



Media Statement

March 16, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Whitchurch-Stouffville Services, Programs and Events During the COVID-19 Outbreak

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, ON –The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has been monitoring the situation regarding the COVID-19 closely. The health and safety of the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville is our top priority and will remain our top priority. We continue to adhere to the recommendations of the Federal, Provincial and Regional governments and the health experts who are monitoring the situation closely.

On Friday March 13, the Town closed all facilities to the public in order to help combat the spread of the virus and increase “social-distancing.” We ask for your understanding during this challenging time. We apologize for the inconvenience.

In light of the situation, we understand residents and businesses have many questions about our services, programs, events and other Town business. The following are answers to some of our most common questions we have been receiving.

We ask that residents with questions beyond these answers, to please contact Customer Service or the facility directly.

1. Recreation Refunds (including fitness and aquatics)

The duration the Leisure Centre is closed will be added to your existing membership. For monthly memberships, refunds are being issued this week. Residents are asked to call the Leisure Center at (905) 642-7529 for more details.

2. Program Refunds (including camps)

Registrations for spring programs has been suspended. The Town will monitor this over the coming weeks. If the 10-week schedule is reduced, residents can request a refund or apply the difference towards their account for later use. Cancellations and refunds for all March Break programs are being processed this week. Residents are asked to call the Leisure Center at (905) 642-7529 for more details.

3. Facility Rentals

All facility rentals have been cancelled and refunds are currently being processed. No new permits will be processed throughout our shutdown period. Staff are currently contacting renters who have booked events in our facilities.

4. By-Law Inquiries

Please send all By-Law inquiries by phone or email only. By-Law will not be setting up meetings or facilitating tickets in person, however, they can be done by phone, online or email. By-Law will be reviewing all complaints to ascertain as to whether it is safe to attend that particular property and/or meet with property owners.

Animal Services calls will be responded to case by case. Our shelter has been shut down to the public once they are at capacity, we will no longer be able to take in domestic animals. We would like remind residents to be extra diligent at this time to ensure that their pets are not at large. Also, if your dog does not have a dog tag it is highly recommended that you purchase one now. Should your pet be found at large during this time it helps us to get the dog home faster. Dog tags can be purchased at townofws.ca/dogtags

Parking will still be enforced. If any residents have any By-Law questions, please call 905 640 1910 (ex. 2229) or Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

5. Safe operations of roads and infrastructure

Our on-call Operator will be available through the Town's after hour service at (905) 640-1900. Down stop signs, flooding, trees that have fallen across roads/sidewalks will be dealt with immediately. Other road activities such as, tree trimming, pothole patching, will continue. Winter maintenance activities of roads, sidewalks and municipal parking lots will continue and be conducted as required.

Water quality sampling will continue as per Provincial regulations and water/wastewater emergencies such as breaks and backups, will be dealt with immediately. Water/wastewater Operators will not be entering private homes, however they will respond to investigate the municipal infrastructure and advise residents to contact a private plumber for internal investigations. Routine water/wastewater activities will continue. Further inquiries should be directed to Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

6. Tax payment information

The next tax due date remains April 17, 2020. Overdue notices from the previous installments have been mailed. As a reminder, payments can be made through our pre-authorized payment plan, in which registration has been extended until

April 9 for the next due date. Payments can also be made at your bank or on your bank's website or mobile app. Post-dated cheques can also be dropped off at Town Hall in the drop-box. For more information about tax payments, please visit townofws.ca/en/residents/paying-your-property-tax-bill.aspx. Further inquiries should be directed to Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

7. Water billing information

The next water due date remains April 27, 2020. Water bills have not been mailed yet and are scheduled for April 6. As a reminder, payments can be made through our pre-authorized payment plan, in which registration has been extended until April 9 for the next due date. Payments can also be made at your bank or on your bank's website or mobile app. Post-dated cheques can also be dropped off at Town Hall in the drop-box. For more information about water payments, visit townofws.ca/en/residents/water-and-sewer-billing.aspx. Further inquiries should be directed to Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

8. Water meter installations

Neptune Technologies will not be stopping resident-scheduled appointments; however, installations may be reduced in the foreseeable future. Technicians will not complete work if residents at the work site appear to be ill, and all signatures, comment card collection, and close physical interaction, will be eliminated. Further inquiries should be directed to Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

9. Development Services (including building)

The Town continues to accept building and planning applications and customers can drop non-confidential plans and relevant information, in the drop-box at Town Hall. All meetings with external clients will be converted to conference calls and we will continue to schedule and conduct building and engineering inspections.

10. Waste collection

Solid waste collection and recycling will continue as usual. Inquiries should be directed to *Green For Life (GFL)* Customer Service at 1-866-421-5625.

11. Emergency services

All emergency services provided by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire & Emergency Services will remain uninterrupted. All public education events have or will be cancelled until April 14th, including school visits and station tours. All non-essential fire prevention activities have also been cancelled or postponed. The Fire Prevention Division will still be responding to requests and/or complaints that involve immediate threat to life. Burn permits are still available online on the Town's website. Fire Station 5-1 and Fire Station 5-2 remain closed to the public.

The Town is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our residents, visitors and businesses. Should you have any further questions, please visit our COVID-19 webpage at townofws.ca/COVID19 or call Customer Service at (905) 640-1900.

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