



# Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement September 29, 2020

## Status of Pandemic

Since 1974 the most powerful tool of the Cree Nation has been its unity and the ability of leadership to come together, stand for each other and hold one another when needed. Since the arrival of COVID-19, this tradition of solidarity continues to serve and protect the Cree Nation. The coordination between leadership from the beginning on tri-weekly, bi-weekly and then weekly COVID-19 briefings where information is shared to make sure that they make decisions with the best available information has been very important. These briefings are supplemented with the support from the Cree Board of Health and Social and Services of James Bay, the Cree School Board and the Eeyou Eenuu Police Force. These meetings will continue so long as needed and with the lessons we have learned in the first wave we have additional tools to support the Cree leadership on these briefings and on a day-to-day basis when information can change and needs to be verified quickly.

The dedication and commitment of the local Public Security Officers has been key in implementing access measures and ensuring our communities remain the safest place in Quebec, a new committee is being established to ensure that these high valuable and effective human resources have the additional support that they need so that we can ensure that all communities have access to the most up-to-date information and assist in providing insight and advice to the leadership of the Cree Nation.

COVID-19 not only continues to spread worldwide and even continues to accelerate on how it is spreading. The spread affects poor and wealthy countries alike without discrimination. In Canada, the Maritimes continue to do better while other jurisdictions across Canada numbers continue to climb in Quebec, Ontario and now Western Canada. It is clear that the reason the Maritimes are doing so well is because similarly to the Cree Nation, they also have a strict self-isolation policy in place requiring 14-day self-isolation when entering to create a “bubble”.

As we see the Government of Quebec ramping up restrictions, changing the status of regions to “red” in reaction to climbing cases, the Cree Nation can continue to be confident that the maximum measures have been put in place to insulate the Cree Nation from the alarming trend of what we see in Southern Quebec and Ontario. The Cree Nation made incredible sacrifices in June and July with the implementation of the local Mandatory Self-Isolation laws. The reward is that we will be able to stay open longer, hopefully not even have to close services or businesses, and keep our schools open trying to give our children as normal experiences as possible during these truly challenging times.

## Testing in Eeyou Istchee

13 cases with 12 recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 1,134 regular tests have been administered
- 1,112 returned negative
- 9 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:

- 1,385 screening tests
- 1,371 returned negative
- 14 awaiting results



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## Travelling

Neighboring regions are being watched very closely for any increases in cases, changes in the ability of regions to manage outbreaks and their contact tracing capacity. The Cree Nation leadership was very proactive in assessing regions so even as we watch the news and see rising cases in the South, there is currently no need to change the assessment of regions. Close monitoring of the Abitibi and Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean regions show that those regions continue to do well in preventing COVID-19 from circulating in the communities. Northern Ontario is also closely being monitored and continues to do well having only sporadic cases at this time.

**Region 2 – Saguenay Lac St-Jean has been increasing with daily COVID-19 cases and there is concern with the region’s ability to ensure compliance with physical distancing and precautionary measures. For this reason, the status of risk for the region will be changing in the near future.**

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

- anywhere outside Quebec, except for the Ontario regions of Sudbury, Porcupine and Timiskaming, which includes the municipalities of Sudbury, Timmins, Moosonee and North Bay;
- within Quebec to:
  - Region 1 – Lower St-Lawrence – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM
  - **Region 2 – Saguenay Lac St-Jean – as of (Thursday) October 1st, 2020 at 11:59PM**
  - Region 3 – Quebec Capital
  - Region 4 – Mauricie and Centre du Québec - since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM
  - Region 5- Estrie
  - Region 6 – Montreal
  - Region 7 – Outaouais (Gatineau)
  - Region 9 – North Shore – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM
  - Region 11 – Gaspé and Magdalen Islands – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM
  - Region 12 – Chaudière-Appalaches – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM
  - Region 13 – Laval
  - Region 14 – Lanaudière
  - Region 15 – Laurentians
  - Region 16 – Montérégie
- any Hydro-Quebec site;
- to any mine site, please note:
  - Workers coming from the Windfall Mining Exploration Site of Osisko Mining Inc with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
  - Workers coming from the Renard Mine Site of Stornoway, with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
  - Workers coming from the Éléonore Mine Site of Newmont, as of October 5th, 2020 with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;





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## Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan Cont.

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. Any request for advice in regard to the Deconfinement Plan or request for advice on what activities and how they can be carried out during a particular phase of the Deconfinement Plan can continue to be sent to: [18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca) or [covidrisk@cngov.ca](mailto:covidrisk@cngov.ca).

A new committee composed of the Local Public Security Officers is being created to assist in the reception and harmonization of exemptions under the local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws, people are asked to bring all requests for exemption to your Local Public Security Officers so that the right information, recommendation can be brought to the request and the advisories are quickly and uniformly distributed. The new Committee will also be supported by the Public Health Department of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree Nation Government and other resources like the Eeyou Eenou Police Force.

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](tel: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.

## Education

A reminder for parents and students to fill out our mandatory Daily Student Health Check form on our website at [www.eeyoueducation.ca](http://www.eeyoueducation.ca). All students are required to fill out the form every day whether or not they are attending classes. You may use your smartphone to fill out the form that takes less than five minutes to complete.

Remember, if you're sick or have COVID symptoms, please stay home.

The Return to School Survey is collecting feedback from parents and students from all sectors. You may find our survey on our website at [www.eeyoueducation.ca](http://www.eeyoueducation.ca). Please complete it by noon on Thursday, October 1st.

Declaration Day is happening on September 30. All Cree School Board schools will send attendance numbers to the Ministry of Education. It is very important to have all students present in their classrooms.

On September 30, the Orange Shirt Day is happening across the country, and we are encouraging all to wear an Orange Shirt to show your support and honour to all children who attended Residential Schools in Canada.

To our teachers and staff, we will continue to work with the Cree Health Board to find ways to provide mental health support services to those who need it.

To our Community Education Administrators, Janitorial and Maintenance, we recognize your hard work and dedication since the beginning of the pandemic. You have ensured extra maintenance and cleaning required for opening our schools safely.

The survey for post-secondary students is now complete, and we have received over 350 respondents, with 55% of PSSS students deciding to continue their studies in their community.