



COVID-19 Crisis in the Town of Banff

Under State of Local Emergency

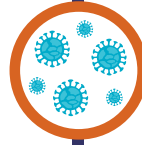
March 17 - June 12, 2020

88 Days



Timeline of COVID-19 Related Events

December 2019



December 31

World Health Organization announces an outbreak of pneumonia of unknown cause, detected in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province, China.

January 2020



January 26

Town of Banff begins working with the Provincial Operations Centre monitoring the coronavirus outbreak around the world, with daily updates at the Level 1 Operational Level.

January 27

Banff & Lake Louise Tourism issues first notification to members (businesses in Banff National Park) about the international situation.

Town of Banff issues statement to media on situation in Banff.

January 29

Town of Banff establishes dedicated web page to coronavirus information (renamed banff.ca/COVID on March 11).

January 30

World Health Organization declares global health emergency.



February 2020

February 27

Town of Banff establishes working group of local agencies to monitor the coronavirus situation and coordinate information for the region.

March 2020

March 9

Town Manager issues first in regular updates to staff about the COVID-19 crisis and the situation in Banff.



March 13

Town of Banff holds first meeting of Banff Community Communications Working Group (group of communications officers and managers from Banff businesses and organizations) on Coronavirus/COVID-19 to share resources and information, and identify local instances of misinformation for action.

March 14

Health protocol posters and signs are created for local businesses.

Online documents about workforce planning are shared with Banff organizations with links to Government of Alberta resources.

Organizations in the community are urged to cancel events and large gatherings.

Residents are reminded to sign up for emergency alerts from the Town of Banff.



Banff's Municipal Emergency Plan is activated.

The Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is mobilized.

March 2020 (cont.)

March 15

Town of Banff creates virtual shared project space for communications officers and managers in Banff for collaborating on information, key messages and resources.



March 16

Town-hosted events and courses are cancelled.

The Fenlands Banff Recreation Centre, Town Hall and 101 Bear Street facility are closed.

March 17

The Town of Banff declares a State of Local Emergency.



All gatherings are restricted to fewer than 50 people.

All business properties limit capacity to 50% of their fire load occupancy, up to a maximum of 50 people.

The Government of Alberta declares a Public State of Health Emergency later the same day.

March 18

Canadian borders close to foreign nationals.

March 19

Town of Banff mobilizes a virtual reception centre to offer personalized email help information and connect people with provincial and federal supports.

A new dedicated webpage is created that compiles government support information for individuals (banff.ca/COVIDhelp) and promotes a support phone line and email service.

A print guide on safe health practices and resource info for seniors is developed.

Visitor facilities and services are temporarily closed and suspended by Parks Canada.

March 20

A resource coordinator is mobilized to receive and redistribute donated supplies to essential services and Banff businesses needing supplies to maintain critical operations.



March 22

Town of Banff announces residents and businesses can suspend property tax payments if they are on the monthly payment program.

Residents and businesses are provided the option to receive a refund on the first three months of property tax payments made in 2020.

March 23

The Town of Banff begins live-streaming Town Council meetings to maintain physical distancing.



March 24

Playgrounds are closed to help prevent the spread.

Parks Canada closes vehicle access by visitors to secondary roads and parking areas, including trailheads.

March 25

Law enforcement agencies are granted full authority to enforce public health orders and issue fines.

Banff utility bill deferral option is offered and interest and penalties on late payments are suspended for three months.

The Banff Housing Corporation offers rent deferrals and reductions for Ti'nu Apartments residents affected by the COVID-19 emergency.

Posters for businesses to post on doors about closures, pick-up services and entrance restrictions are offered to Banff businesses.

Parks Canada suspends all visitor services in all national parks and national historic sites, and temporarily closes visitor facilities including washrooms and day use facilities.



March 27

Gatherings are limited to 15 people.

Non-essential services are closed.

Alberta Health identifies at least one positive COVID-19 case in Banff.

March 30

A Banff-specific Action Request Form is created for residents to report concerns over gatherings and the operation of non-essential businesses.

April 2020



April 2

Additional protective measures are implemented in Banff grocery stores with guidance from the ECC.

Banff's off-leash dog park is closed to avoid COVID-19 spread and construction of the temporary dog park is halted.



April 3

An additional request is issued for more supplies to help back up essential services.

Banff RCMP and Community Peace Officers increase monitoring and enforcement to maintain safety in the community and security of property.

Construction-specific health protocol signs and information packages are distributed to worksites throughout Banff.



April 8

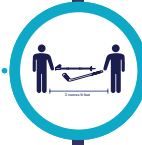
Video updates on COVID-19 from the Mayor and Director of the ECC are launched.

April 10

Educational COVID-19 checkpoints are implemented at both town entrances.

Public service announcements air on Calgary radio stations to discourage non-essential travel over the long weekend.

The basketball court, tennis courts and skateboard park are closed to help prevent the spread.



April 14

Trails signs are installed throughout Banff to encourage physical distancing while in public spaces.

April 17

Parks Canada announces camping, group activities, visitor services, facilities and events at Banff National Park are suspended until May 31.

April 23

Alberta cancels one-time or annual major events until the end of the summer.

April 27

Public service announcements air on Calgary radio stations to discourage non-essential travel as the weather warms up



April 20

New, safe recreation programming is offered to Banff residents, including online meetups, online story time, family fun kits and sports equipment lending.

ECC guides implementation of improvements to support physical distancing and maintain better customer traffic flow at the Post Office.

April 30

Customized signs indicating "We're Open" are offered to businesses to help raise awareness of modified service options and encourage residents to shop local.

May 2020

May 2

Banff re-opens skatepark with AHS-approved measures to control spread of COVID-19 while allowing outdoor recreation.



May 4

The Town of Banff cancels programming for Canada Day and all major events for the remainder of the summer.

May 5

50 days of State of Local Emergency

May 2020 (cont.)

..... May 8

Banff & Lake Louise Tourism, Parks Canada, the Town of Banff, and Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association create the Banff & Lake Louise Economic Task Force to deliver a phased plan to safely and effectively re-open the economy in Banff National Park.

Special health protocols are implemented at the Banff community greenhouses to help reduce the spread.

Banff & Lake Louise Tourism, Parks Canada, the Town of Banff, and Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association launch the Banff & Lake Louise Economic Task Force.

..... May 14

Stage one of Alberta's relaunch strategy begins.

..... May 15

The 100 and 200 blocks of Banff Avenue are reduced to one lane in each direction in order to provide more space for pedestrians to maintain 2 metres distance.

Residents are encouraged to wear masks or face coverings in crowded public places.

Outdoor gathering limit increases from 15 to 50.

..... May 22

The Town of Banff develops public health education signage for the reopening of facilities, such as tennis courts, greenhouses, and sidewalk safety in preparation for visitation in June.

..... May 27

Local emergency medical services begin providing businesses with staff training on the use of personal protective equipment and respiratory precautions to help prepare for reopening.

June 2020

..... June 1

Town of Banff shifts messaging to local community that Banff is ready to welcome visitors back.

Playgrounds in Banff reopen with signage indicating health and safety best practices for the community.

Limited visitor access to trails and day-use areas resumes in Banff National Park.

Provincial campgrounds reopen at 50% capacity.

..... May 9

Video monitoring of recreation grounds is implemented to assist enforcement of public health orders restricting gatherings.

..... May 11

The Town of Banff launches radio advertising campaign ahead of May Long Weekend.

To date, essential services that have received supplies include Nesters, Food Rescue, Alpine Medical Clinic, YWCA, Fire Department and ROAM Transit.

Additional donations received include face shields from Banff Cleaning Supplies and hand sanitizer from Canary Coffee in Canmore.

..... May 16

Open businesses in Banff are listed on a new Banff.ca webpage to encourage local shopping.

..... May 20

Banff businesses are encouraged to sign up for regular Banff & Lake Louise Tourism newsletters.

..... May 26

50 day timeline is published, outlining all Town of Banff activities since the State of Local Emergency was announced.

..... May 29

Banff & Lake Louise Tourism launches the first in a series of webinars for businesses seeking support from Alberta Health Services on how to reopen safely.

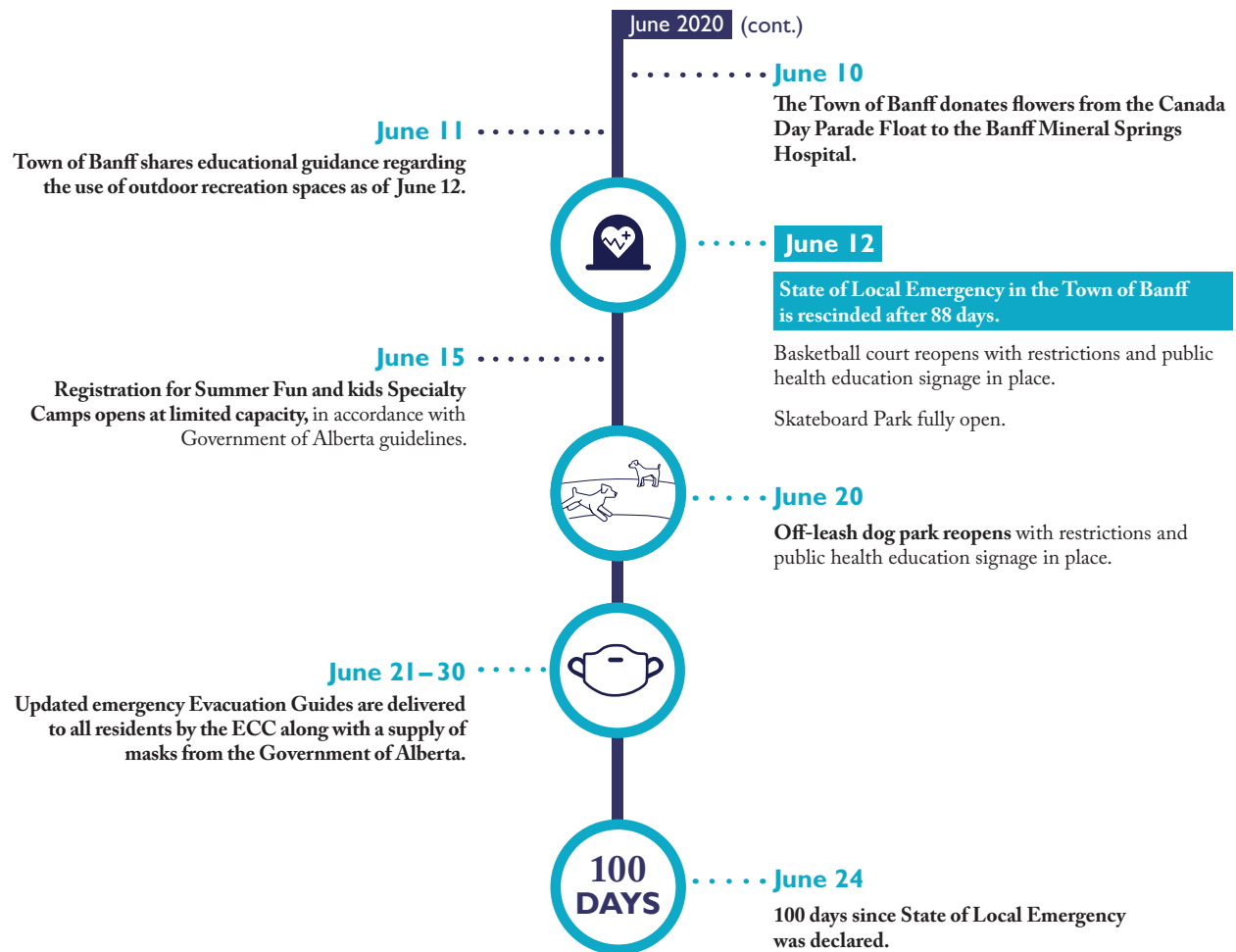
The Town of Banff prints 4,500 updated Evacuation Guides for June distribution to all dwellings.

..... June 3

The Banff Farmers Market opens with enhanced safety measures and protocols in place.

..... June 5

The 100 and 200 blocks of Banff Avenue are closed to vehicle traffic to allow for better physical distancing and to help businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Banff by the Numbers - COVID-19

1 occurrence of mandatory isolation order enforcement.

4 warnings given to businesses regarding essential services and capacity limits.

8 fines and **9** warnings for disobeying a directive sign at the skate park and basketball courts since March 16.

59 municipal enforcement officer generated (pro-active) files since March 16.

617 educational warnings issued based on 97 received complaints since March 16.

1,444 collective patrols in the common gathering spots including the Canoe Dock Area, the Riverside Multi Use Trails, the Rec Grounds, Bow Falls and the Tunnel Mountain Reservoir Area since March 16.



5 banff.ca webpages dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic:
banff.ca/UpdatesECC
banff.ca/COVID
banff.ca/COVIDHelp
banff.ca/COVIDBusiness
banff.ca/OpenInBanff

31 news releases to help inform the public.



60+ media interviews.



520+ instances of direct contact with seniors, including caring calls and food delivery.



50 physical distancing posters distributed to businesses.



50-90% decrease in public transit ridership, depending on the route, as of April 14.

73+ hours helping individuals access government benefits through computer support.

481 hours of professional language interpretive services have been provided to newcomers as of May 22.



283+ exterior signs created and deployed for locations such as playgrounds, recreation facilities, trails and more.



328 individuals have participated in online programming such as cooking classes, yoga, youth programming and theatre programming as of May 22.

As of June 12:

1,769

people supported by ESS through help@banff.ca or via phone.

4,568

meals delivered throughout the community.

15,388

visits to banff.ca/COVIDhelp

Impact of COVID-19 on Banff

The Town of Banff has been devastated by the COVID pandemic.

The Town of Banff is in Canada's oldest National Park, but we are one of Alberta's youngest municipalities. The Town was incorporated in 1990 with a purpose to provide services to visitors, and serve the residents who provide those services.



When international borders were closed and restrictions were implemented by Alberta's State of Public Health Emergency (March 17), many of Banff's businesses were closed.

- Attractions were all closed – ski hills, gondolas – and Parks Canada closed visitor services.
- Tourism is powered by the things that had high risk of transmission: restaurants, retail, tours, museums and galleries, entertainment and events. They had to close.
- Only essential services such as food and supplies were available just for residents for over 8 weeks.
- Gas stations and some hotels stayed open – we are a stopping point on the TransCanada Highway, providing support for people travelling between provinces, emergency workers and essential services.
- Some hotels maintained blocks of rooms in case our community needed isolation space, especially for people in shared accommodation.
- Because Banff is such a small area, many large employers – like hotels and ski hills – provide staff accommodation for their employees. They continued to provide accommodation and meals for free to staff who were laid off.

Visitation stopped

- More than 4 million people come to Banff National Park each year, and at least 80% of those visitors come into the town of Banff.
- On a busy summer day in a previous year, we can have 30,000 pedestrians per day walking down Banff Avenue.

- 50% of Banff's visitors come from outside Canada.

- **At the peak of the pandemic in Alberta, we have had almost as many elk on downtown streets as people.**

Economic impact

- **90% of Banff's economy is directly or indirectly supported by tourism.** In a few days, that came to a halt.
- In 2018, the Town of Banff generated \$3.1 billion in spending in the Province of Alberta (this includes spending in Calgary as people arrive at the airport then head to Banff).
- The total Alberta economic impact from tourism is about \$9 billion.
- **Town of Banff also generates more than \$469 million in federal income taxes and \$247 million in provincial taxes.**

Economic impact

- The Town of Banff is only 4 square kilometres in size, but residents here provide services for much of Banff National Park. Only people who work in the park here can live in Banff.
- For a town with a population of about 9,000 people, the immediate layoffs of 5,000-6,000 people had a major impact.
- **Early estimates had unemployment at 80-85%.**
- However, the unemployment rate is unconfirmed; many of temporary workers are people born outside Canada. Just like Canada, many nations called back their citizens.
- Before federal and provincial aid packages were announced, the town was supporting our population with food services, rent deferrals and support.