



**MEDIA RELEASE
STATE OF EMERGENCY UPDATE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 22, 2020

Town of Smiths Falls lifts some restrictions at recreation locations

Smiths Falls – In accordance with changes to provincial regulations the Town of Smiths Falls is lifting some restrictions for the use of municipal fields, courts, and the skateboard park, effective immediately.

Last week the province of Ontario's announced the Stage 1 re-opening of some businesses that included direction for municipal locations like parks and sports fields. On May 19, some restrictions for Smiths Falls' off-leash dog parks and tennis courts were lifted.

The newest changes in restrictions apply to single play activities at municipal soccer fields, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and the skate park within the Town of Smiths Falls. These locations were previously closed on March 31 as part of the Town of Smiths Falls' emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Personal responsibility is key here," said Shawn Pankow, Mayor of the Town of Smiths Falls. "As restrictions are loosened we will need to be diligent in how we behave out in the community. We are relying on users to follow the rules and regulations that will reduce the spread of COVID-19."

In Smiths Falls, use of these locations is permitted so long as less than five people are within the area at one time and physical distancing of at least two metres is maintained. Competitive play is prohibited.

Users must also avoid sharing equipment, water bottles or towels and must bring and use hand sanitizer at regular intervals. Hand sanitizer and hand wash stations will not be provided. It's also recommended users avoid touching their face while at play.

Signage will be posted at these locations as reminders of the new rules for use. These areas will also be monitored for compliance; failure to follow the rules may result in the reinstatement of full restrictions.

Yard sales continue to be restricted within the Town of Smiths Falls.

As the COVID-19 situation changes and new rules and guidelines are recommended by the province and local health authorities, additional restrictions could be introduced or lifted at any time. The Town of Smiths Falls' Emergency Control Group will continue to provide updates to provincial orders as changes are made, and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator will continue to work in conjunction with Lanark County on the Stage 1 re-opening and recovery plan.

Non-medical face masks encouraged

The Town of Smiths Falls is encouraging citizens to use face masks while away from home, and especially in situations where maintaining a two-metre distance may not be possible. Wearing a non-medical face covering does not protect you from exposure to the COVID-19 virus, but it can offer protection to those around you.

“Even without symptoms each of us could be carrying the virus and wearing a mask can help prevent spread of the disease. We have a responsibility to our families and our community to do everything we can to protect each other,” Pankow said. “Wearing a mask is especially encouraged in stores where physical distancing is difficult and out of respect to the retail workers who are now at an elevated level of risk. Wearing a mask will protect your friends and neighbours, and your community.”

Provincial information indicates that wearing a homemade facial covering or non-medical mask can be an additional measure used to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms. Worn properly, a face mask can reduce the spread of potentially infectious respiratory droplets.

Wearing a mask is recommended for situations in which physical distancing is not possible, such as in-store shopping. Provincial recommendations for appropriate use of a non-medical face mask indicate that face masks should:

- Allow for easy breathing
- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Maintain their shape after washing and drying
- Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- Be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or

linen)

The Lanark Leeds Grenville Health Unit recommends users to avoid touching the face while wearing a mask and to wash their hands before putting on and after taking it off. Use your own face masks and do not share yours with others and clean any surfaces your dirty face covering touches. Change your mask as soon as it becomes damp or soiled. Masks can be laundered with other items using hot water.

More information on masks can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/face-coverings-and-face-masks> and <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/>.

Stop the spread

As the province moves forward with Stage 1 of the provincial re-opening, there are actions both residents and businesses can do in order to keep themselves, and others safe, including:

- Staying home when feeling unwell.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Observing physical distancing rules and maintaining at least two metres between yourself and others at all times.
- Being patient and following store procedures to maintain physical distancing.
- Wearing a cloth face covering if you have must go places where maintaining distance is difficult or when it is required by a business.
- Practicing good hand hygiene, carrying hand wipes or hand sanitizer at all times.

The Town of Smiths Falls offers resources for businesses and residents on its **COVID-19 resource page** at <https://www.smithsfalls.ca/public-safety/covid-19-coronavirus/>

Businesses requiring additional information for re-opening guidelines can call the province of Ontario's **Stop the Spread Business Information Line** at 1-888-444-3659.

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For further information, please contact:

Malcolm Morris

Chief Administrative Officer

Town of Smiths Falls

77 Beckwith St. N., Smiths Falls, ON

K7A 2B8

Phone 613-283-4124 ext. 1104

mmorris@smithsfalls.ca

Box 695, 77 Beckwith St. N., Smiths Falls, Ontario K7A 4T6

Phone: 613-283-4124 Fax: 613-283-4764 Website at www.smithsfalls.ca.

www.smithsfalls.ca

Shawn Pankow

Mayor

Town of Smiths Falls

77 Beckwith St N, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 2B8

613-283-4124 ext. 1110

spankow@smithsfalls.ca

<http://www.smithsfalls.ca/>