

Interim Guidelines for Work Camps during COVID-19



COVID-19: The Basics

COVID-19 is a coronavirus that was first identified in December 2019. Since then, it has quickly spread and infected more than 300,000 individuals globally. While we are continually learning more about the virus, it is thought that COVID-19 is mainly spread from person-to-person. This happens when an infected person produces respiratory droplets when they sneeze or cough, passing the droplets and the virus onto those in close contact (less than two metres).

Those infected with COVID-19 may have flu-like symptoms that can be mild, moderate or severe. The most commonly reported symptoms are: fever, cough, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing. The symptoms may appear from two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Adults who are older, anyone with underlying medical conditions (such as diabetes, lung disease or heart disease) or those who are immunocompromised (transplant recipients, people receiving chemotherapy) are at a higher risk of becoming very sick if they are infected with COVID-19.

Provide information for staff and camp residents

Be sure to provide staff and camp residents access to the most up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19. Ensure all staff and camp residents are informed of the infection prevention and control measures that are being implemented in the camp to help reduce and minimize the risk of potential disease transmission in the camp.

Inform the staff and camp residents of procedures to follow should they become sick. It is advised that employees do not work when they are sick. We recommend that employers provide remuneration to employees who are on isolation precautions. This should be provided throughout their duration of self-isolation as this will help to ensure those who are sick will report their symptoms and to ensure the employee will adhere to isolation protocols – both are essential in helping to control the transmission of COVID-19. Employers should not require the worker to provide a doctor's note for sick leave if they are sick or are required to self-isolate.

How to manage individuals with suspected COVID-19

Individuals who are experiencing symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) can be directed to call 8-1-1 or referred to Yukon's [online self-assessment for COVID-19](#). If there is a medical clinic on-site, the individual can be directed to the on-site clinic staff. Testing recommendations for COVID-19 can be found at the Yukon.ca health professionals page at <https://yukon.ca/en/novel-coronavirus-hp>

If a staff member or camp resident have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 while in the camp, please follow these recommendations:

- Provide the individual with a surgical mask (if available) or tissues to cover their mouth and nose.
- Move the individual to an area separate from others, preferably with a closed door.
- Direct the person to the online self-assessment tool or the on-site medical clinic, if available. These will advise on the next steps.
- The individual can also be directed to 8-1-1.
- Support the individual to self-isolate in the camp, unless they are within driving distance of their home and are able to travel home in personal, un-shared transportation. More important information is provided below in regards to self-isolation.
- Any rooms the individual has been in while symptomatic should be cleaned and disinfected.

If urgent medical care is needed, call 9-1-1.

Notify the Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC) at 867-667-8323 if there is an outbreak or suspicion of an outbreak.

An outbreak is when two or more cases of fever and/or cough, shortness of breath are detected in staff

members and/or residents within a 14 day period, with at least one case identified as a camp resident, or if any staff member or resident is diagnosed with COVID-19.

Travel Restrictions

More than 160 countries globally and 11 provinces and territories in Canada have been affected by COVID-19. Travel restrictions have been enacted to help slow the introduction and spread of the virus in Canada. Anyone arriving in Yukon from other provinces or territories within Canada or from international destinations (including the United States and Alaska) is required to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for any development of symptoms.

Given the remote nature of mining camps in Yukon, in the introduction of COVID-19 to a small community nearby would place a considerable burden on the people and the small community hospitals and nursing stations. **For this reason, all camp workers who have travelled outside Yukon are required to follow these self-isolation orders for 14 days before returning to a camp.**

What is self-isolation?

Self-isolation means staying at home and away from contact with others to prevent the spread of a disease in one's home or community. It is one very important way of helping to prevent the spread of the virus. COVID-19 is a disease with no vaccine and no treatment. If many people in a society become infected, it has the potential to overwhelm the health-care system. That is why, although an individual may only have mild disease, the potential impact of them infecting others is enormous.

People may be self-isolated because they have developed COVID-19 symptoms, have had contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 or because they have recently arrived from an area with many cases of COVID-19. For COVID-19, self-isolation is for 14 days – the maximum incubation period of the virus. That is the time between infection and symptoms

Support and advice for camp residents who are self-isolating

Individuals may be asked to self-isolate by officials and/or health professionals. Workers may be asked to self-isolate at home (if they are in territory), or in a designated facility. The following are recommendations and measures to follow while a person is self-isolated:

Limit contact with others

- Do not leave isolation quarters unless absolutely necessary, such as seeking medical care.
- Do not go to work, public areas or use public transportation.
- If possible, arrange to have groceries and supplies dropped off at the door.
- If one must be in contact with others, they should be instructed to keep at least two metres away, keep the interaction brief and to wear a mask according to advice of health staff.
- If self-isolating at home, stay in a separate room and, if possible, use a separate bathroom from others in your home. Do not share cutlery, glasses, plates or personal items.
- For those self-isolating in a facility: workers should be offered a single occupancy room and should remain in the facility, unless a higher level of care is needed.
- Please do not turn away from the camp individuals who are suspected or confirmed cases without a plan in place of where they can be safely isolated.

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

These measures help to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. **Good hand and respiratory hygiene is important for all workers, whether self-isolating or not! This can save lives.**

Operators of work camps should assure that workers have easy access to hand hygiene facilities throughout the camps.

Hands should be cleaned frequently with soap and water or with a hand sanitizer (containing a minimum of 60% alcohol).

- Hand sanitizer is not effective if a worker's hands are soiled with dirt, food, etc., therefore they should be instructed to use soap and water. If soap and water is not available or accessible, workers can be instructed to use hand wipes to remove debris and followed by hand sanitizer.
- If using soap and water, hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds.

HAND HYGIENE is most important at the following times:

- Before eating or preparing food.
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing one's nose.
- Before AND after contact with a sick or infected person (confirmed or suspected).
- After touching dirty surfaces such as taps, doorknobs, phones, remotes.
- After using the bathroom.

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE is also essential in the prevention of disease spread. The key elements of respiratory etiquette are:

- Cover one's mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Dispose used tissues in the garbage immediately.
- Clean hands after coughing or sneezing.

Work camp operators can support good respiratory hygiene by educating workers on its importance and by assuring workers have access to tissues.

Avoid contaminating common surfaces and items

At least once daily but preferably more often, surfaces that are touched or used often (toilets, phones, door handles, remotes, etc.) should be cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant.

(See section below, "*Infection Control Supplies for additional cleaning information*").

Workers should be instructed not to share personal items with others; these include electronic devices, linens, towels, utensils, etc.

Caring for oneself

Workers should be instructed to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath.

A "call list" should be provided to the worker indicating who to call if symptoms develop, if an emergency situation occurs or if there are any other urgent needs.

Confidentiality is critical to help workers feel safe to reach out immediately should mild symptoms develop.

If symptoms worsen, each work camp should have a protocol established in order to access higher level medical care if needed.

Encourage workers to rest, eat a balanced diet and to stay in contact with friends and family via phone, social media or other long-distance means.

For additional information or reference for workers, please visit www.yukon.ca and search for “covid isolation” for the latest information. It is currently at:

https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/covid-19_patient_home_isolation_-_self_isolating_february_19_final.pdf

Social Distancing: physical distance with social connection

Everyone, including those who are not self-isolated, is encouraged to perform social distancing. It is one of the most effective means of reducing the spread of COVID-19. It also involves making changes in one’s everyday routines to minimize contact with others. Practicing social distancing means:

- **Keep a distance of at least two metres from others – including at work.**
- Avoid crowded places and large gatherings.
- In Yukon, gatherings of more than 10 people are not permitted.
- Greet people with a wave or nod – do not shake hands or hug.
- Limit contact with people who are at a higher risk of developing complications from COVID-19 – those who are elderly, immunocompromised, in poor health or with underlying medical conditions.
- Stagger meal times to decrease the number of workers in a cafeteria.
- Cancel group activities or meetings, and use virtual options such as teleconferencing instead.
- If necessary, shop during off-peak hours to maintain the safe distancing of two metres.

Have sufficient infection control supplies

All camps must have a stock of infection control supplies on site. The supplies must be adequate enough to support any confirmed or suspected cases, but to also support diligent daily hygiene practices of all workers. Supplies should include:

- Hand washing supplies (soap, water) and hand sanitizers (minimum 60% alcohol content).
- Appropriate cleaning supplies (more information below).
- Surgical masks, if possible, for those who are in self-isolation or those with symptoms being transported to another facility.
- Tissues.
- Disposable gloves.

For any camp with an on-site medical facility that provides a higher level of care (e.g. physicians, nurse practitioners):

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for contact and droplet precautions, this includes eye protection (preferably with side shields), surgical/procedural masks, disposable gowns and gloves.
- A stock of swabs to perform COVID-19 tests. Clinicians can use the same collection devices that are routinely used for influenza NP swabs (or other respiratory testing or skin/mucosal swabs for HSV/VZV viral testing), with a label/requisition order for COVID-19 testing. Visit the Yukon government website for additional testing guidance and information: <https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/health-concerns-diseases-and-conditions/find-novel-coronavirus-information-0>.
- It is advised to have a supply of N-95 respirators on-site, if possible, for medical responders in the rare event that they are needed for aerosol-generating medical procedures (e.g., administering CPR, intubation).

Airborne precautions are recommended only for aerosol-generating procedures, such as open suctioning of respiratory tract, intubation, bronchoscopy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

PPE for airborne precautions includes: N-95 respirators, eye protection (either a face shield or goggles with side shields), gloves and gown.

These supplies should be procured from private suppliers and we recommend that orders are made as soon as possible due to risk of short supplies. Do not stockpile excessive quantities of these supplies, as it may put a further strain on health-care systems and supply chains.

Clean and disinfect regularly

High-touch areas in the camp such as toilets, bedside tables and door handles should be disinfected at least once a day, preferably twice a day, with an agent effective against coronavirus. Coronavirus is an enveloped virus, meaning it is one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with appropriate disinfectants. Types of disinfectants that can be used include:

- Diluted bleach solution: 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html>
- Accelerated hydrogen peroxide (0.5%)
- Quaternary ammonium compounds (QUATs)

Health Canada has released a list of registered disinfectant products that are qualified for use against COVID-19 virus. The list of appropriate disinfectants can be accessed here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

When selecting a disinfectant, ensure that the product has a DIN number. Always check the manufacturer's information to assure the product is effective against coronaviruses. Follow the product instructions for the dilution and contact time. Unless otherwise stated on the product, use a detergent to clean the surface of all visible debris prior to the application of the disinfectant.

Surfaces that have become soiled with respiratory secretions or bodily fluids should be cleaned twice: once to remove the secretions, and second with an effective disinfectant to disinfect the area. Use disposable gloves and protective clothing (e.g. plastic aprons, if available) when cleaning or handling surfaces, clothing or linen that has been soiled with bodily fluids.

Ensure safe handling of food

Germ from infected people or contaminated surfaces can be easily transferred to food. During an outbreak, facilities should reinforce routine food safety and sanitation practices. Where possible, implement measures to minimize the handling of shared food and items that may touch another person's food, such as:

- Discontinuation of self-serve buffet lines. Opt to have designated staff dispense food.
- Minimize the handling of multiple sets of cutlery.
- Remove shared food containers from dining areas
- This includes: shared pitchers of water/juice, shared coffee cream dispensers, salt and pepper shakers, etc.
- Dispense snacks directly to staff/clients and use only pre-packaged snacks.
- Ensure that food handling staff practice good hand hygiene and do not work in food handling areas if they are ill.
- Ensure that all surfaces of the tables and chairs (including underneath the edges of the chair) are cleaned and disinfected after each meal.

Persons in self-isolation can place dishes outside their rooms for pick-up. Disposable gloves can be used by the staff who are picking up and handling these dishes.

Ordinary cleaning and sanitation procedures for dishes are sufficient for killing the virus. Please note that the use of disposable cutlery and plates by ill workers is not required during an outbreak.

Ensure laundry is handled safely

Use precautions when doing laundry.

- Contaminated laundry should be placed into a laundry bag or basket with a plastic liner and should not be shaken.
- Gloves and a surgical mask should be worn when in direct contact with contaminated laundry.
- Linens and clothing belonging to an ill person can be washed together with other laundry, using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90° C).
- Laundry should be thoroughly dried.
- Hand hygiene should be performed after handling contaminated laundry and after removing gloves.
- If the laundry container comes in contact with contaminated laundry, it can be disinfected using a diluted bleach solution.

Prepare a summary of project information for reference in event of a camp outbreak

The camp should document the initiatives and procedures that the company has implemented to prevent and manage COVID-19. The plan can be tailored to unique circumstances and scaled to the size of the camp. Some of the following information may already be available in your camp's current Communicable Disease Control Plan (CDCP).

At minimum, your camp's plan should include the following information:

- Project location
- Contact information for all camp personnel. Be sure to have the name, telephone number and email addresses of each person
- Medical service provider(s) details
- Number of residents
- Number of staff (both those working at the camp and housed at the camp)
- Demographics and health care status of the workers (if known)
- Workers' origin: local, regional, provincial or international. If international, include from which countries.
- Turnover patterns and work shifts:
 - Fly in/fly out?
 - How long are the shifts/rotations?
 - From which travel hubs are they flying/driving?
- Overview of the camp set-up. Description of camp facilities including:
 - Number of rooms
 - Room occupancy
 - Number of showers
 - Number of washrooms
 - Dining and community areas
 - Recreational facilities (gyms, pool tables, television rooms, etc.)

Ensure confidentiality

It is important that any targeted communicable disease interventions are non-stigmatizing and respect the confidentiality of all persons involved. This include maintaining privacy for those who are seeking health care, those who are in self-isolation or those involved in contact tracing or outbreak investigation.

Review on-site management of company policies

Burdens are placed on local health-care systems when company policies require sick notes and back to work notes for workers. Employers are asked to excuse staff for sick leave without requiring a doctor's note if their worker is ill or requiring self-isolation. This will help to minimize the pressure on the health-care system, while helping to minimize the risk of spreading disease to the surrounding community.