



Status of Pandemic

Worldwide COVID-19 cases continue to rise. The knowledge of the virus continues to grow from week to week, and although there is discouraging news at times on the possibility of catching COVID-19 a second time we know that everything we learn about the virus ultimately brings us one step closer to defeating it. Southern jurisdictions in Quebec and Ontario continue to struggle to bring case numbers down. While the Northern jurisdictions in both provinces continue to do well keeping COVID-19 out.

The Cree Nation and the people of Eeyou Istchee made incredible sacrifices respecting physical distancing and other precautionary measures. The mandatory local self-isolation laws although very challenging to implement and imposing hardship for those that want to and need travel in and out of our communities have provided an incredible tool to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities. Although on rare occasions the Eeyou Eenuu Police Force have had to intervene in the enforcement of the local law, the vast majority of community members are actively complying with the law, even calling to ensure that they are properly listed on the official local registries even when it is for purely precautionary purposes. It is this level of commitment to protect one another that will ensure the Cree Nation gets through the COVID-19 pandemic. This level of commitment will help to ensure that we don't need to rely on Police forces or the embarrassing situation where someone's failure to respect the measure introduces COVID-19 in one of our communities is identified through contact tracing.

Testing in Eeyou Istchee

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

- 1,266 regular tests have been administered
- 1,243 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:

- 1,551 screening tests
- 1,547 returned negative
- 4 awaiting results

Managing Health Services

In the communities, services continue to be adapted to provide safe medical services and the Cree Health Board is making efforts to introduce more medical specialists into the communities. It will be much safer for Eeyou Istchee to have the critical health specialists come into the communities rather than high numbers of patients travelling to the South. The Specialists are respecting strict screening protocols, supervision and precautionary measures that includes the administration of multiple tests.

It is important to keep in mind that for the last seven months, the COVID-19 cases in Eeyou Istchee did not come from the medical professionals that come to our communities. It is therefore safe to go to the clinic and meet with specialists in our communities.



Travelling

The situation of our neighbouring regions has remained relatively stable in recent weeks despite the arrival of the second wave.

Despite constant unfounded rumours, Region 8 – Abitibi continues to do exceptionally well, quickly contact tracing and isolating sporadic cases as they appear. If the Public Health administration in the region continues to demonstrate this capacity, there is no reason to anticipate the reclassification of the risk status for this region.

Unfortunately, Region 2 – Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean continues to struggle having triple-digit numbers of COVID-19 in the last week.

Just like Abitibi the administrative regions in Northern Ontario of North Bay, Sudbury and Porcupine also have only sporadic cases within the last week.

Confirmation has also been received that contact tracing in regard to the recent outbreak of cases in Radisson is nearly complete and as reported earlier, thus far no community members have been identified as contracting COVID-19 and all visiting workers associated with the outbreak have been returned to their regions of residence. Once the contact tracing is complete there could be a reassessment of the risk status of Radisson.

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
 - > Region 2 – Saguenay Lac St-Jean
 - > Region 3 – Quebec Capital
 - > Region 4 – Mauricie and Centre du Québec
 - > Region 5 – Estrie
 - > Region 6 – Montreal
 - > Region 7 – Outaouais (Gatineau)
 - > Region 9 – North Shore
 - > Region 11 – Gaspé and Magdalen Islands
 - > Region 12 – Chaudière-Appalaches
 - > Region 13 – Laval
 - > Region 14 – Lanaudière
 - > Region 15 – Laurentians
 - > Region 16 – Montérégie



Travelling

- any Hydro-Quebec site;
 - › **Including the locality of Radisson, as of October 7th, 2020**
- 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, with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
- any forestry camp, please note:
 - › Workers coming from the Forestry Camp at km 105 on the James Bay Highway with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate effective immediately;

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

Therefore, people coming from Regions 8, 10 (except Radisson), 17 and 18 in Quebec and the regions Sudbury, Porcupine, Timiskaming and North Bay in Ontario DO NOT need to self-isolate under the local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.

It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine, there will always be a risk associated with travelling.

Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

The incredible sacrifice and discipline demonstrated by the Cree Nation over the summer in the development, implementation and compliance with precautionary measures including our local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws allows us to remain in Phase 4 of the Deconfinement Plan while other jurisdictions have to move into re-confinement:

- No masks for grade 4 and below unless the student or parents wish to wear a mask;
- Grade 5 and above masks are required in common areas but can be removed once seated.

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.)



Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

A special advisory has been developed to ensure that the children of Eeyou Istchee have the safest Halloween possible this year. Special recommendations are made to ensure children trick or treat in groups that keep them safe from monsters and viruses. Special recommendations are also being made to the homes that wish to distribute candy, recommending certain measures in handling prepackaged candy and the distribution outside the house to ensure the safest environment possible for the children. Many alternative activities to Halloween parties are also provided in the special advisory.

A new protocol has been developed and distributed to local Public Security Officers to take into consideration that the weather will not permit for outdoor funerals. Funerals will require large well-ventilated indoor spaces where the scheduling of ceremonies will need to permit respect for local self-isolation requirements for attendees.

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.

In anticipation of the Christmas holidays, community members are advised to continue relying on online shopping and local businesses to do what they can to secure inventories to meet local demand and needs. Community members are also asked to consider the designation of shoppers for multiple households to further limit the risks associated with Christmas shopping for Eeyou Istchee.

Finally, the Cree Nation COVID-19 Public Safety Committee is working on a protocol which would hopefully be available for November 17th, 2020 which could see a reduced self-isolation period of seven (7) days, for Cree School Board students returning home for the Christmas holiday. The protocol would need to be developed in close collaboration with the Cree Health Board and requires that all administrations work to increase the capacity of COVID-19 testing in the communities while reducing the demand on the testing during the concerned period.

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 regarding 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 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.