



**For Immediate Release**

## News Release

### COVID-19 UPDATE – Town of Edson (March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

**Edson, Alberta, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – The Town of Edson held a special meeting of the Emergency Management Advisory Committee last night to discuss various issues surrounding the COVID-19 virus outbreak. This included Council, a limited number of Administration, and representatives from Alberta Health Services and the RCMP.

One of the messages coming out of the meeting is the importance of residents following the social/physical distancing guidelines. The Town of Edson has set more strict recommendations than the Province at this time, asking for gatherings to remain at 10 people or less. This is for public spaces like parks and trails and does not apply to restaurants, which fall under Alberta Health regulations.

Many communities have been forced to declare a Local State of Emergency to help deal with enforcement of these public health restrictions. The Town of Edson has not had to take those steps, however, it does remain an option to assist in enforcement if it's found that residents are not respecting the guidelines set forth.

Playgrounds in Edson remain open to the public at this time as per Provincial recommendations. The Town of Edson would just ask that proper social distancing is taking place and everyone follows guidelines on hygiene, such as washing hands before and after attending playgrounds.

During last night's meeting Council received reports from various departments and had in depth discussions on ways the Town of Edson can move forward to responsibly deal with the crisis and potential fallout. The following measures were reviewed, but still require official Council approval.

**Utility Penalty Deferral** - In these extraordinary times, the Town of Edson recognizes that steps need to be taken to help residents and businesses stay on their feet. If approved, this measure would mean no penalties will occur for non-payment on utility bills for the months of March through July. While those payments will still need to be made, customers will have until the end of 2020 to catch up on those balances. Penalties will be reinstated in August, but for new balances only. This will allow customers to spread out those payments over a number of months if necessary.

Please note that automatic payments for utility and tax accounts will continue unless the account holder contacts the finance department with further instructions.

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**Tax Due Date Adjustment** - Council is also looking at pushing back the property tax payment due date. Tax notices will still go out as normal, however, the payment deadline will now be September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The COVID-19 situation does have a profound impact on the Town's budget. As such, Council is also taking a very close look at finances to ensure proper steps are taken to maintain an acceptable level of service while being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers in this difficult time. More details will be forthcoming as Council reviews the budget at an upcoming meeting.

The Town of Edson is committed to our public and will continue to review information as it comes in and make decisions in the best interest of our community. We ask everyone to stay informed locally, and with the various other levels of government.

Thank you for doing your part to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Be safe!

Edson – [www.edson.ca/covid](http://www.edson.ca/covid)

Alberta – [www.alberta.ca/covid19](http://www.alberta.ca/covid19)

Canada – [www.canada.ca/covid19](http://www.canada.ca/covid19)

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