



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Centennial Outdoor Rink closed for season due to required chiller replacement

With the arrival of more snow in the North Okanagan, residents in Vernon are starting to think of winter activities and outdoor sports. As part of its regular maintenance schedule in August, the City of Vernon conducted an inspection on the Priest Valley Arena refrigeration plant, which services the Priest Valley Arena, Vernon Curling Club and Centennial Outdoor Rink.

During the course of an inspection, a refrigeration contractor determined the chiller which serves the Centennial Outdoor Rink required further testing and recommended that a non-destructive (x-ray) investigation be carried out. The results of that investigation indicated that the chiller was “in the severe stages of deterioration and the vessel appears to have reached the end of its useful life.” Because of this, the refrigeration contractor and Recreation Services’ Chief Engineer have both recommended the chiller be taken out of service and replaced.

Due to the timing of the news, it is unlikely that a replacement chiller could be installed by the spring. Because of this, the Centennial Outdoor Arena will remain closed this season.

“This is extremely disappointing news for our community,” said Mayor Victor Cumming. “We know many of our residents and schools love to use this outdoor rink to spend time with family and friends, getting outside and staying active. And being outside this year will be particularly important to maintain *fewer faces in bigger spaces*. However, it would be unsafe to continue using the chiller in its current state and we will not put anyone at risk.”

“Safety is paramount,” said Doug Ross, Director, Recreation Services, “and we must follow the advice of the experts who have recommended not to operate the chiller. Recreation Services is now identifying funding to help replace and upgrade the chiller.”

Ross continued, “The refrigeration plant has an expected life span of 20 years and the chillers that service the Priest Valley Arena and Vernon Curling Club are near that age. We were pleased that the initial report from the refrigeration contractor indicated that there was no evidence of similar concerns about the Priest Valley Arena and Vernon Curling Club chillers at this time. However, out of an abundance of caution, we are conducting further inspection and testing to confirm they are in safe working condition.”

Public skate sessions will still be available at the Priest Valley Arena this season. To comply with provincial health regulations and guidelines, all participants will need to pre-register through

the City's [website](#) or by calling Recreation Services at 250-545-6035. Public skate times are currently in the planning stages and more information will be available soon.

“This has been a year that has required great resilience,” said Mayor Cumming. “We want to thank all of our residents, businesses, visitors and employees for your continued commitment to taking the steps necessary to keep yourselves and each other safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also want to thank you for your understanding as we’ve worked through many of these unexpected changes and interruptions to our regular routines and find ways to forge ahead in unprecedented circumstances.”

For more information about recreation opportunities in Vernon and our safe reopening plans, please visit www.gvrec.ca.