



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 13, 2020

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Several public events cancelled at Vernon recreation facilities following direction from Provincial Health Officer

On March 12, 2020, Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer, made the following statement:

“Effective today, we are also directing all event organizers to cancel any gathering **larger than 250 people**. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events. This threshold has been selected, as it is much easier to maintain important social distancing to prevent transmission of COVID-19.”

In response to concerns arising from COVID-19, several events have been cancelled, which were to take place within Vernon recreation facilities. The events cancelled at this time include:

- Chamber of Commerce Community Expo
- Vernon Vipers Playoffs
- Bantam A Female Provincials
- Vernon Spring Home Show
- Village Green Hockey Tournament
- Nk'mapls Challenge Cup Hockey Tournament
- Kal Tire Hockey Tournament
- Vernon Vipers Spring Camp
- All BC Hockey Sanctioned Groups
- Seedy Saturday
- Punjabi Heritage Society
- Greater Vernon Minor Hockey Banquet
- Shoparama
- School District #22 Battle of the Books
- Kids Stuff Garage Sale
- Vernon Judo Club Tournament
- Vernon Fish and Game Club Banquet
- Vernon Kokanee Swim Club Swim Meet (as mandated by SwimBC)

It is important to note the direction from Dr. Henry **does not apply** to workplaces or educational institutions at this time. Dr. Henry stated the Province will be working with Post-Secondary

schools, the Ministry of Education, and others to ensure they can handle these measures in those settings appropriately.

The health and wellness of our citizens, staff and visitors is paramount. Vernon Recreation Services has been, and continues to be diligent with its cleaning of public facilities. Additional measures are being taken to ensure the health and safety of our staff and facility users including bringing in additional staff to increase the disinfection of public spaces, in particular common touch points like light switches, door handles, etc.

Vernon Recreation Services has attempted to personally contact all the impacted event organizers. Recreation Services is now providing a full refund or credit for cancelled events and will be working with organizers to try and accommodate rescheduling where possible.

Recreation staff are also in contact with several other event organizers concerning the status of their planned future events.

At this time, Recreation Services programs, lessons and camps are going ahead as planned. While swimming lessons will not be impacted, Recreation Services will be limiting the number of people that are provided entry to the Aquatic Centre for public swimming in order to ensure that there are not more than 250 people in the facility at any given time. **The public is reminded that if they are not feeling well, they should stay home and not choose to participate until they are feeling well again.**

As the provincial and federal health authorities have said, the best action for all of us to take is to practice sound personal hygiene and keep our spaces clean.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands;
- Practice social distancing, which means to keep 1 metre (3 ft) between yourself and others;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve, and not your hands;
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others;
- Wipe surfaces and objects (e.g., phones, desk tops, door handles, light switches) with disinfectant often; and
- Seek accurate and reliable information directly from public health agencies.

We appreciate that difficult decisions are being made during this time of uncertainty. Greater Vernon Recreation Services appreciates the public's understanding and patience as we monitor the COVID-19 situation and take direction from provincial and federal health agencies.

For more information, you can read Dr. Henry's announcement from March 12, 2020, here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020HLTH0077-000484>.