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# Housing Identified as Essential Service

The COVID-19 virus demonstrates how interconnected home building is with the community.

On March 26, the BC govt listed home construction as a “Non-Health Essential Service.” All construction must be carried out following the advice of the Provincial Health Officer.

The precautions include:

- There should be no more than 50 people in the same space;
- Employees should maintain a distance of 2 metres apart;
- Post signage limiting the number of occupants in elevators to four people at a time;
- Reduce in-person meetings and other gatherings and hold site meetings in open spaces or outside;
- Increase the number of handwashing stations and post signage that identifies their location;
- Maintain a list of employees currently working on sites and update the list daily;
- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at the end of each day including washrooms, shared offices, common tables, desks, light switches and door handles;
- Anyone with COVID-19 like symptoms such as sore

throat, fever, sneezing, or coughing must self-isolate at home for 14 days.

There are many reasons housing is an essential service. Our population continues to grow and people need a place to live. Also, thousands of families with contracts have sold and purchased homes and need to complete the process.

Housing’s essential service to the community is also evidenced by the govt’s moratorium on rental evictions, a freeze on rent increases, and a \$500 monthly subsidy for those in need.

Accompanying the rent freeze should be a freeze or cap on municipal taxes, DCC’s, permits and fees.

Now is also the time to remove the Speculation Tax, mostly paid by British Columbians, many of whom are out of work.

Successfully beating the COVID-19 challenge will require cooperation by industry, govt and the community.

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