

COVID-19 and Scottish Country Dancing in the Calgary Branch Area – March 15, 2020

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO). Although the current risk level is low in Alberta, the Alberta government is asking Albertans to take certain precautions in order to slow the spread of the virus and to protect those that are more vulnerable.

With these precautions in mind, the RSCDS Calgary Branch made some difficult decisions.

1. As announced previously, the **March 14 workshop and dance was cancelled. Refunds will be mailed in the next few weeks.** For more information email Freda at treasurer@rscdscalgary.org.
2. **Branch Board Beginner classes are cancelled until at least April 4th. These classes include Debby Henderson's class on Monday nights, and Sheree Iffla's class on Wednesday nights.**

Cancelling the March 14, 2020 workshop:

As of Thursday, March 12, 2020 the RSCDS Calgary Branch Board of Directors (the "Board") chose to cancel its workshop scheduled for March 14, 2020. We had 60 people registered for the workshop and 70 for the evening dance. On Thursday March 12th the Alberta government had recommended that any gatherings of more than 50 people be cancelled if (among other things):

- *event includes attendees from demographic groups at greater risk of severe disease, such as people 60 years of age and older and individuals with chronic medical conditions*
- *will attendees be participating in activities that promote transmission (e.g. singing, cheering, close physical contact such as when participating in contact sports, sharing food or beverages, buffet style meals)*

It was on these directives that the Board made its decision to cancel the workshop. We plan to reschedule the workshop in September. [If you registered for the workshop, you will receive a refund. Please email \[treasurer@rscdscalgary.org\]\(mailto:treasurer@rscdscalgary.org\) if you would like any further information on your workshop refund. Otherwise you can expect your refund to be mailed to you in the next few weeks.](#)

Cancelling Calgary Branch Beginner Classes at least until April 4th

The RSCDS Calgary Branch Board of Directors has chosen to cancel its two beginner classes taught by Debby Henderson on Monday nights, and Sheree Iffla on Wednesday nights at least until April 4th.

The following considerations were key to our making this decision:

- In the RSCDS Calgary Branch area most of our dancers are 60 years of age and older. This puts most of our membership in the group of people that are at a greater risk of severe symptoms if they get COVID-19.
- One of the key recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to avoid physical contact. This is next to impossible to do for Scottish Country Dancing. Most of our dance formations involve some form of physical contact - for example turns, Allemande holds, poussettes... the list goes on and on and on.

The health and safety of our membership is of the utmost importance. Although we know that Scottish Country Dancing is very good for our health and well-being in general, during the COVID-19 outbreak, other considerations must take precedent.

Other Scottish Country Dance Classes in the Calgary Area

All Scottish Country Dance classes in Calgary (other than the Branch classes above) are run by different groups around the city - for example the St. Giles Scottish Country Dance Group, the Cross and Thistle Scottish Country Dancers, and the Calgary Scottish Country Dancers Society (St. Barnabas) to name a few. (For a complete list please visit our website <http://www.rscdscalgary.org/classes-2>.) Each of these groups will be making their own assessments of whether or not to continue with classes. **Please contact your class teacher or group rep for more information.** The Branch will do its best to keep the membership informed of any class cancellations on its website and through email updates.

Things to consider as individual dancers:

In order to make the classes as safe as possible for all participants please consider the following:

From: Government of Alberta website.

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Prevent the spread: All Albertans are encouraged to take personal steps to help prevent the spread.

- *stay home and away from others if sick or in isolation*
- *wash hands often*
- *cover coughs and sneezes*
- *avoid touching face with unwashed hands*
- *avoid travel outside Canada*
- ***self-isolate for 14 days if returning from travel outside Canada or were exposed to COVID-19***

From: RSCDS HQ website

<https://www.rscds.org/blog/coronavirus>

Good practice for staying healthy

It may seem obvious, but a few precautions can go a long way to stop germs from spreading:

- *Wash your hands prior to and directly after attending a dance class*
- *Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze*
- *Put used tissues in the bin straight away*
- *Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available*
- *Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell and please do not attend a dance, a class or a committee meeting if you are feeling unwell.”*