

Community Update – August 19, 2020

Emerging Wisely Current State: Relaxing Phase 2 – Next Steps

NWT Public Health Emergency Extended Through September 1 as Cases in Southern Canada Continue to Grow

Minister of Health and Social Services Diane Thom has extended the territory-wide Public Health Emergency under the Northwest Territories' Public Health Act on the advice of Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) Dr. Kami Kandola.

The latest extension runs through September 1, 2020. The Public Health Emergency remains necessary in order to respond decisively to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Reintroduction is most likely to occur as a result of travel from locales with community transmission. The risk to the NWT remains significant as increases in cases in southern Canada continue to grow – particularly within our territory's closest provincial neighbours.

With self-isolation plans filed reaching more than 900 last week, travel to the territory by returning residents, and others coming to live, work, or study continue to grow. Additional entries to our territory include those exercising traditional harvesting rights and those servicing supply-chains – though with significant additional precautions when they are here.

We remain intimately connected to the rest of Canada, which means public health officials must consider these risks when planning and executing the territory's response.

The GNWT is reminding everyone that travel within the NWT is restricted upon arrival with limited exceptions. It is an offense to travel within the NWT without an exemption under the Public Health Orders. Everyone entering the NWT is required to self-isolate for 14 days in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River or Fort Smith with few exceptions – no matter how long your trip out of the territory is.

Self-isolation is the frontline of our COVID-19 defence. If you're required to self-isolate, do your part and stick to the self-isolation plan. Taking responsibility for ourselves is crucial. By keeping physical distance of two metres, keeping our circles and gatherings small, washing our hands, keeping our coughs and sneezes to ourselves, and wearing non-medical masks when it's difficult to keep physical distance will help keep everyone safer by preventing cases from becoming outbreaks.