

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County of Simcoe to reopen select landfills and transfer stations to the public for essential use

Midhurst/March 26, 2020 – The County of Simcoe is reopening select landfills and transfer stations to the public to support our small essential businesses and our residents' urgent/essential waste disposal needs during this uncertain time.

Four geographically strategic County waste sites (North Simcoe, West Gwillimbury, Nottawasaga and Oro) are scheduled to reopen on Monday, March 30th at 9 a.m. These four facilities will be fully operational Monday to Friday from 9 am to 3 pm only, until further Government restrictions occur or staffing challenges arise. Sites will be closed to the public on Saturdays and all other site locations will remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future. The County and our front-line staff ask that residents follow all Public Health recommendations and use the landfill for critical or essential drop-offs only. If you are in self-isolation, stay at home. Please store materials at your home if possible; don't make any unnecessary visits to the sites.

“We made the initial decision to close these sites to the public in order to comply with public health and safety recommendations, as well as in response to an alarming number of non-essential visits to the sites by residents who were in clear violation of public health recommendations to stay home,” said Warden George Cornell. “We can’t stress enough how important it is for residents to stay at home to help flatten the curve of COVID-19 by limiting the spread of this virus. If you are self-isolating due to any symptoms or have recently returned from travel outside the country, please don’t put our staff, other residents and our communities at risk. Stay home, utilize our continuing curbside collections and do your best to find a place to store non-urgent household items that require diverting or disposal until we return to regular operations.”

In the past week, the County has significantly enhanced procedures at these four sites to provide additional safety and physical distancing measures for staff and customers. In addition, the County is responding to provincial requests to maintain essential services, especially those for small and vulnerable businesses. To maintain curbside waste collections for all households in the County, our staffing levels at some select landfills and transfer stations must be maintained for drop-off, landfilling and haulage of curbside materials. To avoid jeopardizing the health of staff, other customers and the continuation of curbside waste collection services for all, please adhere to these restrictions and Public Health recommendations.

Safety measures and restrictions:

- The safety of our staff and customers is paramount, and the County is taking extra precautions with its front-line staff, including:
- Speaker systems installed at weigh scales to allow for staff/customer transaction through a closed window
- Increased sanitization and PPE requirements for staff

- Implementing a \$10.00 minimum flat fee limit for all residential car and truck drop-offs to reduce scale contact with customers and discourage small, non-urgent/critical loads (mattresses and fridges will be charged separately as always)
- Debit and credit only from an exterior terminal - tap is the preferred option
- Removing split load charges, thus reducing multiple interactions between customers and staff at the weigh scale; however, customers must separate materials into designated areas
- Limiting vehicles entering the facility at any given time to reduce contact among customers and employees - this could lead to longer wait times
- Staff will no longer support individuals with unloading items from customers' vehicles
- Additional social/physical distancing measures will be put in place for all interactions between customers and staff
- Increased safety and instructional signage must be obeyed

Residents are reminded to utilize curbside organics and recycling, and the two-bag garbage limit on garbage collection weeks as the best means to dispose of their usual household materials. Organics and recycling quantities for curbside collection are unlimited. Please continue to use your green bin as much as possible, and bag and seal your organics and garbage to protect the well-being of collection crews. Diapers can also be set out in sealed clear bags on garbage weeks and won't be counted against garbage bag limits.

We encourage residents to download the Simcoe County Collects app, as hours and operations may fluctuate based on staffing levels. Service Simcoe is also open to field inquiries by phone and email Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 705-735-6901 or service@simcoe.ca.

County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.

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