



Dene Tha' First Nation  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM  
COVID-19

## COVID-19 CURRENT SITUATION UPDATE

### September 11, 2020

---

Dene Tha' First Nation Chief and Council and the Emergency Management Team (EMT) are working with Indigenous Services Canada, and the Alberta Region (ISC-AB) Medical Officers of Health to ensure the continued health and safety needs of DTFN members and residents are met during this difficult time, after receiving confirmation of our first confirmed case of COVID-19 in our community of Bushe River. We will have additional supports deployed for testing sites in Bushe River, Meander River and Chateh for any member that would like to be tested or may have been in contact with a confirmed positive case.

A news release was issued by DTFN Chief and Council and released to the DTFN members on September 9, 2020 (please refer to that release for a detailed update on the confirmed positive case of COVID-19).

As the cases continue to rise in the Mackenzie County, our Emergency Management Team are continuing efforts in response to COVID-19 and ensuring the DTFN members are receiving continued supports for COVID-19 testing, essential services, education on COVID-19, and the safe reopening of services and schools. We ask all our members and residents to continue helping us by practicing the Public Health Measures provided by Alberta Health Services, the risk of infection remains in our region and in our communities, please remain alert and cautious when leaving the community; consider only traveling out for essential food and supplies.

The DTFN C&C and EMT will continue monitoring the COVID-19 case in Bushe River in conjunction with the ISC-AB Health Team, and should the situation change to more cases; a State of Local Emergency (S.O.L.E.) will be reinstated to implement safety measures again for our communities. The EMT will keep the Chief and Council apprised of the COVID-19 situation and cases and will provide recommendations to reinstate S.O.L.E. as required.

Alberta Public Health Measures continue in Alberta as there are “hot spots” areas of COVID-19 within the province, the Mackenzie County continues to be a “watch area” for COVID-19.

There are active COVID-19 cases in nearby First Nations. We encourage all members and residents to stay home as much as possible.

The Emergency Management Team are continuing their weekly team updates and meetings; the team will respond to any potential contact that is self disclosed or as informed by the Health team. The respective community will respond by activating their emergency plans as quickly as possible to mitigate the COVID-19 situation. Part of this mitigation is responding as a “Precautionary Measure” meaning we will take steps even if a case isn’t confirmed yet and lockdown the area in the community affected to avoid any further contacts or spread until deemed safe. We ask for community support in understanding when this measure is taken and not to assume that there is a case or cases, the only way this can be determined is by COVID-19 testing, Our team will do what they can to avoid any spread or contact and contain an area for the safety of all members and residents. We encourage everyone not to make judgement, criticize or demean the person or family when these safety measures are in place; these measures are done to protect everyone even if the situation outcome is a negative COVID-19 case. Please be kind and understanding of one another while we get through these difficult times. We, as Dene people, have always been kind, considerate, loving, and caring people. It is in our blood and has been passed down from our ancestors. Let’s allow this compassion to shine through each one of us during this sad and devastating pandemic situation.

There is an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Administrator on call from September 6, 2020 to October 31, 2020 that members can call if you should have questions, concerns, or require more information about COVID-19. The number to call is **1-780-285-0084**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

- **Local Radio Station** – daily announcements in Dene and English are available Monday to Friday 1:00 – 5:00 PM. Please tune in daily for updates from Chief and Council, Emergency Management Team, Health News and Updates, Educational Sessions
- **Health Educators for COVID-19 ongoing awareness** – as of September 14, 2020 there will be Health Educator Units (these units are not security personnel) situated at entry points in Chateh, Meander River and Bushe River with assigned staff that will be distributing information on ways to live safely with COVID-19, distributing health kits that contain disposable masks, gloves, sanitizers and any additional updates , information and educational material that will assist the team with getting information out as quickly as possible to our members and residents. We ask that you kindly take the time to stop in with them and ask for information or health kits. We are hoping this approach will be well accepted by our members/residents as we do what we can to keep everyone informed with ways to live safely with COVID-19.

- **Disposable mask and/or masks.** We encourage everyone to use disposable masks or a homemade mask when you are entering a business or office in the DTFN or in our neighbouring communities or towns, where you cannot safely keep your 6 feet distance. A reminder that some businesses have mandatory masking in place before you are allowed entry; please respect these businesses and service areas. Masking up is one of the ways that you are caring for and protecting one another....***When I wear a mask, I am protecting YOU, when you wear a mask you are protecting ME.***
- **#DTFN STRONG** – Continue practicing all safety measures provided by Alberta Health Services. Together we will get through this. As a homeowner you have the right to refuse visitors to your home and this is encouraged due to the rising cases within the Mackenzie County and neighbouring communities.
- **COVID- 19 ZONES OR HOTSPOTS** - Anyone who has been in an AHS “watch area” zone or “hot spots” for COVID-19 are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 by reaching out to the on-call number or to your community Health Services to arrange for testing. You are advised to isolate during the waiting period of test results. For more information please visit the website at: [www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans](http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans)
- **Mass Gatherings Restriction** - Due to the increase in cases within the Mackenzie County, neighbouring First Nation communities and the recent confirmed COVID-19 case in DTFN. The EMT are advising that all large group gatherings in Dene Tha’ communities be stopped, to help us prevent or stop the spread of the virus. Mass gatherings increase the risk to members and residents. Listed below are not recommended until such time it is safe to do so:
  - Hand games
  - Indoor Bingos
  - Poker games
  - Tea dances
- **Intercommunity Travel Restriction** - It is strongly advised that there be **NO Intercommunity travel** until it can be determined safe; this practice will help us to reduce the risk of transmission and spread of the virus.
- **If you are not feeling well, feeling ill, or feeling sick** - you are encouraged to get tested and isolate at home until you have received test results or symptoms resolve which ever is longer. Remember to stay home if you are starting to feel sick or have gotten sick. Do not go to work, school, or go out in public.
- **Who can be tested?**
  - Any person who wants to be tested can now be tested, even if they do not have any symptoms.
  - The following groups will continue to receive priority for testing:
    - Any person showing any symptom of COVID-19
    - All close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases

- All workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites
  - All workers and residents at long-term care and level 4 supportive living facilities.
  - All patients admitted to continuing care or transferred between continuing care and hospital settings.
- **COVID-19 Symptoms** – You should get tested if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. If you have any of these symptoms you are **legally required to isolate for at least 10 days** from the start of your symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer:
  - Fever
  - Cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough)
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening)
  - Runny nose
  - Sore throat
- **If you have any of these other symptoms - Stay home and minimize your contact with others until your symptoms resolve:**
  - Chills, painful swallowing, stuffy nose, headache, muscle or joint aches, feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion, gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite), loss of sense of smell or taste, conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye
- **School Reopening Updates**
  - The school year has begun SAFELY in our communities for K-12.
  - Headstart in Chateh and Meander will begin on September 21.
  - Attending students are using their PPE, and those who are refusing to follow protocol are either being taken home or their parents are contacted. There is no room for thinking this pandemic is a joke. Safety must be maintained for all students and staff.
  - Procedures in all schools are being fine-tuned to make school as safe as possible.
  - All staff at Dene Thá education staff continue to be COVID-tested every 2 weeks to help ensure they are providing a safe environment for their students.
  - Learn-at-home programs are currently being set up in all schools.
  - Please inform your child’s school if they have any medical conditions or allergies.
  - Please keep your child home if they are sick.
  - Please offer suggestions to help the schools through this new territory!
  - **Please go through the checklist each morning with your child before sending them to school.**

## **EOC ADMINISTRATOR ON-CALL**

- **September 6, 2020 to October 31, 2020** the number to call with any questions and/or concerns or information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic is **1-780-285-0084**
- Any agency or company that are reporting for work in any of our communities are still required to report to the on-call number. They are required to have clearance of COVID-19 meeting AHS criteria by their agency, or company. Written clearance on official letterhead of the agency or company is required prior to entry into any of the DTFN communities.

## **DTFN OFFICE CLOSURES**

- All offices remain closed to the public until October 2, 2020
- If all is well by October 5, 2020, a decision will be made to re-open our Nation Offices following all safety measures and protocol as approved for DTFN Health & Safety Manual for COVID-19

## **STAYING HEALTHY AND SAFE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Core personal public health measures is the “new normal” to maximize our ability as a society to control the spread of the virus in the long-term. The following core personal public health practices are fundamental, and should continue throughout all steps of the COVID-19:

- **Staying informed, being prepared, and following public health advice**
- **Practicing good hygiene and other infection prevention and control measures (hand hygiene, avoid touching face, respiratory etiquette - coughing into your arm, or tissue that is thrown out immediately after, disinfect frequently touched surfaces). Clean hands with hand sanitizer when on the go.**
- **Maintaining physical distancing as much as possible when outside of the home (i.e. from non-household members). Keep at least two metres or 6 feet distance.**
- **Increasing environmental cleaning of one’s personal environment**
- **Staying at home and away from others if feeling ill or symptomatic (i.e. not going to school/work and following public health advice)**
- **Staying at home as much as possible if at high risk of severe illness**
- **Wearing a medical mask if available, otherwise a non-medical mask (NMM) or face covering if experiencing symptoms and required to be in close contact with others (i.e. going to access medical care)**
- **Considering the use of mask in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained**
- **Reducing personal non-essential travel. Limit the number of times you need to leave the house for errands.**

Thank you,  
Dene Tha' First Nation – Chief & Council and Emergency Management Team

**Don't get it, Don't bring it, Don't spread it**  
**Stay Safe & Stay Healthy**  
**#DTFN STRONG**