



## **Town of Halton Hills**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1: Why has the Town declared a State of Emergency?**

**A1:** More than half of COVID-19 cases appear to be the result of local transmission (i.e. not travel related) and the Town of Halton Hills and Halton Hills Hydro are joining the Province of Ontario and Halton Region in declaring a State of Emergency to support Public Health officials' efforts to "flatten the curve" and slow the spread of COVID-19.

The reason for the declaration is to send a message to our community; if you are not delivering essential services, please stay home, except for necessary visits for groceries or medical supplies.

If you absolutely do need to go out, practice physical distancing by maintaining at least a 6 foot (2 metre) gap from everyone except those in your own household and/or immediate family.

**Q2: Does the declaration give the Town special powers?**

**A2:** Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, "The Head of Council may declare an emergency exists in the municipality and may take such actions and make such orders as he or she considers necessary and are not contrary to law to implement the emergency plan of the municipality and to protect property and the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the emergency area."

By declaring an emergency the Mayor has the authority to make decisions on behalf of Council. The decisions are made in an effort to safeguard the Town; in this case, to mitigate further harm to our citizens as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These decisions cannot be contrary to law. This means that if the Head of Council does not have the authority to do something, or order something otherwise, an emergency declaration will not provide them with this authority.

**Q3: The Province has mandated that all non-essential businesses close. Has the Town imposed any additional restrictions or will Town staff be enforcing this?**

**A3:** The Province has the authority under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to direct these closures. They are asking businesses to abide by this mandate and will determine if enforcement measures are necessary. An emergency declaration does not provide a Head of Council, nor anyone else in the municipality, with any extraordinary authorities that are not otherwise provided for in law. For example, a Head of Council will not have the authority to order a private business or service to cease operations or to close by virtue of having declared an emergency.

**Q4: What do I do if I think a business should be closed but isn't following the rules?**

**A4:** Businesses had until midnight March 24 to make arrangements to close their workplaces. They will still be permitted to work remotely from home if possible but will not be permitted to open establishments or places of work with the expectation of serving customers in person or that employees be physically present to perform work on the premises.

Essential services may continue their operations to ensure that people have access to necessities.

We need law and order, we need emergency services, we need groceries and home maintenance items, we need banks and telecommunication services, we need gas, and we need a supply chain of those products including trucks and drivers to deliver them. Our hospitals and emergency workers need equipment and supplies. We need continuity of government, and we need public safety and security.

The Province of Ontario has provided a [full list of essential services](#) at Ontario.ca.

*The Province has launched a toll-free line 1-888-444-3659 to provide support to Ontario businesses who have questions about the province's recent emergency order to close at-risk workplaces following recommendations by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Businesses who have questions about closures of at-risk workplaces or how emergency measures impact their business or employment can call the Stop the Spread Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659.*

**Q5: Where can I get information about actions that will be taken by the Town under the State of Emergency?**

**A5:** The Town will continue to post updates on the [COVID information page](#) and media releases will be issued as appropriate. For COVID-19 Business Support updates, visit [investhaltonhills.com](http://investhaltonhills.com).