

Property maintenance efforts during COVID-19

April 24, 2020 - Recognizing the importance of property maintenance, and in response to questions from the community, the City of St. Catharines is providing some clarity about lawn maintenance, landscaping, and construction.

Landscaping and lawn care businesses that are providing services strictly for safety, security or sanitation purposes will be permitted. These services include lawn cutting and spraying. This is to ensure that properties remain safe, property standards are met and that grass is maintained to help prevent weeds, ticks and mosquitoes in tall grass and standing water.

Under provincial direction, businesses are not permitted to conduct landscaping projects that are to beautify a property, or for aesthetics, such as planting shrubs and trees.

In terms of other maintenance and construction efforts, fence repairs are permitted only to manage and maintain safety, security and essential operation of any properties and buildings. Construction of landscape steps, granular driveways and sidewalks for buildings being constructed under previously issued residential building permits are considered essential under the province's list of essential workplaces.

As per the provincial regulations, some activities are not permitted until further notice. Examples include construction of pools, sheds, detached garages and carports and decks. Installation of new asphalt, interlocking brick / pavers or concrete driveways are also not permitted under the direction of the province's list of essential workplaces.

Businesses with questions about the Provincial list of essential businesses and services can continue to call the Province's 'Stop the Spread' Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659.

Residents are able to continue to conduct select property maintenance efforts on their own, but are asked to be mindful of compliance with the Ontario Building Code, the City's municipal zoning by-laws and all relevant applicable municipal and provincial regulations.

A reminder that under current provincial orders, all non-essential businesses are required to remain closed, outdoor amenities remain closed except for walk-through purposes, and public gatherings of more than five people are prohibited. Residents who are concerned with individuals or groups violating Provincial emergency orders can report them via our online form at www.stcatharines.ca/COVID19 for investigation, or to Citizens First via phone at 905.688.5600 or by email at CitizensFirst@stcatharines.ca.

Outside of normal business hours, contact Niagara Region's dispatch line at 905.984.3690 or 1.877.552.5579. Do not call 911.

Residents are reminded that the City also continues to deliver services such as water, sewer, road and core infrastructure, as well as construction that is deemed critical. As well, the City will continue to maintain our buildings, cutting grass in parks and sports field to control weeds, overgrowth and ticks. This will also allow the City to open these facilities more quickly once the emergency is past and ensures no additional costs are incurred to bring parks and fields up to appropriate standards.

The City is safeguarding municipal staff by taking a series of measures to limit contact between employees and the public, and minimize exposure to COVID-19. The City takes the safety of our employees seriously and regularly consults with the Ministry of Labour and the regional, provincial, and federal public health agencies.

Services, programs and service levels are subject to change based on the evolving circumstances of COVID-19. For the latest information check the City website at www.stcatharines.ca/COVID19

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