

COVID-19 Facebook live update: November 24, 2020

>> Pat: Good morning.

I'm Pat Living with the Department of Health and social services and moderator for the COVID-19 update for Tuesday, November 24th.

We're joined by the Yukon premier, the honourable Sandy Silver and the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of health, Dr Brendan Hanley.

Our sign language interpreter Mary Tiessen and Andre Bourcier from French language services directorate are also with us.

Following our speakers we will go to the full answer questions from reporters.

We will call you by name and you will each have two questions.

Before we begin with our speakers I would like to verify everyone can hear us.

If any reporters are having a problem, please e-mail ecoinfo@gov.yk.ca.

Premier Silver?

>> Thank you, Pat.

Good morning everybody and thanks again for joining us here in the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün first nation and the Taa'an Kwächän Council.

I would like to start today as I have many days by thanking Yukoners for their continuing practice of the Safe Six.

And for the sacrifices they are making.

To keep us all save.

Yesterday we announced new COVID-19 cases in the territory which brings our total case count to 38.

We also issued a public notification for various locations in Whitehorse over the past several days.

I would like to quickly review what a public notification means so that we or all clear on why these notifications are issued.

We issue possible exposure locations so that anyone who was at that location at that time knows to monitor for symptoms.

It is very likely that the businesses are other facilities identified have been following the rules, in public notification is not intended to suggest that there is any danger at those locations, nor is it intended to shame anyone who was at those locations.

Please remember that the purpose of notifications is to help you know a few have been exposed.

A few were at one of those locations, please monitor for symptoms.

Anyone who has symptoms should solve isolate, take the online self-assessment, and also called 811 and arrange for testing at the COVID-19 testing and assessment centre at 867-393-3083 or through the rural community Health centre.

We must stay vigilant and calm.

Our health system is well prepared to deal with COVID-19 cases in the territory including our capacity for testing in contact tracing.

We have added an additional temporary testing space beside Centennial motors on the Alaska Highway across from the airport.

Yukoners can go there if they require a test.

It is a drive-through testing spot so that you can stay in your vehicle while being tested.

Over the last seven days, we have seen Yukon's total case count increase.

It is accurate to say that we are in our second wave.

Because of this rapid increase in cases and on the recommendations of Doctor Hanley, we are making masks mandatory.

As of December first, it will be mandatory to wear a nonmedical mask and all indoor public spaces.

This will extend to all Yukoners over the age of two with very limited exceptions.

Following the Safe Six, with the addition of wearing a mask is the best thing you can do to continue to curb the spread of this disease.

The Safe Six just got a plus one.

Make no mistake, we must all take these precautions now so that we do not see cases increase exponentially and rapidly throughout the territory.

As I saw last week, we are at a turning point.

It is time to reset our behaviours and take extra precautions.

We must renew our commitment to practising the Safe Six.

Limiting indoor gatherings to ten people.

Keeping distance, staying two metres away from people outside of her household level.

Washing your hands frequently.

It is also a good idea to sanitize shared surfaces regularly as well.

Travel respectfully if you're leaving your home community.

Self isolate if required, including if you have just arrived in the territory or are returning to the territory.

Monitor your symptoms, and stay home if you're feeling ill.

I think we are all very sensitive to symptoms these days.

Be careful, stay home if you're feeling any COVID-19 symptoms at all.

We are all in this situation together, but we have to control what we do ourselves.

The Safe Six are things we can do individually to protect ourselves and our communities.

Last week, we laid another charge under the civil emergency measures act for failure to self isolate.

This brings the total number of charges under CEMA to 26.

As I have said before, self isolating is not a suggestion.

It is not something you can choose to ignore if it is inconvenient.

Self isolation requirements are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our territory, and you must take them all seriously.

When he failed to solve isolate you but your friends, your neighbours, and your colleagues and follow Yukoners at risk.

Please do what you can to support each other, including those who need to self isolate.

Whether it is picking up groceries or other supplies, or dropping off meals.

These are challenging times, and we need to help each other so that we continue to stay safe and healthy.

Another thing that you can do is to check in on your own social bubble to make sure that it has not grown bigger than it should.

Social bubbles should not be any more than 15 people and even then, indoor gatherings should be limited to ten people.

I know that this isn't easy, but I also know it is incredibly important.

We all have our role to play to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our territory.

We also each have a role to play in minimizing the spread of misinformation as well.

It is vital to be properly informed about what is happening in our territory and what we can do individually to keep Yukoners safe.

I have talked about rumours before but it bears repeating.

Rumours can spread very quickly and can cause unnecessary panic, distressed, and resentment.

Again, this is not what we need and it doesn't help us keep each other safe.

I encourage all Yukoners to stay informed about COVID-19 and to do that, accurate, up-to-date information is also -- always available on Yukon.ca.

This is there so that you can find out about active cases and any risk to the public.

We will continue to share information to keep you informed about what is happening in the territory.

If you aren't sure -- if you're unsure again, please check Yukon.ca.

These weekly briefings are also an important source of accurate information, so thank you again for tuning into day as you do each week.

Last week, we ended the mobility bubble with BC and the other territories.

I know that this has caused stress for individuals and for businesses who now have to change their plans.

The requirement for all individuals entering the territory to once again self isolate for 14 days can also have an impact on work.

Our government has paid sick leave rebate program for employers, including those who are self-employed and affected by COVID-19.

We also have relief programs for Yukon businesses and essential workers who may need support as they are dealing with the pandemic.

You can apply for these supports online at Yukon.ca, or by reaching out to the team at economic development.

The Yukon government is here to support you through these very challenging times.

Our government and the infallible team of public servants who are working so hard to keep services and supports available for Yukoners is still working incredibly hard.

This includes the amazing team of educators as well as school-based and central administration staff who are keeping Yukon schools open.

A big thank you to all the folks in the education team including the janitors, the bus drivers, the folks clearing the snow, the administrative support.

It truly does take a whole community.

There are so many people contributing to this effort.

My most simply -- sincere thank you to everybody.

The health and safety of our students is maintained as a number 1 priority as we continue to move this school year.

I would like to think a moment again to thank teachers and school administrators for their incredible hard work and dedication during this extremely stressful and unusual year.

Thank you.

I want to thank the students who have been so flexible and adaptive over the past few months as we work hard to keep them safe.

I appreciate that there are some questions about how our education system would respond, if there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools.

School operation plans are unique to each and every school.

They are prepared by the school community with the guidance of the office of the Chief Medical Officer of health and support from the education Department.

These operational plans also cover how schools will respond if staff or students develop symptoms of COVID-19.

If there is a confirmed case, the Yukon communicable disease Centre, YCDC, will identify and directly notify anyone who has been in close contact with that case.

They will provide direction on who should stay home and self isolate.

A confirmed case will not necessarily mean a school will close.

YCDC will provide direction on who needs to stay home and self isolate, which may include specific classes or groups of students.

YCDC will also determine who needs to be notified within the school community while still ensuring the privacy and security of personal health information.

YCDC will notify parents directly if their child has been exposed, as well as school administrators on a confidential basis.

The school administration does not notify other students, staff, or other families.

YCDC will.

Again, the best thing we can do as individuals, whether students are general population, is to practice the Safe Six plus one.

Finally, I would like to take some time today on today's update to thank Yukoners.

Thank you for those who are working every day on the front lines.

Because of you, Yukoners can still buy food, they can get their mail, they can enjoy their favourite sport, they can have a delicious dinner at a local restaurant.

Yukoners can still get medical care, dental work, haircuts.

We are able to shop at the many fantastic local shops and craft markets recently opened for holiday shopping and of the same time, please keep in mind that many local businesses have adapted to COVID realities.

Many stores and restaurants now offer online shopping and curbside pickup so that you can shop from home.

These and other creative solutions are helping Yukoners limit their times and stores, to buy local, and also keep each other safe.

Thank you to these businesses for adopting and for keeping Yukoners safe.

It remains important to support local businesses, now more than ever.

But please do so safely by following the Safe Six in by wearing a mask.

The work that you're all doing, Yukoners, is so important.

So I thank you, the business owners, and everyone in the community to keeping these shops open.

We have come so far yet we still have so far to go.

Please again be extra patient with each other, be kind, take care of one another like you do, Yukoners.

This is a stressful and uncertain time for all of us, and everyone is managing it differently.

Practising the Safe Six and wearing a mask, not just for yourself but for your neighbours, your friends, your colleagues, for your Yukoners.

Be vigilant and we can keep Yukon in a situation with low COVID-19 cases.

By being kind and supporting each other, again Yukoners, we will get through this.

I will now pass things off to Dr Hanley to share more information about our current situation.

Thank you very much.

>> Pat: Thank you, Premier Silver.

Dr Hanley?

>> Thank you, premier.

And thank you for all your comments and thank you for all your thank youse.

And I think, just the broad range of people the premier was thanking, I noted public servants, educators and students, people coming forward for testing, business and business owners, and it just reflects how the pandemic solution is a communities solution.

And that we are all part of the solution.

The other elements I really noticed again is how we are at a turning point, and how many turning points we have had in this pandemic.

Here is yet another turning point, towards a pathway where we know there will be an end, there will be a solution.

Something that we will get through.

But we need to start by acknowledging how stressful and emotionally draining these last few days have been for all of us.

We saw significant change unfold before us with lightning speed, that has left many of us still taking the time to process.

We had a number of confirmed cases that have left many people anxious to know what was happening.

And last week, only last week the premier and I noted that Canada second wave was likely to hit Yukon as well.

In many ways, it was a matter of time until this second wave in Canada affected us.

But control of this pandemic is still within reach and we must focus our efforts on the goal of keeping COVID to a minimum.

Yesterday, I spent some time explaining where we were with the cases.

Today I will give a brief update and then move onto some other themes.

As the premier said, as of this morning we have a confirmed total of 38 cases.

Bringing the territory's number of active cases to 14, plus the two probable cases I described yesterday.

I will tell you that one of those probable cases will be converted into case 39 most likely later today.

There will be no surprises if there is an update to case 39.

It is one of our two probable cases that we are expecting confirmation on in testing.

The most recent cases, 32 to 38, are all self isolating at home and doing well.

As the premier mention, there have been additional public exposures and we have posted notifications.

I will just go over them quickly.

In Whitehorse, Canadian Tire.

And the independent grocery.

November 17th.

The Starbucks between November 12th and 18th, from opening to closing times.

Tony's restaurant at the sky hotel, on November 14th, 5:00 PM until closing.

And the general store in Dawson city for the day of November 15th.

There were also flight notices posted, and Aaron North has graciously circulated these postings on their website.

These cover a number of different days as well.

Cell again, if you're experiencing any symptoms and you've been at these locations, please arrange for testing or even drop in at the drive-through testing centre located at the Centennial motors on the Alaska Highway across from the airport.

As the premier said, because of public exposure notices issued it is really giving that extra alert.

It is just saying there was a potential for transmission within the particular setting.

It doesn't say anything about the setting itself except that it is a reminder that there is a possibility there may have been exposure in that setting for the times posted.

And it is issued to notify Yukoners to self monitor for symptoms if they have been at those locations during a time that it may have overlapped with an individual who has tested positive.

So when you do see you have been in one of these places, you lay low, you reduce the public outings, and you self monitor.

But that doesn't mean you have to go into self isolation.

I think it might be useful to review when you should go into self isolation.

That is when you have symptoms.

And if you have had a test and you're waiting for results of the test.

If you have returned to Yukon from travel outside the territory within the past 14 days or if you have been instructed to self isolate, by the testing and assessment centre, by YCDC, by community nursing, or by your healthcare provider.

Then again, as the premier said, when there is a public notification this does not mean the business needs to close down either.

If there is a positive case connected to an establishment, Yukon communicable disease control will determine what contacts need to stay home and self isolate and what the next steps are for a business.

In the meantime, please be patient.

Please don't vilify or avoid businesses that don't shut down.

If they remain open and is it -- it is because there is little to no risk of doing so.

A little more on the cases in the outbreak.

After evaluating the new cases that have been confirmed, we are continuing with the declaration of two outbreaks.

And outbreak is not a cause for panic.

An outbreak really means a sudden increase in cases that we have been seeing.

And it does mean that we are also putting extra time and resources to managing the outbreak.

So the outbreaks are as follows.

Outbreak A which involves cases 24, 25, 28, 33, and 34.

And cases 29 in 27 which we identified as a cluster are most likely linked to outbreak A, although we have not established that with certainty yet.

And the other outbreak involves cases 26, 30, 31, 36, 37, and 38.

Case 32, as I said yesterday, is unrelated to the two outbreaks noted.

We are currently treating these as separate groups, but as I say there are probable links between at least two of them and possibly between all three.

So how does this happen?

This has been a question of course on a lot of people's minds.

Think of an outbreak, or outbreaks, as requiring first an introduction of infection.

And then the spread of infection.

In these outbreaks, case 28 has been related to out of territory trouble.

That was the introduction, through no fault of this case, and there was inadvertent spread to two other individuals.

Resulting in transmission to others either in household or work settings.

Meanwhile, in the case 26 cluster, there was transmission in a shared household.

Case 26 transmitted the illness to other individuals within that same household.

The source of origin for this case is still being explored, but as I said we suspect there is a link between the two clusters with a common transmission site.

Cases 27 to 29 also likely had a link to being in a shared space in one of the settings we have identified in our public exposure notices.

We are keeping a close eye on these cases and as we get closer to understanding all of the threads of transmission, I will bring back a more detailed description of the outbreaks.

I have seen much speculation about community transmission and indeed, we have to be concerned about that.

That there is a significant risk of that occurring, but we are not there yet.

To reiterate from yesterday, community transmission is said to occur when we have a number of cases where the source of transmission is not known.

In the current situation, there are links to households, common settings, and workplaces for the majority of cases and for the few others, contact tracing is ongoing.

We have not ruled out community transmission but at the same time, we still see no evidence of community transmission in that all cases to date have a defined or suspected link to travel or two cases in themselves linked to travel.

So off course, our efforts to contain this outbreak are going on, with proper self isolation, increased testing capacity in contact tracing which allows us to get a grip on these cases.

And as this continues, I will continue to release information and advise as necessary.

I would like it to be patient.

Our teams are continuing to work through this.

The reality of epidemic control is that we are finding out new information by the day and sometimes by the hour.

We will likely to continue to see changes in the pandemic, in the numbers of cases over the next few weeks and I ask Yukoners to prepare.

I don't mean that you need to run out and buy toilet paper.

Our stores will remain well stocked and we are not anticipating any need for walking down.

Prepare yourselves more that we may see more cases, perhaps many more.

Prepare your mental health by being ready to see worse before we see better.

Prepare by ensuring that you have a mask, with a spare or two when needed.

Prepare by starting to think about organizing virtual gatherings this holiday season.

Prepare by knowing your social bubble, and with whom you're interacting daily.

That is a level of preparation each Yukoner needs to invest in.

What does this mean for us ahead?

In order to help us contain this outbreak and prevent as much as possible any seeding of COVID spread into the community, changes will need to be made and this will require us to adjust our retains accordingly.

For the next few weeks, I am advising Yukon residents to keep to your social bubble.

Whether this is your one or two household bubble.

This is a time to avoid any indoor social gatherings that do not comprise your bubble members.

Keeping to your household is absolutely key during this time, and -- as COVID-19 is just a virus that is hard to control in the winter and we are seeing that now.

Every indoor gathering that we host, every coffee date we have with people outside of our bubble increases our risk of exposure.

I would rather we do this now, in tandem with the rest of Canada, in the effort to contain this now rather than months down the road.

Please think of that before you go out and socialize with people outside your household bubble.

A beer with a neighbour may seem innocent until a chance transmission of COVID occurs.

This recommendation does not change orders.

It does not change the gathering guidelines that allow for indoor gatherings up to 50 or outdoor up to 100, when the gatherings are seated, organized, and supervised.

And guidelines for these sorts of gatherings are on the website and have not changed.

What I am concerned about are those spontaneous household gatherings or parties that occur indoors among people who may be good friends but who are not in that one or two household arrangement.

Regarding travel.

We know there is a general recommendation in Canada steadily to avoid nonessential travel.

But we all know there are a variety of circumstances where travel is required.

Celebrations of life, funerals, work-related travel, medical visits all fit into that category.

Circumstances that cannot be avoided.

If you have to travel outside of the territory for one of those reasons, please practice the Safe Six guidelines while you were travelling.

Pay close attention to whatever the local requirements are.

Stay close to home, work, or your hotel while you're there so that you keep a low profile.

Limit your outings.

Wear your mask when required and in any public settings.

I would suggest that it is your duty as a travelling Yukoners to do everything you can to avoid acquiring COVID-19 infection and bringing it home.

Back here in Yukon's and other critical prevention manoeuvre.

If you're sick, please stay home.

I know there are circumstances where people still feel the need to go to work if they are feeling ill.

I understand that some people do not have the financial flexibility to stay home and small businesses are fearful of losing staff.

But we need to stay home and remember that supports are in place, asked the premier side, to assist individuals who are facing this challenge.

The Yukon business relief program provides relief for Yukon based business is affected by the pandemic, as well as the paid sick rebate for employers which allows employers to provide any

employee with the time to self isolate or take sickleave as needed, if they are affected by COVID-19.

Again, this is available on Yukon.ca for more information.

And as we have all seen, this virus has a ripple effect.

One person who has the sniffles might go to work and, in fact, another employee, who then goes on that affects their household, and someone.

It can happen so quickly, as we have seen with this present collection of cases.

It is crucial that you take it seriously and stay home and away from others when you need to.

Due to this welcomed increase in demand for testing, and I am happy to see that, we have set up a drive-through testing centre at the old Centennial motors wash bay on Alaska Highway.

In partnership with EMS services, community services of the government.

This drive-through will provide screening for those who are experiencing symptoms and who require testing.

Testing for this can be arranged through the testing centre or you can drop by the old Centennial Sobeys carwash.

You will be asked a number of questions and if you meet the required -- the criteria, you will receive appropriate testing.

If you're preparing to seek testing at the drive-through, please make sure you remember the following.

Everyone in the vehicle should have a mask.

If you happen not to have one it will be supplied.

Please write out your name, date of birth, health card number, phone number, and mailing address on a piece of paper to hold up in your vehicle so that the administrator can transcribe that information.

Access the drive-through from the Burns roadside, and not from the front as you would have to get your carwash.

As a reminder, this is not a testing centre for asymptomatic testing.

If you're symptomatic and require a test, you can visit the drive-through and receive a test.

As I previously said, we are not testing people without symptoms except in very specific circumstances, under direction from YCDC.

With the holidays approaching, questions about the appropriate self isolation protocols have been coming into my office quite regularly.

And with the recent decision to curtail our bubble with the other territories and British Columbia, any incoming visitor or returning resident is now required to self isolate for 14 days.

Since the holidays are coming fast, we want to make sure people know what their options are when it comes to visits and self isolation responsibilities.

There are two options.

First, if you want to enjoy the holidays with your family, meaning you share meals, hogs, members of your household are then committed to self isolating with you for 14 days.

This will mean the entire household must stay home, only go outside alone or with the people you were isolating with, and not have the visitors.

If you're the household and your guest leaves before the 14 days expire, everyone in your home will need to continue to self isolate for three days following the departure and self monitor for symptoms.

In addition, you need to check in daily with the guest after leaving to find out if they are experiencing any symptoms.

If everyone in the household and they departed guest or guests do not experience symptoms after three days, then your household is free to return to activities.

The other option, and this is best for people who will be with a household who need to continue to work and maintain their daily lives as usual, and this can be done in a shared household as long as the guest has a separate bedroom and preferably a shared bathroom.

This means there is no overlap between the guest and the household.

So again, instructions are on the website but, you need to stay two metres away from other household members who are not self isolating.

Use a separate bathroom if possible and if it is not possible, the bathrooms need to be cleaned at least daily.

You cannot share household items, you cannot share items such as drinking glasses, eating utensils, pillows, other items that would lend themselves to sharing the virus as well.

You can't eat meals together with others in the household, and you need to clean up household items after using them.

I want to highlight that you're still able to host a guest and not self isolate with them, that is perfectly safe and encouraged, as long as you maintain the guest's appropriate separation.

And if you're unsure how to self isolate, please refer to Yukon.ca for further information.

As the premier said, he announced the use of mandatory masks and we had previously said we were in the exploratory phase.

Already in the last few weeks, I have seen a tremendous uptake in mask used in public spaces around Whitehorse and also in the communities.

As we continue to see a resurgence in COVID-19 across Canada, of course there is a higher risk of importing and therefore contracting the virus.

Canadian jurisdictions have taken this risk into account in many have mandated or recommended mask used and defined public spaces where physical distancing can be hard to maintain.

In addition to the mandatory mask announcement at the premier just announced, starting this Thursday, Yukon's hospitals will

implement recommendations from our office by asking all members of the public to wear a mask when they arrive at the hospital.

Yukoners can also expect to see hospital employees, physicians, and contractors wearing a mask at all times in all public areas of the workplace.

Of course the risk remains low.

The hospitals wanted to be aligned with the territory's approach that recommends people wearing masks and public indoor spaces, and this will allow us to maintain Yukoners' confidence level while in the hospital.

Now, I recognize the benefit of masks and how they are seeming to play a crucial part in reducing exposure risk from an infected person and reducing the transmission of COVID.

I also know the use of masks alone cannot stop the spread of COVID-19.

They work best as the seventh step to the Safe Six.

So the mandated use of masks as the premier said will be moving forward starting December 1st, which will require all individuals over the age of two to wear a mask and defined indoor public spaces.

Right now we need to be vigilant in the precautions we take.

Introducing the use of nonmedical masks into our daily lives is in the interests of protecting the health and well-being of Yukoners in the territory.

We will continue to provide updates on mandatory mask used as the time progresses.

I highly recommend wearing a mask when you're unable to physically distance or when asked when in a public space.

As we said in the beginning, we are in another challenging period in Yukon and this is another time when we will likely be thrown curveballs every day and we will just have to meet those challenges, stick together, and keep on living.

We know how to do this.

The Safe Six is our weapon and now with masking as the six plus one, these well worked to limit the spread of COVID in Yukon.

We will get through these current outbreaks with continued aggressive contact tracing and testing, if people do the right thing.

Let's go over the Safe Six again.

Maintain physical distance and, keeping two metres away from everyone who is not a member of your social bubble.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

Stay home if you're feeling sick.

Follow the organized social gatherings and respect the limitations on group size.

And as I say, extra attention to that particular step on social gatherings.

Sticking to your household bubbles only.

For the time being.

Limit travel to rural communities and be respectful when you're there.

Self isolate if you have returned to Yukon from outside in the last 14 days, or if you have been directed to buy public health.

And wear your mask when required to or when physical distancing is challenging.

We are in a time when vigilance, kindness, generosity, confidence, and patience will prevail.

I just want to correct something I said yesterday, which was a mistake.

That is about a child associated with a daycare, with being in daycare.

That wasn't true.

It was actually an adult case associated with a daycare.

An adult staff of one of the daycares.

Through YCDC, we are in very close touch to handle the process, very similar to what the premier outline for the schools.

It is under control, and all the appropriate contacts have been made in terms of notifying the parents, working with the daycare, and so I have no concerns there.

That is all for my update.

So thank you.

Remembered to take care of each other, Tuesday well.

Thank you.

>> Pat: Thank you, Dr Hanley.

Excuse me.

We will move now to the phone line and we will begin with John from CKRW.

>> Reporter: Hi.

I am wondering what exactly this mask mandate starting on December 1st will look like for those who work in tightknit environments such as an office, a restaurant, a local business.

And I'm also curious about sports, mainly ice hockey, indoor related sports and organizations.

>> I will start and I'm sure Doctor Hanley will have some things to add as well.

Mandatory, nonmedical masks in public spaces.

This includes masks that are two layers, ideally three.

Should be tightly woven fabric such as cotton or linen.

A third middle layer should be a filter or -- filter type is all.

But again, two layers of the minimum.

It should completely cover your nose, mouth and chin.

An example of my beautiful mascara that does that.

It does have an insert as well.

It also should allow for easy breathing and securely fit over the head with ties around the ears.

All public to find places will require the use of nonmedical masks.

This includes shopping centres, service businesses such as mechanics or cleaners, personal care services such as hair salons, common areas and hotels, convention centres, community and recreational centres, public faith gatherings-- sorry Mary, I will slow down.

In other publicly shared spaces.

Again, a full list will be made available on Yukon.ca before December 1st.

So we are getting some time out there before folks go to this new normal.

As you listen through the list of places here, many of them already have mask provisions in place.

Recreation centres like the Canada games Centre for example.

Hair salons-- bless you.

Hair salons and things like that.

We see this as becoming more and more normal, as businesses have been doing excellent work, remaining vigilant on Yukoners' safety.

When it comes to exemptions, children under the age of two as I mentioned will not be required.

Other exemptions like people who have medical conditions that prevent them from wearing masks will be exempt.

People participating in sports, in the private areas of long-term care homes, or are eating or drinking in a public restaurant will also not require the masks at those times.

But again, the list of exemptions will be available on Yukon.ca before December 1st.

I hope that answers your question.

Dr Hanley, if you want to add something?

>> It is hard to add much to that?

I can't believe the premier has memorized all that already.

[Laughter]

>> I only have the two layer mask.

The type of mask, again that will come more in the recommendations, the ideal mask.

But that is not, you know, no one is going to be pulled aside because they only have a two layer mask.

But I think it is important to understand how a mask is most effective and how it should be worn.

I think that covers the basics.

Without going into more details, which the premier amply covered, it is really about recognizing masks as an additional layer.

So all of those other layers are or should already be in place.

You asked about the workplace for instance.

This is an additional layer for common spaces where there is mixing with public that maybe an hour workplace.

But that is added onto, what is the operating plan, the business operating plan for the workplace.

So you know, how many people in the meeting room, space in, people not showing up when they are sick.

Those are all fundamental layers to which ask -- to which now mask use is added onto, in those common areas where there is mixing with the public.

Similar with sports and activities.

As you know, mostly over the summer we published all of those guidelines about activities and how to do certain organized sports like hockey and indoor sports.

So we will not be expecting mask used during the activity.

It is in those areas where there is mixing that we are recommending the addition of mask used to the other established guidelines.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Follow-up, John?

>> Reporter: I do!

I am curious as to mask availability and I guess, limitations in that.

If someone doesn't have a mask and they are unable to get one through a local store, they can't afford one, or something prevents them from getting a mask in a traditional sense, is the government

or some public entity going to be of -- going to be providing masks to those who need them?

>> We don't have a policy right now for providing masks.

Our focus when we were negotiating with restart funding from the federal government when it came to PPE was on masks for our medical community.

For our health and social services providers, those types of things.

We have noticed again a lot of businesses in the past have had reuse -- have had masks available for folks but at this time, there is no government policy to provide masks for the general public.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will move to our next on line reporter.

Phillippe, CBC Yukon.

>> Reporter: Doctor Hanley, yesterday you mentioned two cases of children under nine.

You have issued the direction on the daycare.

Is that still the case that there are two children in the active cases?

>> Yes, that is true.

So they are household contacts of one of the cases that became cases themselves.

One of them as a probable case and one of them is a confirmed case.

>> Pat: Follow-up?

>> Reporter: Yes, could we just find a public space?

Would that include a space like a sidewalk?

Only within private businesses?

What is the public space?

>> Maybe I will start and the premier can correct me.

For one thing, we are talking about indoor spaces.

It is quite clear that really the concern is about indoors.

As far as outdoors, all of the usual guidance about spacing and gathering.

I think that is sufficient to take care of the much reduced -- risk of transmission in outdoor settings.

So no, when you were on the sidewalk, try to observe spacing but you don't need to wear a mask.

So think of indoor settings where there is mixing with public.

Again, this is all going to be clarified in the policies as they are published.

But where you have a place where you're providing services to the public, then that is wear a mask usage will be prescribed.

>> Not much more to add on that, Dr Hanley nailed it.

This -- this focuses on public places and buildings.

What I have noticed, first of all, I will give a shout out to folks like Mayor Curtis, other public figures who have said, well, I am just

going to start wearing a mask in all places.

I have been doing the same and what I have noticed is from the time I leave my apartment, just putting my mask on when I'm out makes sense to me.

I'm not taking it out of my pocket and putting it back on, which is exposing my face to more touching if I am doing those things.

I put it on when I get into my car and I leave it there until I get to desks like this.

It has really been easy to do, in that case, as opposed to-- if I am on the sidewalk and I know I can maintain social distance until someone comes up and talks to me.

I have been wearing it everywhere I go.

And what I have been noticing too from the general population is a lot of people are thankful for that approach.

Again, Dr Hanley has said so many times the mask is really to protect others.

It is also a sign of respect as well.

If you're at the cash register, we know there is Plexiglas and other things but those folks working on the front line, whether they be in grocery stores or hospitals or other areas, up until this mandatory requirement have been very thankful for individuals wearing masks in public places.

We will update the list on Yukon.ca before December 1st, to clearly define where these public spaces are wear a mask wearing is now mandatory.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will move now to our next reporter.

Claudiane, Radio-Canada.

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: So Dr Hanley, can you please repeat the new measures for today, and the rationale behind them?

[Speaking French]

>> Pat:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: You mentioned the possibility of exposure in Dawson city.

This seems to be new.

Could you please elaborate on that and tell us a bit more about what is going on?

Ali Lily.

[Speaking French]

[Speaking French]

>> I will repeat that in English.

>> Pat: Thank you very much.

[Laughter]

>> Claudiane noted that the notification for Dawson City, it is kinda an outing that yes indeed, our two out of Whitehorse cases are indeed Dawson residents.

One of the cases was in the general store on that date and that is why we posted that.

Again, this is precautionary.

I have been to the general store of course myself many times.

I know that they are very conscientious about protocols, as I think the whole city of Dawson is.

Again it is no particular worry about the setting, just a precautionary notice that there could've been an opportunity for transmission and again, as a reminder, if you were in that setting pay extra attention if symptoms occur -- and if symptoms occur please come forward for testing.

The physicians in Dawson and at the clinic and the hospital are as prepared as anyone to receive people to do a swab and get a test done.

Or a few are now in Whitehorse and were in Dawson, the same applies.

I think it also had another purpose, and that was just to reassure the city of Dawson that we are not concerned about any other public exposure.

We are not concerned about the circulation of COVID in the community.

Again, I want to reassure the community to live life as normal, and as a reminder, I know Dawson was through this in the summer but just another reminder to recheck those protocols Calgary look at the Safe Six, to take up mask usage in addition.

And that we will all get through this together.

>> Pat: Thank you.

Next caller.

Maryne, L'Aurore boréale.

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: The question is for Dr Hanley.

Are masks also going to be mandatory for children in daycare, or does it still arrest with parents to make that decision?

[Speaking French]

>> I will also repeat that in English.

It is just to clarify that the existing guidelines for daycares and schools with respect to masks have not changed.

So mask use as we announced a couple of weeks ago for the schools will become required in common areas for kids ten in up, but not within the classroom.

So none of that is changing from this new mandate.

And the same, existing guidelines for the daycares will not change.

>> Pat: Thank you.

[Speaking French]

>> Reporter:

[Speaking French]

>> Interpreter: So of the Yukon people are used to getting together outside for fires or other reasons.

Do you expect to change the rules for these gatherings with Christmas coming and the holidays, where people might be tempted to do these activities?

[Speaking French]

>> Pat: I want to ask you to repeat that.

You did speak to that in English earlier.

>> Just to add to that question, it reminds me again of the message that myself and Dr Hanley have been saying a lot.

It is now time for us to reset and readjust our own personal behaviours and practices, and now more than ever, we take these measures.

We are in a situation right now hopefully aware Yukoners can safely get together over the holidays.

Yukoners can safely go to stores.

We don't want to rolled back.

But now more than ever it is up to Yukoners.

I want to give a shout out to our youth because we're really relying on younger Yukoners right now to help us get through this.

One only has to take a look on Facebook to my good friend, Dustin's viral post.

Over thousands in thousands of views, where this young gentleman is saying, with a lot more curse words than I am allowed to use, but step up Yukoners.

Now more than ever, we really need you for the safety of our elders and for everybody else.

I can't thank Dustin enough for being an example for other youth.

We need to follow his lead for sure.

And if we do, we will get through this and we won't have to go back.

We will go forward to the vaccine, hopefully with everybody doing what they are supposed to.

Thanks, Dustin.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will move to our next caller.

Gabrielle, Whitehorse Star.

>> Reporter: Hi.

Is there an enforcement aspect to mask use at all?

And if businesses are responsible for enforcing mask use in their own establishment, do operational plans need to be updated to reflect that?

>> Sorry, could you repeat the first part of the question?

>> Reporter: Just wondering if there is an enforcement aspect to mandatory mask use at all.

>> Right now we are not considering any additional changes.

Any more information about enforcement will come before December 1st.

But again, this is mandatory.

It is a mandatory requirement.

We will give more information about what that means as far as if people refuse, but we are asking Yukoners to wear masks, to protect the people around them.

We are going to share information about this requirement and, you know, we do have an option to enforce it through the fines if somebody or some business shows repeated or egregious failures to follow the rules.

But more information on all of that will be out on the website before December 1st.

>> Pat: Follow-up, Gabrielle?

>> Reporter: That is good, thank you.

>> Pat: Thank you.

We will move now to Haley, Yukon News.

>> Reporter: Thank you.

I also had a question about masks.

Premier Silver, it was mentioned there would be limited exemptions.

Could you speak a little bit to what those exemptions might include?

>> Again, so children under the age of two will not be required to wear masks.

People with medical conditions which prevent them from wearing masks of course would be exempt as well.

But again, we're looking at situations of people playing sports or in private areas of long-term care homes.

If you're at a restaurant, you need to take your mask off to eat or to drink.

So in those cases, you're within your bubble anyway.

But those are some of the situations right now where of course, you're not going to be able to wear your mask but for the general public over the age of two, in public places it will be mandatory.

Again, we will have the complete list in place on Yukon.ca well before the December 1st deadline.

>> Reporter: Follow-up, Haley?

>> Reporter: Thank you, yes.

I apologize if this was already asked.

I lost the feed for a minute.

Could you explain the decision to wait until December 1st to make the masks mandatory as opposed to a shorter deadline?

>> Very much appreciate the question.

We want to give businesses, organizations, in other governments time to prepare for this.

As we said, please start wearing your masks now.

I have seen a sea change over the last couple of weeks in Yukon.

People have really been upping their game when it comes to masks anyway.

We are asking people, don't wait until the deadline.

If you have masks now, this is the new normal and it is coming.

But we really want to give some time to help people prepare for what this means.

Help people get online and take a look at the information, to make sure they know exactly what is required of them.

Nobody wants to be in contravention of any of the rules.

We have seen that all summer long with our helpline.

A lot of people calling the helpline were people making sure that they are doing things properly, as opposed to other calls.

Again, same situation where it is coming, it is mandatory, and prepare yourself by reading online and knowing how to make sure you're following the rules.

>> Pat: I would like to thank everyone for their time today.

Our next COVID-19 update will take place Tuesday, December 1st, at 9:30 AM.