Chief Administrative Officers:

As you know, on March 18, 2020, following the public health emergency declared by Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Province of British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency to support COVID-19 response. We are at a critical juncture in our response to COVID-19 and are taking unprecedented steps to best respond and recover from this provincial emergency. Last Thursday, March 26, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Honourable Mike Farnworth, issued a series of additional orders to further support the government-wide approach to COVID-19 response and recovery, which included maintaining critical supply chains, making sure critical infrastructure and materials are readily available, ensuring people have access to essential goods and services to keep society running, and ensuring public health and safety orders are enforced.

We are writing to you today to provide a consistent compliance and enforcement framework of the Provincial Health Officer’s orders across all B.C. communities and to ask for your cooperation in public education and compliance as we provide clear guidance on the role of local government staff in supporting compliance.

**Provincial Enforcement Framework**

Starting next week, the Province will establish a central point of contact to anyone supporting compliance and enforcement of Provincial Health Officer orders, including local government bylaw officers, to ensure the clear interpretation and application of such orders. This structure will be able to provide a clear line of communication with those assisting in order compliance and enforcement, keep local governments informed, and importantly, take a coordinating role on actual enforcement decisions, as directed by a health officer.

Further the Province will be redeploying provincial compliance staff from various ministries to assist in compliance and enforcement under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer. These Provincial employees, who include liquor and cannabis control and licencing inspectors, gambling enforcement and investigations officers, and community safety personnel, will also assist in monitoring, providing information, advice and warnings as necessary and reporting contraventions to health officers.

**Guidelines for Local Government**

The attached guidelines provide Provincial Health Officer direction for municipal and regional district bylaw officers, and others involved in supporting compliance and enforcement, on warnings, public education and fines, and what can be issued by whom, to make sure the Provincial Health Officer’s orders are enforced consistently in B.C. communities. Importantly, they provide clear guidance on how Provincial Health Officer orders are to be applied and how compliance and enforcement actioned.
The role of local government bylaw officers in regard to COVID-19 rules is to provide assistance, not to be direct enforcers. As outlined in the Minister’s orders issued last week, bylaw enforcement officers do not have the ability to detain an individual as a result of a contravention or suspected contravention of a public health order, or issue a fine or penalty, including an administrative penalty, under the Public Health Act. Local bylaw officers can, however, provide enforcement assistance for the Provincial Health Officer’s orders by:

- monitoring facilities and areas closed to the public by a public health order;
- providing warnings, information and advice to businesses and members of the public in respect of public health orders, including warnings to businesses and members of the public who may be acting in contravention of a public health order;
- providing public health officers with information in respect of potential contraventions of a public health order.

To ensure consistency across the Province in this time of emergency, it is very important that matters that are covered by Provincial Health Officer orders are enforced only through those orders as the Provincial Health Officer considers appropriate, and not by other means such as enforcement of local bylaws.

We will continue to provide guidelines and other supports to help you implement orders from health officers and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Please continue to stay apprised of daily updates being provided by the government and updated on the COVID-19 website (listed below). We have created various channels for you and your teams to raise issues and ideas to government, including weekly calls hosted by the Honourable Minister Robinson, but please do not hesitate to reach out directly to us if you have questions or require assistance addressing an issue and are unsure where to connect.

Thank you for your continued efforts and partnership in this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Kaye Krishna               Lori Halls
Deputy Minister            Deputy Minister
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing   Emergency Management BC

Provincial COVID-19 Resources

- BC Government [COVID 19 Provincial Support and Information](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/covid-19) website provides a hub through which you can access critical information as it is updated, including the provincial health officer’s [Pandemic Preparedness Page](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/covid-19/preparedness) and the [BC Centre for Disease Control COVID](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/covid-19) site.

- Toll-free non-health phone line at: **1 888 268-4319 (1-888-COVID19)**, is open between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. seven days a week for non-medical information about the emergency (including latest information on travel recommendations and social distancing, as well as access to support and services from the provincial and federal governments).
Daily operational Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PREOC) calls hosted by Emergency Management BC (EMBC) in each region for emergency planning/program staff with local governments, First Nations, and Health representatives or medical health officers, and other key regional organizations. PREOCs act as a clearing house for questions of all kinds, including pandemic response task numbers and funding eligibility. If your emergency staff have not yet connected into those calls, please contact EMBC to join:

- Central Region (CTL): preoc3.ops1@gov.bc.ca
- Northeast Region (NEA): preoc5.ops1@gov.bc.ca
- Northwest Region (NWE): preoc6.ops1@gov.bc.ca
- Southeast Region (SEA): preoc4.ops1@gov.bc.ca
- Southwest Region (SWE): preoc2.ops1@gov.bc.ca
- Vancouver Island Region (VIR): preoc1.ops1@gov.bc.ca