

# All Gatherings Are Advised to Cancel Effective Immediately

## News Type:

Advisories

**YELLOWKNIFE** 22 March 2020 – To limit the spread of COVID-19, the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) is advising all individuals and organizations that they should **cancel** all gatherings regardless of size or number of participants or whether they are held inside or outside.

This will include (but not limited to) the following events/groups:

- Organized outdoor and indoor events (jamborees, spring festivals, hamlet days, etc)
- Religious services/churches (including funerals and weddings)
- Recreational facilities/indoors (arenas, pools recreational centre, youth centre, gyms)
- Bingos/Chase the Ace
- Community centres

The CPHO is also recommending that the following businesses **be closed** as the nature of their operation will not allow them to have suitable distancing measures in place to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19:

- Tour Operators
- Bottle Depots
- Gyms and fitness centres
- Museums and Art galleries
- Bars and night clubs
- Theatres and movie theatres
- Buffet style restaurants
- Personal service establishments (barber, hair salons, massage, nail and other salons)

## Objective of Advice

The CPHO recommends social distancing of 2 metres to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing means limiting the amount of people you come into contact with, which lowers the risk of passing or catching the virus.

Organized gatherings (indoors or outside) and businesses where clients and workers cannot maintain the 2 metre distance separation are a significant source of spread of COVID-19.

Social distancing of more than two metres apart becomes challenging, healthy respiratory practices may not always be followed, and more bodies with more time near each other means more chance of spread of COVID-19.

Taking action to limit gatherings and these business operations will help protect all Northwest Territories residents — and especially the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

## Who Can I Contact For Advice?

If you're business or event or gathering type is not listed in above you can contact [environmental\\_health@gov.nt.ca](mailto:environmental_health@gov.nt.ca) to request advice. Please ensure you provide a phone number, community name and some brief details of your event or business in your request email.

The email address is monitored regularly from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday. Public health officials will get back to you with advice as soon as they can.

## Important Note

If you feel sick, you should not go to any gathering of any size — stay home.

If you develop fever, cough, or other flu-like symptoms during this time period, contact the following:

- Yellowknife: 867-767-9120
- Inuvik: 867-490-2225
- Fort Smith: 867-872-6219 or 867-872-6221
- Hay River: 867-874-7201 (8:30 to 16:30). After hours, please contact the Emergency Department at 867-874-8050.
- For all other communities, see <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/health-centres>.

They will talk with you about your symptoms, and advise you what to do next. **Do not go in without calling.**

**If you develop severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing call 9-1-1.**

## Implications for Businesses

Personal Services Establishments (massage, salons, barbers and tattoo parlors and piercers) should be closed until further notice as they cannot operate and provide for the 2 m separation required to be safe and they by nature require more time than a casual

time limited contact. It is recommended businesses that require clients and staff to have close contact (less than two meters) close at this time or take steps to limit how close persons may be to one another.

Essential services large retail stores (groceries, gas bars and convenience stores) can remain open if they can maintain 2m separations between persons within the facility. They should also strongly encourage employees and customers to keep a distance of two metres between each other, including in line-ups, wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content frequently.

Other essential businesses should wherever possible limit face to face meeting and contact of any kind. Banks, pharmacies, Liquor stores, Gas stations, restaurants and pubs serving food, and coffee shops should if possible operate with 2 m distance, increased hand washing or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.