

COVID-19 Pandemic - Kitsumkalum Update March 27

March 27, 2020

To all Kitsumkalum Community members and staff,

In an effort to keep everyone informed of what is happening in the community, what supports are available and what is being done to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we'll be sending out an update weekly. As I'm sure you are aware, we are all being directed to practice strict social distancing of 2 meters from anyone who doesn't live in the same home and to minimize our trips out of the home to just acquiring the essentials. I know this is tough, and requires a fundamental shift in the way we all live, but it is essential if we are to slow the spread of Covid-19 and to protect each other. The most recent update from the Provincial Health Officer and Premier John Horgan released Thursday March 26th allow enforcement of the orders to maintain social distancing and to not engage in group activity. The new orders state anyone found to not be complying may face fines or jail time. ****Again, any Kitsumkalum employees not adhering to the recommendations MAY have pay suspended or employment terminated, pending a review by Chief and Council****. We must take the orders seriously to protect the entire community.

In line with the actions taken by other communities in the North, we have activated the Kitsumkalum Emergency Operations Centre. This gives us the structure to plan and prepare for dealing with the pandemic, as well as gives us direct communication with Provincial resources so we can coordinate efforts with neighbouring communities efficiently. Normally the EOC would be in a fixed location with people working together, due to the social distancing requirements we are working remotely and coordinating efforts by phone and computer.

Some of the initiatives that have been implemented, or are being worked on, are:

- Setting up the Emergency Operations Centre and personnel structure so community needs can be addressed efficiently
- Planning for how to assist the most vulnerable members of the community to reduce the need to leave your homes which will prevent exposure to, and spread of, Covid-19
- Protecting the community by asking visitors to not enter, signs will be placed at road entrances
- Reducing business operations to essential levels, many employees working from home, others staggering their hours or days in the office
- Investigating what the medical and business worlds are preparing for which will assist us in creating well informed plans for the longer term
- Assessing what financial assistance options are available and applicable
- Ensuring that all who need health advice or counselling can access it 7 days a week by reaching out to our amazing health team by phone or email.

If cannot be stated strongly enough that we need to continue to take the pandemic seriously; by our very nature we will all get tired and frustrated with being stuck at home, or with limited movement and interaction, but it is the only solid defence we have. The extraordinary effort we are all being called upon to exert can cause mental fatigue, and even feelings of despair and depression. If you are having any trouble coping with the very real challenges this pandemic presents, I urge you to reach out and talk. Please talk to your family and friends or call the Health Centre, which although has its doors closed, is still staffed to help you 7 days a week.

If we are successful in preventing an outbreak within the community there will undoubtedly be some who will feel as though none of this was necessary, and that the threat was exaggerated; we know from watching the spread and devastation in other countries, however, that is simply not the case. If we can prevent an outbreak it will be because our extraordinary coordinated efforts have resulted in us winning; it will be then that we need to continue our diligence and care, not get complacent.

There are many helpful resources available or being developed, we will endeavor to provide the most up to date and comprehensive list, and will include them in this weekly update.

Resources:

Health and Wellness

Kitsumkalum Health: 250-635-6172

COVID-19 Online Clinic: 1-844-645-7811

<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/>

1-800-784-2433 or 1-800-SUICIDE

Employment

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

<https://smallbusinessbc.ca/article/what-employers-need-to-know-about-temporary-layoffs/>

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Sign installed at three locations in Kitsumkalum: Spokechute Road entrance, West Kalum Road entrance, and the road behind Tempo.