



# Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement July 21, 2020

## Status of Pandemic

Worldwide COVID-19 continues to spread at alarming rates. Many jurisdictions struggle to contain the virus and others are having troubles with flare-ups as they try and deconfine.

Quebec appears to be having a particular challenge with their deconfinement plan which has permitted flare-ups and clusters of COVID-19 especially in establishments like bars and restaurants. The Government seems to have great difficulty in identifying the activity responsible for the source of flare-ups and then controlling that activity.

Within Eeyou Istchee, communities continue to do well, which is a testament to local leadership and more importantly to the people of Eeyou Istchee who respect and remain committed to physical distancing and precautionary measures.

With 10 cases recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 670 regular tests have been administered
- 650 returned negative
- 10 waiting for results

The Cree Health Board is doing more screening tests focusing on Health Workers, patients returning home and other high-risk groups such as elder's home workers. The current Screening results are:

- 763 screening tests
- 749 returned negative
- 14 awaiting results

## Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

We are currently in Phase 3 of the Deconfinement Plan which involves:

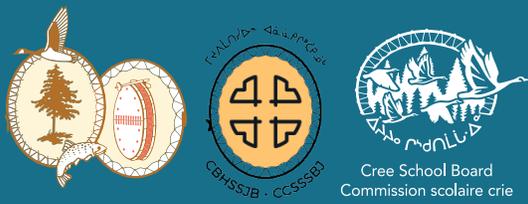
- Resuming activities for children, including daycares, schools, summer camps and all team sports
- Increasing size of indoor gatherings (5 households max.)
- Increasing size of outdoor gatherings (10 households max.)

The Cree Nation has been successful progressing through the different stages of deconfinement by being more conservative than other jurisdictions. There is a concern that as community members begin to travel further from their communities and measures are relaxed there is increased risk justifying the slowing down of the pace of deconfinement. The Cree leadership is therefore recommending the **postponement of Phase 4 by 2 weeks** or one cycle. There are no significant differences beyond the size of gatherings that are permitted between Phase 3 and Phase 4.

Despite the slowing down of deconfinements, it is recommended that church services be permitted with a maximum of 50 people and the appropriate social distancing and wearing of masks.

The Public Health team will continue to provide support to communities and organizations in deciding which services or activities to resume and how to do it safely. Organizations may send their request to: [18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca) or [covidrisk@cngov.ca](mailto:covidrisk@cngov.ca)

If you feel like you may need someone to talk to during these challenging times, please contact the Cree Health Board's **Psychosocial** Health Line: **1-833-632-4357**. The Cree Health Board would also like to inform people that specialists with a traditional approach to healing are also accessible through the same number.



## Travelling

**Region 8- Abitibi** continues to do well with no new cases since June 19th, 2020. Just because a region does not report cases does not mean that there is no risk, rather the principal that the farther you travel from your community will be true for some time to come. Things can change very quickly and regions tend to struggle to get things under control once there is a flare-up. For example **Region 2 - Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean** which had done so well for so long continues to struggle to get their COVID-19 cases under control. Since July 14th, 2020 there have been 13 new cases with 12 new cases being added this last weekend alone in **Region 2**.

### Therefore, for now, the Areas Representing a Risk are:

- Anywhere outside Eeyou Istchee, Nunavik, Region 10 - Nord du Quebec and **Region 8 - Abitibi (As of July 14th, 2020)**
- Any mine site
- Any forestry camp
- Any Hydro-Quebec site

Travelling to any of these areas will require self-isolation. There is a simple question that people can ask to determine whether or not the self-isolation requirement applies to them:

“In the last 14 days have you travelled....

- anywhere outside Eeyou Istchee, Nunavik, Region 10 - Nord du Quebec or **Region 8 - Abitibi?**
- to any mine site?
- to any forestry camp?
- to any Hydro-Quebec site?”

If at any point the answer is yes, then the individual must self-isolate.

It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine there will always be a risk associated with travelling. The farther you get from your house, your community, your region, the greater the risk is of contracting COVID-19. It is imperative that people remain cautious, no one can say that travelling to any other area is safe, all that we can try to determine is how much riskier it is.

Further, Cree travellers should exercise caution beyond what is permitted in other jurisdictions. For example, movie theaters, bars and sit-down restaurants are open in other jurisdictions and have been linked to a considerable increase in risk of outbreaks. Cree travellers are therefore recommended to avoid all sit-down restaurants, movie theaters or bars when visiting in other jurisdictions.

The Government of Quebec has made masks mandatory indoors in public places throughout Quebec, people are therefore cautioned that they should be prepared to comply when travelling to other jurisdictions.



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## Education

The Cree School Board is proud to announce the number of Secondary V graduates for 2020 had been revised to 173 graduates, which is a remarkable achievement considering the challenging year.

The Cree School Board is planning on the return to school for Thursday, August 27, 2020. The Cree School Board reassures the Cree Nation that teachers will be required to self-isolate and respect all local regulations. Their travel and arrival will be coordinated with local emergency management authorities.

There will be adaptations to class sizes, increased hygiene requirements, and distancing requirements. The Cree School Board is also developing more restrictive measures should the need arise. The measures will also be adapted to the context of each community. The Cree School Board intends to work closely with local emergency preparedness groups and continuously investigate measures to improve the security of teachers and students.

## Reliable Sources

People are advised to continue exercising caution on where they get their information in relation to COVID-19 and to keep in mind that the reliable sources of information remain:

- [eeyouistcheecovid19.org/](http://eeyouistcheecovid19.org/)
- [cngov.ca/covid-19/](http://cngov.ca/covid-19/)
- [creehealth.org](http://creehealth.org)
- [eeyoueducation.ca](http://eeyoueducation.ca)
- [quebec.ca/coronavirus](http://quebec.ca/coronavirus)
- [canada.ca/coronavirus](http://canada.ca/coronavirus)

## Eeyou Eenuu Police Force

The Eenuu Eeyou Police Force continue to operate at full capacity. The police force is working harder on prevention as they enforce all regular laws including the special COVID-19 laws and regulations. Officers are required to conduct all interventions while wearing a mask.