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NEWS RELEASE

April 3, 2020

[Sooke, BC]

COVID-19: Municipal Bylaw Enforcement Officers to aid in enforcement of social distancing and public gatherings

BC's Provincial Health Officer has issued guidelines to help clarify the role of Bylaw Officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public education efforts are being stepped up to remind residents to obey health orders. While Bylaw Enforcement Officers do not have authority to detain or fine people, they do have the capacity to help public health officials by monitoring areas within the community that are closed due to public health orders, such as greenspaces, parks, and businesses.

Bylaw Officers will give warnings and provide enforcement assistance to residents and businesses in Sooke who are not heeding the following:

- Public health orders currently prohibit gatherings of 50 people or more.
- Restaurants and personal service establishments, such as nail and hair salons, tattoo parlors and spas, must close. Restaurants can offer take out service.
- Re-selling of essential supplies and equipment during the pandemic is prohibited.

Medea Mills, Sooke's Senior Bylaw Enforcement Officer outlines her department's approach as follows: "The Bylaw Enforcement team are here to assist you by answering questions you might have and to offer suggestions on how to keep social distancing. We appreciate those that are complying with the park closures even though we know that you really want to be in one of our fabulous parks. We need to continue to work together and by doing so, hopefully, this situation will be short lived. We are here if you need us, just call"

Residents can report non-compliant behaviour by contacting: (250) 642-1634, Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. or by email at bylaw@sooke.ca

"Local governments are key partners in ensuring the provincial health officer's orders are obeyed so people in our communities can stay healthy," said Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth. "It's important that communities, and those responsible for compliance, have clear and consistent guidelines to enforce the provincial health officer's orders so businesses can adapt their workplaces and help keep people safe."

Enforcement of public health orders is ultimately the responsibility of the Public Health Officer or local Medical Health Officer. 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, nor issue a fine or penalty, including an administrative penalty, under the Public Health Act.

Link to Ministerial Order – Bylaw Officer: [2020 M082](#)

Residents are reminded to remain vigilant – stay home and stay informed.

District of Sooke website - information links:

[COVID-19 PANDEMIC – DISTRICT UPDATES AND INFORMATION](#)

- [Provincial & Federal Updates](#)
- [What You Can Do](#)
- [Financial Support](#)
- [Reliable Info Links](#)

Update from Langford-Juan de Fuca MLA, John Horgan

Sooke’s MLA, John Horgan, released a community report today thanking residents, essential service providers, and healthcare workers for their efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. Details of Provincial support programs and resources, as well as applicable contact information can be found in the community report, located here:

<https://app.cyberimpact.com/newsletter-view-online?ct=QLGBIMACHpAiLd-euX21QhhgfZMqvvK4Uu6ENEV1FQk30oLJT5-tujjO1dMUHuJwkRTq2ImxptD0lwJwEzStYA~~>

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District Contact and Social Media Channels:

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