

Edmonton Global Covid-19 Update

Monday March 23, 2020 2:45pm

Edmonton Global maintains a [Covid-19 Business Resources](https://edmontonglobal.ca/covid-19-resources/) page containing updated information for the Edmonton metro region's business community. <https://edmontonglobal.ca/covid-19-resources/>.

The contents of this update are not intended to replace the official communications of the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, or any official communications of our municipal or other partners.

Government

Federal

The House of Commons will return Tuesday to debate the details of the Covid-19 stimulus package. The package will comprise \$82 billion in support for both businesses and individuals in the form of direct payments and tax deferrals. Individual supports are detailed [here](#) and include changes to Employment Insurance protocols and the introduction of the Emergency Care Benefit.

Support to Businesses

The details of the \$82 billion stimulus package have been detailed by the [Federal Department of Finance](#).

- The Canada Account administered by Export Development Canada (EDC), is being changed to provide additional support to Canadian companies through loans, guarantees or insurance policies. EDC and BDC can now provide an additional \$10 billion to customers facing economic challenges caused by COVID-19.
- The Temporary Wage Subsidy will provide “eligible” (to be defined) small employers a temporary wage subsidy for a period of three months. The subsidy will be equal to 10% of wages paid during that period, up to a maximum subsidy of \$1,375 per employee and \$25,000 per employer.
- CRA Business Tax Deferrals will allow all businesses to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts between March 18, 2020 and

before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments, under Part I of the Income Tax Act. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.

- For SMEs, no new post assessment GST/HST or Income Tax audits will be launched by the CRA for the next four weeks.
- The credit available to farmers and the agri-food sector has been increased by \$5 billion through Farm Credit Canada (FCC). FCC suggests customers with financial contact them to discuss loan payment deferrals and or other financial products available to assist with cash flow needs.

Innovation for COVID-19 Treatment, Management, and Mitigation

On March 20, the Prime Minister's Office announced several innovation-focused measures to combat COVID-19, listed:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2020/03/20/new-measures-under-canadas-plan-mobilize-industry-fight-covid-19>. The plan is intended to help Canadian industry scale up and retool their production to increase domestic supply of much need health items such as masks and protective equipment.

Financial Instruments

As the institutions governing Canada's ongoing financial stability, the Governor of the Bank of Canada announced an interest rate cut down to 0.75%. The Superintendent of Financial Institutions announced an additional \$300 billion in lending capacity by the major banks.

Provincial

COVID-19 testing is being administered across Alberta; policy for testing eligibility is determined by Alberta Health. As of Monday, March 23, 2020, the policy will emphasize vulnerable Albertans' access to testing:

- Testing will be prioritized for symptomatic members of the following groups: patients hospitalized with respiratory illness; residents of continuing care or other support facilities; people who returned from travelling abroad between March 8 and March 12; health-care workers with respiratory symptoms (this testing will begin later this week).
- Travelers who returned to Alberta after March 12 and have mild symptoms will **no longer** be tested for COVID-19. They will simply be advised to self-isolate.
- However, anyone who has been advised that they will be tested by Health Link will still be tested.

The Government of Alberta has committed to providing supports for Albertan [individuals](#) and [businesses](#) impacted by COVID-19.

- ****Announced today** Education Property Tax Deferrals:** The government will immediately cancel the decision made in Budget 2020 and will freeze education property taxes at last year's level. Effective immediately, the government will defer education property tax for businesses for six months. Government expects municipalities to set education property tax rates as they normally would but defer collection. Deferred amounts will be repaid in future tax years. Government encourages commercial landlords to pass on these savings to their tenants through reduced or deferred payments.
- ****Announced today** WCB Premiums Deferrals:** Government is deferring WCB premiums for private sector employers until early 2021, effectively for one year. **Employers who have already paid their WCB premium payment for 2020 are eligible for a rebate or credit.** For small and medium businesses, the government will cover 50 % of the premium when it is due. Large employers will also receive a break by having their 2020 WCB premium payments deferred until 2021 at which time their premiums will be due.
- A one-time payment of \$1,146 will be paid to eligible individuals in mandatory self-isolation; this is intended to arrive rapidly, before the deployment of federal payments.
- Corporate income tax balances and instalment payments will be deferred from March 19 until August 31, 2020 to increase employers' access to cash for operational needs.
- Residential, farm and small commercial customers can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days.
- ATB Financial small business customers can apply for a payment deferral on loans and lines of credit for up to 6 month and access additional working capital.
- Changes to the Employment Standards Code will allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are required to self-isolate or caring for a child or dependent adult that is required to self-isolate. Employees do not need a doctor's note and do not need a minimum term of employment.
- WCB Alberta has issued guidance on COVID-19 for employees: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/wcb-covid-19-worker-fact-sheet.pdf> and for employers: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/wcb-covid-19-employer-fact-sheet.pdf>
- The Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society Organizations will be developing COVID-19 plans and protocols to support Alberta's most vulnerable: <https://www.alberta.ca/premiers-council-on-charities-and-civil-society.aspx>
- The Alberta Emergency Management Agency has launched an online form for entities seeking to offer support to Albertans: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/4d1261e6d08f4d2eb530c53cc089242c>

Municipalities

Alberta Health is maintaining a data dashboard with critical information about cases across the province. It is updated daily and is available at <https://covid19stats.alberta.ca/>. As of 9am on Monday, March 23, 2020, there have been 27,000 COVID-19 tests administered across Alberta.

- 8,445 have been administered in the Edmonton Zone.
- 60 cases have been confirmed in the Edmonton Zone.

Within the region, the following updates have occurred:

Beaumont	Beaumont closes all public buildings except Family and Social Services by appointment only. https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/beaumont-closes-city-buildings-to-stop-spread-of-covid-19-1.4859217
Bon Accord	Town of Bon Accord Main Office building and the office at the Public Works Shop are now closed to public access until further notice. All Town services will continue as normal, other than direct physical contact with Town staff. Town staff will continue to provide all services through telephone, email, fax, on-line payments, regular mail, and via the drop box at the Town office. https://www.bonaccord.ca/assets/office-closure-notice_covid19.pdf
Devon	Town facilities are closed and available by appointment only. The community bus is available to residents at no fee but can only seat two people at a time to support social distancing measures. The town is offering support to seniors and those with disabilities in accessing grocery shopping through home delivery of needed items. http://devon.ca/Residents/COVID-19#322215-covid-19
Edmonton	On Friday, March 21, 2020, the City of Edmonton declared a State of Local emergency. This allows the City additional powers for a period of 7 days, which can be subsequently renewed. These powers are outlined online here: https://myemail.constantcontact.com/News-Release---City-of-Edmonton-declares-State-of-Local-Emergency.html?soid=1127191170163&aid=M4EMLNDN19U and include capacity to control travel to and within Edmonton; distribution of essential supplies; and entering buildings without a warrant for emergency purposes.

Fort Saskatchewan	Most public facilities are closed; support is available to residents by phone and by appointment. https://www.fortsask.ca/en/living-here/covid-19.aspx#
Gibbons	Facilities are closed to the public until further notice: https://www.gibbons.ca/town-hall/who-we-are/town-news/post/town-offices-closed-to-public-information-release
Leduc	All county-hosted programs, workshops and events are cancelled; likewise, all upcoming council, internal committee and in-person external committee meetings. Facilities are closed. https://www.leduc-county.com/en/county-government/covid-19-coronavirus.aspx#March-17-2020
Morinville	All town events are cancelled until May 1, 2020 and will be reassessed as needed. Public facilities are closed, except for the town office. https://www.morinville.ca/en/living-here/covid-19-resources.aspx
Parkland County	All public facilities closed except for the Animal Shelter and Transfer Stations. https://www.parklandcounty.com/en/county-office/covid-19.aspx
St Albert	All city-managed facilities are closed until April 6, 2020. Details of service availability, alterations, and closures are available online here: https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources/overview/
Spruce Grove	Walk-in access to facilities is restricted but not outright cancelled. Details for online service sign-ups are listed on the updates page: https://www.sprucegrove.org/government/news/covid-19-update-march-20-2020-we-re-here-to-serve-you-just-in-a-different-way/
Stony Plain	Most facilities are closed; some service facilities remain open with limited hours: https://www.stonyplain.com/en/live/covid-19.aspx
Strathcona County	All Strathcona County recreation facilities are closed to the public until April 14, 2020. County's website lists closures and online alternatives for service provision: https://www.strathcona.ca/council-county/news/covid19/
Sturgeon County	All council meetings are cancelled for the duration of March. Facilities are closed: http://www.sturgeoncounty.ca/COVID19#27182-facilitiesprograms

Across Canada

Across Canada, some municipalities have taken more dramatic efforts to enforce social distancing. Halifax has closed all parks, beaches, and fields to enforce social distancing. Nova Scotia police have been granted additional authority to break up all gatherings of more than 5 people. Vancouver and surrounding municipalities have also restricted access to public spaces and fines are being levied against non-compliant individuals and businesses.

In Nova Scotia, evictions have been forbidden.

The Provinces of Ontario and Quebec have each ordered all non-essential businesses to close. These closures are set to begin at 11:59 pm Tuesday, March 24. Ontario will close businesses for at least the next two weeks and Quebec's closures will last at least until April 10. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ontario-quebec-order-non-essential-businesses-to-close/>

Canada, followed closely by Australia, formerly withdrew from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. In response to growing international concern, IOC organizers have now delayed the Olympics until 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/olympics/tokyo-olympics-will-be-postponed-1.5506910>

Economic

See attached file

Stakeholder/Community

Organizations with active surveys:

- Economic Developers of Alberta (EDA)
 - Alberta Business Needs Survey

<https://edaalberta.wufoo.com/forms/r19ded0919ea64b/>
- Alberta Innovation Corridor
 - Company Impact Assessment (Survey) for Alberta-based tech companies impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak <https://abccorridor.com/>

Toolkits and other resources

- Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) -
 - **Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency**

<http://edaalberta.ca/resources/Documents/Community%20ToolKit%202019%20Final%20Email.pdf>

- Normally \$30, EDA is offering for free

COVID-19 Webinar Series

FREE virtual seminars designed to connect with community leaders from Alberta, across Canada and around the world. These weekly webinars will not only provide information to help mitigate the economic impacts of this pandemic disaster; they'll also give participants some relief from the social isolation this pandemic is causing. Each webinar is held on Wednesday from 12:00 - 1:00 pm. <http://www.edaalberta.ca/2020-COVID-19-Pandemic>