COVID-19
Considerations for Seasonal Residents and Visitors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal residents and cottagers may want to shelter at their home or cottage in Grey Bruce. However, many rural communities do not have the capacity to support an increase in the population at this time. Consider the impact that relocations can have on rural communities before deciding to leave your permanent residence.

The Medical Officer of Health for Grey Bruce as well as the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario have asked the public to avoid all non-essential travel to seasonal residences. Leaving a primary residence for a seasonal home or temporarily visiting the area is considered non-essential travel, even for property owners. The province and many local municipalities have also asked that people not travel to rural areas during this time. Travelling to and from the area, or within Grey and Bruce Counties, increases the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

If you are already at your seasonal residence or cottage, please stay there. Do not travel back and forth between locations. Do not invite friends and family to visit your seasonal residence or cottage. It is imperative you continue to follow measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 at your seasonal residence, just as you would at your permanent home.

The Province of Ontario and many local municipalities have a Declaration of Emergency in place, resulting in restrictions on gatherings and closure orders for many businesses and amenities. This means that, if you choose to visit, your experience at a cottage or seasonal property will not be the same as usual.

The following considerations may be helpful for seasonal residents and visitors who are considering relocating to or visiting Grey or Bruce Counties. For most people, staying at your primary residence will be the safest decision.

May 4, 2020
Consider the availability of supplies and essentials.

- Consider bringing supplies with you for several weeks so that you will not need to make any stops.
- Grocery stores in rural areas may have limited supplies and capacity.
- Many stores and restaurants may be closed or have limited hours.
- Options for take-out food may be limited or not available.
- Delivery or curbside pick-up services for groceries or food may be unavailable.

Consider the availability of services.

- Many services to help you open your cottage for the season may not be available. These services may not be available should any issues arise if you choose to open your seasonal residence yourself.

Understand the current restrictions and lack of recreational amenities.

- Ontario Provincial Parks, picnic areas, and National Parks are closed.
- Many hiking trails are closed.
- Most beaches, boat launches and municipal recreation facilities are completely closed.
- Parks, trails, beaches and conservation areas that are not closed remain open for walkthrough access only.
- Campfires may not be permitted. The Government of Ontario has prohibited outdoor fires, including campfires, in a Restricted Fire Zone that includes parts of Grey and Bruce Counties. Local municipalities outside of the Restricted Fire Zone may also prohibit outdoor fires.

Review advice from your local municipality regarding the situation.

- Many municipalities have provided information for seasonal residents, which is available on municipal websites and through local news outlets.
If at your property in Grey or Bruce Counties, stay home as much as possible and continue to practise physical distancing. Do not travel back and forth between your permanent residence and your seasonal residence or cottage. Please choose and stay in one location.

- Maintain a 2 metre distance between yourself and others.
- Do not have any visitors to your home or cottage.
- If you are feeling well, have not travelled out of Canada recently and have not been told to self-isolate, you can go outside for a walk as long as you can maintain a distance of 2 metres between yourself and others.
- Continue to wash your hands with soap and water often.

Do not visit your seasonal residence or cottage if:

- You have travelled out of Canada in the last 14 days.
- You have been asked to self-isolate.
- You are not feeling well with cold or flu-like symptoms.

Resources

Grey Bruce Medical Officer of Health orders international travellers to self-isolate, and strongly recommends against non-essential travel to and from Grey and Bruce Counties
Media Release - March 26, 2020 - Grey Bruce Health Unit

Ontario Extends Declaration of Emergency to Continue the Fight Against COVID-19 –
News Release - April 14, 2020

Ontario Reducing Risk of Fire in the Province – Media Release – April 2, 2020

May 4, 2020