

## City of St. Catharines introduces grace period for payments to assist residents and businesses

**March 20, 2020** - The City of St. Catharines is introducing a payment grace period to support residents and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City has also suspended payment for parking on street, and in municipal lots.

The grace period for payment – which runs until June 30 – means late fees and interest penalties will not be applied to water and tax payments, as well as accounts receivables. Water bills continue to be issued across the City as scheduled.

The City has also suspended all water disconnections due to non-payment.

“Given the uncertainty and financial impact of this evolving pandemic, we want to provide assurance to our community that we understand their concerns,” said City CAO Shelley Chemnitz. “No additional late fees will be applied during the grace period and we will not disconnect customers who are in arrears.”

Legal and Clerks Services is also introducing a temporary grace period, until further notice, for a pair of its services. No late fees will be charged for business licences, and there will be no late fees for those renewing dog licences. While City Hall remains temporarily closed, residents can still renew the licences online via DocuPet by visiting [www.stcatharines.ca/doglicence](http://www.stcatharines.ca/doglicence).

### Temporary Parking Changes

The City has also introduced a series of changes to parking services. Payment is not required, on a temporary basis, for on-street parking or in municipal parking lots. This is to take away numerous people touching the same parking machines throughout the day. Parking enforcement for lack of payment will also be suspended until further notice.

Parking enforcement is currently limited to safety-related issues such as fire-routes, accessible parking, no-parking areas and fire hydrants. Time-limit restrictions have been relaxed to help those working from home or self-isolating. If you have a driveway the City encourages you to use it, keeping in mind there could be increased stationary vehicles on the road.

All residential permits that expire while we are closed to the public will still be honoured. Any new permits or renewals can be purchased once City Hall reopens to the public.

**Alternative Payment Options**

While City Hall remains closed to the public, residents have several payment options for property tax, water bills and parking tickets that can be done from the comfort and safety of their own home.

Water and tax payments can be made via online banking through a resident's financial provider, or directly at the bank. Cheques can also be mailed to the City. Details on these methods of payment are available at [www.stcatharines.ca/paymentoptions](http://www.stcatharines.ca/paymentoptions).

All payments can also be made via cheque at the City Hall drop box, located at the James Street entrance. Do not deposit cash via the drop box.

The City also offers pre-authorized payment for water / wastewater and property taxes. Preauthorized debit agreements are available online at [www.stcatharines.ca/preauthorizedpayment](http://www.stcatharines.ca/preauthorizedpayment).

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