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For Immediate Release

COVID-19 and Emergency Response in the Cariboo Region

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is bringing unprecedented challenges to our emergency response system and the first responders who are critical to its effectiveness. These factors are amplified in the Cariboo Regional District, where distance, terrain, and weather conditions can impact response times.

For these reasons we are asking the residents and businesses of the CRD to help us maintain this essential service, through sensible precautions and an understanding of the factors that must be considered in this unique situation. We are working with all levels of government and public agencies – developing and implementing protocols on an ongoing basis, to maximize our ability to respond as needed, without exposing responders or the public to unnecessary risk. You can play an important role in these efforts. Here are some guidelines and tips:

Stay Home and Stay Healthy

Limiting the amount of time, you spend in public places, is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of contracting the virus. **If you are out in public, please practice social distancing** (stay at least 2 metres away from others), **abide by the rules put in place by businesses to protect their workers and customers**, and **avoid risky behaviours that might require an emergency response**, so that first responders are available and ready to serve the public.

Think you might have COVID-19?

Please do not call 9-1-1. If you suspect you may have been exposed to the virus or are exhibiting symptoms associated with coronavirus, **your best first step is to call 8-1-1**. This service has been instituted to provide guidance and information to the public, to avoid swamping the 9-1-1 emergency line. The medical personnel answering your call will be able to assess your symptoms and advise you as to the appropriate steps you should take.

If you need an emergency response

We know the coronavirus is very contagious and potentially fatal, regardless of age or pre-existing conditions. If you are in medical distress, especially if you have chest pain or trouble breathing, call 9-1-1 and let them know. The appropriate responders will be dispatched. **Please note, for emergency vehicles to reach your home, it is important to keep driveways and private access roads cleared and accessible** for fire trucks, ambulances, or other emergency vehicles.

Looking for more info?

Visit our website at cariboord.ca/covid-19 for useful resources and relevant links to important information.

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