

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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### **Cowichan region working closely to coordinate COVID-19 preparedness and response**

**DUNCAN, BC** – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has established a Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) to assess and respond to the public safety risk posed by COVID-19.

“The CVRD is working closely with its partners, including member municipalities, First Nations, school districts, and Island Health to fully understand the situation across the region and coordinate decision making,” said Brian Carruthers, CAO of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “We are reviewing essential service levels across all aspects of our workforce, recognizing that this situation is likely to worsen and require reduction or periodic elimination of services.”

While the BC Ministry of Health has confirmed the first case of COVID-19 on Vancouver Island, the public health agency has no evidence of community-based transmission in BC’s Island Health region. However the provincial health officer is strongly recommending the cancellation of non-essential travel outside of Canada and has directed the cancellation of mass gatherings of 250 people and more at this time, and the CVRD will be following this direction.

In an effort to encourage the practice of ‘social distancing,’ the CVRD and its member municipalities ask that the public consider their patronage at public facilities and determine whether their business with local governments could be conducted online or over the phone. If in-person attendance is essential, the public are asked to maintain at least a 1-metre distance from staff and other patrons as much as possible.

It is anticipated the REOC will convene daily for the foreseeable future to assess the evolving situation with representatives from partner governments and agencies, and continue to share information with the public as required.

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*For more information, please contact:*

Kris Schumacher  
Manager, Communications & Engagement  
250.746.2635  
kris.schumacher@cprd.bc.ca