



Dene Tha' First Nation

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

COVID-19

COVID-19 CURRENT SITUATION UPDATE RELEASE

November 16, 2020

Dene Tha' First Nation Chief and Council and the Emergency Management Team (EMT) are continuing with ongoing efforts in response to COVID-19 and second wave of COVID-19 that has now reached Western Canada including Alberta. The EMT have their rapid response plans in place to ensure the safety of all its members and residents to respond as effectively and efficiently as possible. During the second wave we want to assure our members and residents that everyone will have continued supports for COVID-19 testing based on the Alberta targeted testing method (meaning: you can be tested if you have symptoms of COVID or have been in contact with a confirmed case). All essential services, education and awareness on COVID-19 and Public Health Measures will continue during the pandemic. During these challenging times of the second wave, we plead with 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, don't let your guard down to COVID-19 especially staying cautious when leaving the community; consider only traveling out for essential food and supplies and remember to always wash your hands and/or sanitize, mask up wherever you go and keep physical distance of 6 feet. Alberta Public Health Measures have new targeted restrictions introduced as of November 13, 2020, these targeted measures is for a two-week period from November 13 – 27, 2020 in areas of Alberta such as Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Fort McMurray. These restrictions are to help all Albertans maintain the health and safety during the pandemic. The temporary measures have been selected to address strategic areas in order to help bend the curve to support the health care system, keep schools open and protect vulnerable Albertans. Go to www.alberta.ca for additional information on the Public Health Measures. Please support our efforts to keep all our members and residents safe and stay home as much as possible. We need everyone's help right now; you are one BIG PART of the SOLUTION during this pandemic.

¹ **Resource Information from the Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health – Information Bulletin**
Alberta, including many First Nation communities, continues to see a troubling increase in the number of cases of COVID-19. The number of active cases on reserve is the highest they have been since the start of the pandemic. Many new cases are linked to social gatherings (e.g. birthday parties; non-essential travel), and community events (e.g. in-person band meetings; wakes). Today’s confirmed cases are reflective of exposures that happened within the last 2 weeks, which means we have an opportunity today to impact case numbers for tomorrow. If we align with provincial public health measures right now, today, we can change this concerning trend. Key public health measures continue to be limiting social gatherings; organizing virtual meetings; staying home when unwell; limiting non-essential travel; and using a mask when social distancing is not possible. Diligently working together, applying these public health measures, and heeding public health advice today, will see ourselves, our families and our communities stay safe tomorrow.

We are continuing monitoring COVID-19 cases within the Mackenzie County, within our communities and surrounding communities. Our Emergency Management Team will respond to any potential contacts and activate emergency plans as quickly as possible to mitigate the COVID-19 situation. The DTFN C&C and EMT will continue monitoring COVID-19, and should the situation change; a State of Local Emergency (S.O.L.E.) will be reinstated to implement safety measures again for our communities that will include additional restrictions. The EMT will keep the Chief and Council apprised of the COVID-19 situation. Should the EMT deem it necessary for a State of Local Emergency (S.O.L.E.) to be called; the EMT will notify the Chief and Council to convene an emergency meeting to apprise the governance team of the rising concerns and to review the recommendations as to why a S.O.L.E. may be needed.

The Emergency Management Team will activate its rapid response emergency plans during the second wave if the need arises; even as a Precautionary Measure. This is to ensure that we are taking steps to stop the spread of COVID-19 especially, to limit or stop the spread of infections with members and/or other communities. The EMT is asking for community support and understand when these measures are being taken; the measures being done will be to protect everyone. 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. Being kind and understanding during such challenging times and help one another to get through it safely. Encourage your family and friends to follow the Public Health Measures, when we all follow the health guidelines we are saying “NO TO COVID-19”, it is up to each one of us to stop COVID-19.

There is an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Administrator on call from November 1, 2020 to January 2, 2021 that members can call if you should have questions, concerns, or require

¹ **Novel coronavirus (COVID-19): Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 13, 2020**

more information about COVID-19 updates. The number to call is **1-780-285-0084** regarding COVID-19

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPDATES AND ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS/MEASURES NECESSARY DURING SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19:

- **Mass Gatherings Restriction** (remains in place for DTFN; Strongly Recommended Measure) – New gathering limits for DTFN as an additional safety measure, to help us prevent or stop the spread of the virus. Mass gatherings increase the risk to members and residents.
 - **Stop** holding social gatherings in private homes or outside your community. This includes holding indoor bingo, poker games, hand games
 - 15-person limit on indoor and outdoor social and family
 - 50-person limit on outside wedding ceremonies and funeral services; **indoor events are still limited to 15.**
 - Faith-based gatherings limited to 1/3 capacity
 - Limit of 3 cohorts: your core household, your school, and one other cohort.
²A COVID-19 cohort – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe quads, is a small group of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 metres apart. A person in a cohort should avoid close contact with people outside the cohort. Keeping the same people together, instead of mixing and mingling:
 - *Helps reduce the chances of getting sick*
 - *Makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get sick*
 - *You should only belong to one core cohort. It is safest limit the number of other cohorts you belong to reduce the risk of getting sick or spreading COVID-19*
- **Intercommunity Travel Restriction** (remains in place for DTFN; Strongly Recommended Measure) - 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. Reminder: the virus doesn't move, it's the people that move it.
- **COVID-19 Core Symptoms** – If you have any of these core symptoms, you **need to isolate for at least 10 days** from the start of your symptoms or until they are gone, whichever is longer, or until you test negative for COVID-19.

Adults over 18

Cough
Fever
Shortness of breath
Runny nose
Sore throat

Children under 18

Cough
Fever
Shortness of breath
Loss of sense of taste or smell

² www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta – symptoms and testing/cohort groups

- **Other Symptoms:**

Adults over 18 - Any symptom: Stay home and limit contact with others until symptoms are gone. Testing is recommended:

- Stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell or fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of smell or taste, conjunctivitis (also known as pink eye)

Children under 18

1 symptom: Stay home for 24 hours, get tested if symptoms don't improve.

Two or more symptoms: Get tested and stay home until well or test is negative.

- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell or fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite
- Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye

- **Who can be tested? COVID-19 Testing - Continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.** If you have symptoms, please stay home, and book a testing appointment by calling Health Link 811 or calling your local clinics in each community. Alberta has revised its **targeted COVID-19 testing**, pausing general asymptomatic testing, to further reduce testing wait times and speed access to results. Priority testing is now available to:

- Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to 3rd bullet for COVID-19 symptoms)
- All close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
- Anyone linked to a known outbreak

- **How to get tested**

- Book a test - If you have symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19, you **must** stay home and book your test online with AHS assessment tool or call Health Link 811, or by contacting your local Health Centre in Chateh, Meander River or Bushe River.

- Albertans who don't have symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 should speak with their health-care provider if they have concerns about their health.
- **If you are not feeling well, feeling ill, or feeling sick** - 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.
- **Help prevent the spread** - Download and use the [ABTraceTogether contact tracing app](#) when out in public. This voluntary app helps let you know if you've been exposed to COVID-19 – or if you've exposed others – while protecting your privacy.
- **Local Radio Station Continues during the Pandemic** – Daily announcements in Dene and English will continue to be 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
- **#DTFN STRONG** – Continue practicing all safety measures provided by Alberta Health Services, this includes the targeted restrictions announced on November 13, 2020. Together we will get through this. As a homeowner you have the right to refuse visitors to your home and this is encouraged. The EMT has many useful resources available such as up to date COVID-19 statistics and information, posters, pamphlets, health kits available from Health Educators (masks, gloves, sanitizers), education material. Please contact the on-call administrator number, DEM, or Deputy DEMs for COVID-19 or any EMT member or call your local offices.
- **DTFN ADMINISTRATION UPDATES:**
 - **Mandatory Mask in effect for all nation offices**
Masks are now mandatory in all offices in DTFN. You will be asked to mask up upon entering any office, if you do not have a mask one will be made available to you.
 - **COVID-19 Safety Officer** has been recruited to assist the EMT and Administration with safety measures for each office and safe reopening of offices to public.
 - **COVID-19 Assessors** are in place at each office; they are assigned to do COVID-19 screening and assessment, temperature check, sanitizing and monitor traffic in each office.
 - **All essential services** are continuing for its nation members/residents. If you require essential services, please contact your local band office in each community.
 - **Programming during COVID-19** pandemic required adjusting and remains in effect until further notice. DTFN implemented restrictions on travel support in attempts to lessen the transition of COVID-19 into our communities, this includes assisting members to travel into the community from infected areas. This restriction will remain in effect until further notice. Thank you for your understanding

- **DTFN office closures** - All offices remain closed to the public until further notice. More information will be posted and shared once it has been determined it is safe to reopen the nation offices.
- **Mail Slots** are now available at each local band offices to address the offices being closed and members/staff that need to drop off mail for employees.
- **Disposable mask and/or masks.** You are encouraged 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 this now includes all nation offices; 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.***
- **EOC ADMINISTRATOR ON-CALL**
 - **November 1, 2020 to January 2, 2021** the number to call with any questions and/or concerns or information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic is **1-780-285-0084**
 - **Company/Industry Restrictions during COVID-19 Pandemic** (remains in place for DTFN) - 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 screening 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 and forwarded to the DEM for COVID-19.
 - **Restrictions during COVID-19 Pandemic - NON-MEMBERS or NON-RESIDENTS** are not allowed entry due to COVID-19 restrictions, for additional information and/or questions please call the on-call number **1-780-285-0084**

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:

Following these steps will help you and your families stay healthy and safe during the pandemic.

- Staying informed, being prepared, and following public health advice
- Practicing good hygiene and other infection prevention and control measures (frequent hand washing, 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

Sources cited:

1 - Novel coronavirus (COVID-19): Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 13, 2020

2 - www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta – symptoms and testing/cohort groups