

From: "Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 3/10/2023 5:59:14 PM
Subject: Avian influenza - Confidential

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to advise you of recent confidential reports from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of suspected avian influenza in a sample of skunks found within Vancouver and City of Richmond. We have been working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

While avian influenza in skunks is considered low risk to human health, there are always risks when people and pets come into contact with sick or dead wild animals, including skunks and birds.

We are following guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture, as they are the lead organization responsible. In particular, we are providing staff, who could come into contact with dead wildlife, with an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and reminding them of safety measures, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). We are also updating our protocols for removal and disposal of dead animals.

The Ministry will publicly share information on Monday, March 13 through a statement. We are preparing some guidance for the public on our website and for 3-1-1 teams accordingly. Please treat this information as confidential until that time.

We ask that you refer any media inquiries to media@vancouver.ca and we will triage a response with affected bodies based on jurisdiction.

Below are key messages for staff and the public for your reference:

- . The City of Vancouver is following the Ministry of Agriculture request to report and deal with any ill or dead skunks, to help prevent transmission
- . Our safety team is sharing updated guidance for safe handling of dead animals in a Standard Operating Procedure for handling dead animals with staff in Parks and Recreation, Engineering and Animal Services
- . City staff in operations who could come across sick or dead animals in their work are being briefed through a safety talk on how to

respond

- . If a member of the public encounters a dead skunk, they should leave the animal where it is, and contact the BC Wildlife Health Program at the Ministry of Forests at 250-751-7246
- . While influenza in skunks is considered to be a low risk to human health, there are always risks when people and pets come into contact with sick or dead wild animals, including skunks and birds
- . More information about the province's response to avian influenza can be found at avian influenza (AI) – [Province's avian influenza website](#) and [HealthLink BC's avian influenza site](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out to Magnus Enfeldt, Chief Safety Officer, or me.

Best,

Karen