



🏠 [HOME \(HTTPS://FOCA.ON.CA/\)](https://FOCA.ON.CA/) > COVID-19 UPDATE FROM FOCA  
← [\(HTTPS://FOCA.ON.CA/SALT-IN-OUR-FRESHWATER-SYSTEMS/\)](https://FOCA.ON.CA/SALT-IN-OUR-FRESHWATER-SYSTEMS/) →  
[\(HTTPS://FOCA.ON.CA/2019-YEAR-IN-REVIEW/\)](https://FOCA.ON.CA/2019-YEAR-IN-REVIEW/)

## Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

# COVID-19 Update from FOCA

### Current News:

April 2, 2020: FOCA is quoted in this digital article: [‘COVID time is not cottage time’: Canada’s top health official](https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/news/article/covid-19-coronavirus-time-is-not-cottage-time)  
(<https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/news/article/covid-19-coronavirus-time-is-not-cottage-time>) (Weather Network)

April 1, 2020 – as reported by our colleagues at Boating Ontario, many marinas are currently not allowing any launches or mooring, and/or are on restricted access for service or repair. While marinas are listed among Ontario’s [“essential services](https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces)  
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces>)” the posting notes “only to the extent that the marina is necessary to enable individuals to access their primary place of residence.” For links to several postings, visit:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BoatingOntario.ca/>  
(<https://www.facebook.com/BoatingOntario.ca/>)

March 31, 2020: FOCA has been contacted by members who are American citizens who traditionally spend up to six months of the year at their Canadian waterfront properties, wondering whether they will be allowed entry at the border, even to check on their properties due to recurring Spring water level concerns. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, FOCA spoke with **Canadian Border Services customer service** who informed us that developments were occurring quickly, and could continue to change at any time. You are advised to call 1-800-461-9999 and talk to a Border Services customer representative for the most current information. Please note that additional restrictions related to cross border travel may also be imposed by US Customs and Border Protection.

**Important: this situation is very fluid and changes are possible at any time.**

March 29, 2020: Dr. Theresa Tam, the **Chief Public Health Officer of Canada** directed her messaging to snowbirds and other travellers returning to Canada, specifically noting:

*“Urban dwellers/Cottagers should RESIST THE URGE to head to the cottage and rural properties as these communities have less capacity to manage COVID19.”*

For her full remarks, visit [@CPHO\\_Canada on Twitter](https://twitter.com/CPHO_Canada/status/1244390050164506626) ([https://twitter.com/CPHO\\_Canada/status/1244390050164506626](https://twitter.com/CPHO_Canada/status/1244390050164506626))

March 27, 2020: [“Premier Doug Ford pleads for city residents to avoid rural cottages, properties.”](https://globalnews.ca/news/6742303/coronavirus-ontario-cottages-rural-properties-covid-19/) (<https://globalnews.ca/news/6742303/coronavirus-ontario-cottages-rural-properties-covid-19/>) (Global News)

## Shelter in Place: Safety First

March 25, 2020 **update from FOCA:** If you are a snowbird, or otherwise returning from travel abroad, Health Canada expects you to self-isolate for 14 days. Information is available online here:

[Health Canada COVID-19 Information](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html)  
(<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>).

**What if you own property in two places in Ontario, and want to relocate from one to the other, such as to shelter in place at your cottage?** FOCA has heard from many members, partners, and municipal contacts over the past days about this issue. Many are concerned that any transiting increases the chance for spread of illness.

FOCA reminds members that our rural communities have reduced capacity to accommodate sudden changes in supply demands. Many of us wouldn't ordinarily open the cottage until nearer to the May long weekend. As we already know from our local grocery experiences, parts of the supply chain are under strain. Additionally, rural hospitals have limited capacity and resources, and you should consider where your health needs can best be met, in an emergency situation.

**If you do relocate to your waterfront residence (or are there already), FOCA suggests the following:**

- Connect with your lake association on social media (find many connections via [FOCA's Facebook page, here](https://www.facebook.com/foca.on.ca) (<https://www.facebook.com/foca.on.ca>)). As always, these are the people who know your waterfront area best!
- Provision yourself for several weeks (with food, drinks, gas, hardware supplies, prescriptions) before leaving your off-season community, so that you will not need to make stops along the way. This is not the time for our usual credo to "buy local" in cottage country. As you would do anywhere at this time, should you urgently need anything from a retailer or pharmacy you should call ahead to see if there are options for safe pickup or delivery.
- Continue to follow all the principles of social distancing at the cottage! Although cottage country is usually the place for relaxed rules, that cannot be the case anywhere for the foreseeable future. Cottages are often the gathering places for multiple

households in an extended family; for now, and possibly for some time to come, that could put everyone at risk.

- Develop an exit plan with immediate family, in case you develop any indications of illness while at your waterfront property.
- As the clock slows down on our usually-hectic schedules, use this time to enjoy nature, cook, read, sing, dance, nap and dream about dock-jumping time to come.

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