



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 6, 2020

Town of Smiths Falls declares state of emergency in response to COVID-19

Smiths Falls – Mayor Shawn Pankow today declared a state of emergency in Smiths Falls to help support Public Health officials’ efforts to “flatten the curve” and to contain the spread of COVID-19. This aligns with steps already taken by the Government of Ontario.

“With the number of cases of COVID-19 in our region continuing to rise, we are at critical point to reduce community spread of the virus,” said Shawn Pankow, Mayor of Smiths Falls. “Declaring a state of emergency is necessary to emphasize the seriousness of the situation. It is critical that people in Smiths Falls do everything in their power to reduce the risk of this virus spreading any further. Be rigid in your hand washing practices and adherence to physical distancing protocols. Stay home as much as possible. You should only be going out in public if you are an essential worker, to pick up groceries once a week, to attend medical appointments, or pick up medications. Everyone plays a critical role and now is the time to act.”

The Town’s Emergency Control Group had previously discussed the possibility of an emergency declaration numerous times in the past several weeks. The announcement from the Health Unit on the weekend of an outbreak at two local retirement homes and a continuing concern that some of our citizens are still not taking proper precautions were factors in making today’s declaration.

This declaration will also enable the Town to initiate and support efforts locally to help ensure our seniors, people living with compromised immunity and others at elevated risk are able to self-isolate, knowing community supports will be in place to deliver groceries and prescriptions to them.

Under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, the Head of Council may declare that an emergency exists in the municipality and may take such action as necessary to implement the emergency plan of the municipality and to protect property

and the health, safety and welfare of residents. The state of emergency will remain in place until further notice.

The Town has been proactive in its response to COVID-19. Although municipal offices and recreation equipment are closed to the public, essential services such as garbage and recycling continue to be provided. By-law officers are also assisting the Smiths Falls Police Service in patrolling the downtown area, all parks, as well as residential areas to educate the public and ensure compliance with new provincial orders. In addition, the Thurber Street location of the Child Development Centre has now re-opened for the children of essential and critical workers. Construction projects on Beckwith Street and at Town Hall are also continuing as per guidance from the province.

For health information, please contact the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit their website at healthunit.org/coronavirus.

For additional information on the Town's response, please visit the [Town's COVID-19 page](#).

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