



December 22, 2021

Ref: 269049

Mayors, Regional District Chairs and Chief Administrative Officers of British Columbia

Dear Mayors, Chairs and CAOs:

I am writing to you to provide you with additional information respecting the expected extreme weather conditions forecast for the coming week and further information respecting the additional COVID-19 restrictions announced yesterday.

### **Weather Warning**

Environment Canada is forecasting periods of heavy and blowing snow, freezing rain and very cold weather in many parts of the province between now and New Year's Day. Please advise residents to prepare for extreme cold, including cold winds with wind chill values of up to -20 C, and be prepared for potential power outages. Severe weather can lead to power outages and it is recommended that households have emergency kits prepared for these circumstances.

As temperatures drop, there will be an increase in demand for space at warming centres and shelters.

Emergency Management BC Regional Offices have already distributed an Environment and Climate Change Canada notification to the emergency program coordinators in your communities to support preparedness. In addition, given this extreme weather is less frequent on the coast, the Southwest and Vancouver Island Coastal Regional Offices and key ministry representatives held coordination calls with First Nation and local government emergency program staff to provide information and answer questions.

Emergency Management BC (EMBC) staff are available to your governments to assist in responding to emergency needs should they arise.

Local governments can contact their local regional offices for any needs they have from EMBC. The 24-hour emergency reporting line can be reached at 1-800-663-3456.

The province is providing more than 1,900 temporary shelter spaces and nearly 360 extreme-weather response shelter spaces to ensure people experiencing homelessness have a warm place to sleep. The extreme weather response shelters are available overnight when a community issues an extreme weather alert.

A copy of the news release from EMBC can be found [here](#). There you'll find additional links to resources that you, your staff, and residents within your community may find helpful to prepare for the anticipated extreme weather.

### **Additional COVID-19 Restrictions**

The additional COVID-19 restrictions announced on December 21, 2021 will affect all local government recreational centres that include fitness centres or dance studios. As required by the Provincial Health Officer, all adult gyms, fitness centres and dance studios must be closed until January 18, 2022. We know that these, and the other restrictions announced yesterday, will continue to have impacts for local governments and residents. We appreciate your continued support and assistance through these challenging times.

Further information on province-wide restrictions can be found [here](#). Please continue to monitor this website for further updates.

### **Proof of Vaccination and Layers of Protection**

Essential local government business - including by-elections, council/board meetings, and public hearings - continue to be exempt from the Provincial Health Gatherings and Events Order. That means that council and board members and staff, as well as the public, are not required to show a vaccine card to attend these important functions.

Other layers of protection such as the mask requirement for all indoor public spaces continue to apply. The PHO Order – Face Coverings can be found [here](#). Local governments can determine other health and safety measures in their local communicable disease plans (e.g., capacity limits for specific spaces).

Keep watching [BC's Response to COVID-19](#) website for updates, and please encourage your residents to do the same. We will continue to work with you over the coming weeks, so that you have the support and information you need to move forward based on the Provincial Health Officer and Medical Health Officer's most recent Orders.

If you have specific questions about meetings, please contact the Governance and Structure Branch at 250-387-4020 or [lggovernance@gov.bc.ca](mailto:lggovernance@gov.bc.ca).

Sincerely,



Tara Faganello  
Assistant Deputy Minister