notification System – sign up for routine and emergency notifications: <https://emergency.rdos.bc.ca/civic-ready/>



Kaleden Fire Department Occupational Health and Safety Committee practice physical distancing during meeting.

RDOS Parks & Trails Social Distancing Notice

RDOS parks and trails remain open but we advise you to exercise caution while using them during the current global health crisis.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 park users must:

- Keep 2 meters (6.5 feet) apart from each other
- Restrict groups to households/families in limited numbers
- Yield to users on bridges, stairs, and narrow sections
- Obey park amenity closures (playgrounds & sports courts)



Avoid contact with common surfaces



Obey park amenity closures



Avoid crowds



Wash and/or sanitize your hands



Maintain social distance




Use tissues or gloves



Cough or sneeze into your sleeve

Come prepared to take precautionary measures to minimize the risk of exposure and spread.

The RDOS priority is to protect public health and safety of all park users and continues to follow the direction of public health experts to reduce the impact on our community and health care system.



For updates on the response to COVID-19:
www.bccdc.ca or 1-888-COVID19

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