



Status of Pandemic

The challenge for the Cree Nation is trying to find ways to relieve pressure and the burdens that come with trying to protect our communities from COVID-19 without losing focus, this will require the continued coordinated effort of all leaders of the Cree Nation.

Worldwide, COVID-19 continues to spread. Many jurisdictions struggle to contain the virus and others are having troubles with flare-ups as they try and deconfine. This is very concerning as the world braces for a 2nd wave of COVID-19 which is already starting in some parts of the world. This means that these regions will never know relief or have a break from COVID-19 since the pandemic began.

In Quebec, the situation continues to improve but in the urban centre of Montreal and surrounding region there continues to be communal transmission.

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:

- 858 regular tests have been administered
- 843 returned negative
- 5 waiting for results

The Cree Health Board continues to make efforts to increase screening capacity 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:

- 1033 screening tests
- 1029 returned negative
- 4 awaiting results

Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

In Eeyou Istchee we remain in Phase 4 of the Deconfinement Plan. The cooperation and the respect of physical distancing and precautionary measures has allowed the Cree Nation to protect our Health care capacity and protect community members from COVID-19.

- Activities like weddings, graduations, etc. subject to the gathering size restrictions
- Indoor gatherings (50 people max.)
- Outdoor gatherings (150 people max.)

It is our respect for physical distancing of 2 metres and respecting other precautionary measures that allowed us to reach Phase 4, and it will be our continued respect for these measures that will allow us to stay in Phase 4 for as long as possible for the benefit of all community members.

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 or
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

The Cree Health Board will be making greater efforts to re-introduce more specialists into the communities. The Cree Health Board will be implementing strict pre-screening and monitoring of specialists prior to arriving in the community. Specialists will also be required to follow very strict precautionary measures and supplementary screening once they have arrived in the community. It will be much safer for Eeyou Istchee to have the critical health specialists come into the communities under strict supervision than to send great numbers of patients south to see needed specialists.

Neighboring regions to Eeyou Istchee continue to do well with no significant outbreaks since mid-July. In fact, most regions in Quebec have dropped to levels which represent a lower risk, unfortunately the same cannot be said for cities like Montreal or Ottawa.

Greater efforts are being made to monitor the status of COVID-19 in Ontario and there are a number of regions which are doing well, such as the North Bay, Timmins and Moosonee areas. Unfortunately, recent outbreaks in Sudbury and Ottawa make these areas too risky not to require self-isolation from travellers coming from Sudbury or Ottawa.

Stornoway which operates the Renard mine has invested significant resources and effort to secure testing equipment and testing capacity and implement a program for giving multiple tests to all workers so that we can verify the presence of COVID-19 on site. This will allow for the exemption of workers from the local mandatory self-isolation laws.

After evaluation of the **Areas Representing a Risk**, those individuals who have in the last 14 days travelled:

- anywhere outside Quebec, except for Porcupine and Temiskaming, which includes the municipalities of Timmins, Moosonee and North Bay;
- within Quebec to:
 - Region 6 – Montreal
 - Region 13 – Laval
 - Region 14 – Lanaudière
 - Region 15 – Laurentians
 - Region 16 – Montérégie
- to any mine site, please note:
 - Workers coming from the Windfall Mining Exploration Site by Osisko Mining Inc with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - Workers coming from the Renard Mine Site by Stornoway, as of September 8th, 2020 with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
- any forestry camp;
- any Hydro-Quebec site;

will be required to self-isolate for 14 days under the Local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.



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Travelling

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.

Testing

It is important to understand the limitations of the COVID-19 testing technology currently available. The current tests are most valid when the test result is positive, meaning that someone is infected with COVID-19. That is because the test is very specific, and false positive results are not very common. Unfortunately, even the best technology available is not very sensitive, which means that false negative results can be possible. This means up to a third of people who have no symptoms and obtain a negative test results could still be infected with COVID-19. The Cree Board of Health and Social Services will be working hard to increase our testing and screening capacity over the coming weeks. Unfortunately, local authorities need to be on the lookout for fraudulent or misleading letters from health care professionals that falsely assert in advance that a Cree worker does not have COVID-19. With multiple tests and close monitoring, it is impossible to confidently say that someone does not have COVID-19.

Education

Schools will start to reopen beginning on August 27th with staggered schedules to ensure that safety measures are properly implemented and followed.

Additional teaching positions have been approved and will ensure that class size restrictions can be met. There will also be an increase in janitorial, maintenance, and security positions for each school to ensure cleaning and safety protocols and measures are in place.

A live virtual Public Information Session on the return to school was held on Tuesday, August 18th and the recording and presentations are available on our website. In addition, there will be videos from each school available on the CSB website this week.

A Health & Safety guidebook has also been developed to help students and their families better understand our operating procedures and emergency plans. It covers Pre-school, Elementary, Secondary, and Adult Education and is available at www.eeyoueducation.ca/docs/pub/covid-19-response/2827-health-safety-guidebook/file. We recommend reviewing this guidebook before returning to school.

Congratulations to all 245 graduates! It has been heartening to see the many proud parents and grandparents as they celebrate their children's accomplishment. Despite the cloud of COVID-19, there are peaks of sunshine where we can celebrate. A huge thank you to the Cree School Board, commissioners, teachers, support staff, and everyone who ensured that our students could move forward!