

British Columbia News

State of emergency extended to continue B.C.'s COVID-19 response

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/23900>

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VIEW TRANSLATIONS

Victoria - The Province of British Columbia has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing health and emergency management officials to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act (EPA) to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response.

The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on March 16, 2021, to allow staff to take the necessary actions to keep British Columbians safe and manage immediate concerns and COVID-19 outbreaks.

"Vaccines have already saved the lives of some of our most vulnerable, and yesterday we announced the next phase," said Premier John Horgan. "Every single day we're making progress, thanks to the hard work of public health experts, front-line health-care workers, essential workers and British Columbians who are committed to doing their part to keep us all safe. We're going to get through this together."

The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. The original declaration was made on March 18, 2020, the day after Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer (PHO), declared a public health emergency.

"We need to keep following public health orders so we can all get through this next period safely until more vaccines are ready," said Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. "In the meantime, orders will continue to be enforced for those who refuse to do their part and risk undoing the progress we've made so far."

The Province continues, with the support of police and other enforcement officials, to use measures under the EPA to limit the spread of COVID-19, including issuing tickets to owners, operators and event organizers who host an event or gathering contravening the PHO's orders.

On July 10, 2020, the COVID-19 Related Measures Act came into force, enabling provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue as needed should the provincial state of emergency end.

Learn More:

On Dec. 16, 2020, enforcement measures were expanded.

Details are available here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0108-002083>

(<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0108-002083>)

On Nov. 24, 2020, a mask enforcement order was introduced under the EPA, requiring masks for people over the age of 12 in public indoor settings, unless they are exempt.

Details are available here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020EMBC0061-001960>

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For information on all recent orders and guidance, as well as general COVID-19 information for all British Columbians, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/covid19 (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/covid19>)

For more information and latest medical updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the centre's website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/> (<http://www.bccdc.ca/>)

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contacts

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Backgrounders

Facts about B.C.'s state of emergency

- Between Aug. 21, 2020, and Feb. 26, 2021, 1,336 violation tickets were issued, including:
 - 199 \$2,300 tickets to owners or organizers contravening the provincial health officer's (PHO) order on gatherings and events;
 - 38 \$2,300 violation tickets for contravention of the PHO Food and Liquor Serving Premises Order; and
 - 1,099 \$230 tickets issued to individuals who refused to comply with direction from law enforcement.
- The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is continually working to align Emergency Program Act (EPA) enforcement orders with those of the restrictions enacted by the PHO.
- Additionally, since the pandemic began, police agencies in British Columbia have issued 101 violation tickets to individuals who were in contravention of the Federal Quarantine Act, totalling \$328,442.
 - The purpose of the Quarantine Act is to protect public health by taking comprehensive measures to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases.
- Since the start of the pandemic, WorkSafeBC has conducted 23,130 COVID-19 related work site inspections.
- On Dec. 16, 2020, the Province announced enhanced enforcement measures to keep British Columbians safe and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. This included strengthening COVID-19 fine collection measures and asking provincial enforcement officers to support police and increase enforcement by issuing violation tickets during their normal course of duties or when in public places.
- Declarations of provincial states of emergency may be issued by the minister responsible under the EPA.
- The provincial government can extend the period of a declaration made by the minister responsible for further periods of up to 14 days at a time.

Translations

- 3-2-21_SOE_French.pdf (https://bcgovnews.azureedge.net/translations/releases/2021PSSG0018-000377/3-2-21_SOE_French.pdf)