



April 1, 2020

## **COVID-19 Update: Whitehorse Correctional Centre and Yukon Community Corrections**

The Corrections Branch continues to work steadfastly towards preparedness during the ever-evolving COVID-19 global pandemic. The Branch remains committed to implementing measures to ensure the health and safety of correctional staff, clients, and the public while also ensuring the provision of humane essential services.

In consultation with the Yukon Communicable Disease Centre and in line with recommendations from the office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), the Corrections Branch has taken a carefully planned, proactive approach to reduce the potential for exposure to, and transmission of, COVID-19. Further to the precautionary measures outlined in the public memorandum released on March 23, 2020, the following are some of the additional steps that have been taken at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC) and in Yukon Community Corrections (YCC).

### **The Whitehorse Correctional Centre**

- An updated COVID-19 screening form has been circulated and is completed for every individual admitted to the WCC. The new updates include the new direction from the CMOH regarding domestic travel;
- Updated precautionary isolation and medical monitoring procedures have been developed and implemented for both current inmates, as well as for all newly admitted individuals upon intake at the WCC;
- In collaboration with other justice stakeholders, the WCC continues to undertake a detailed review of the personal circumstances of individuals on remand, those serving intermittent sentences, and individuals who may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 due to their age or underlying health conditions. This proactive review is underway to ensure that all clients are housed in the most appropriate location should there be a pandemic issue within the correctional institution. This review also includes an assessment of which, if any, inmate(s) could be released on an unescorted temporary absence and housed in the community without compromising their safety or that of the public;

- In partnership with the RCMP and Health and Social Services, work is underway to appropriately manage individuals in the community who do not pose a public safety risk to others rather than have them admitted to the Arrest Processing Unit within the WCC;
- To maintain continuity of service and program delivery, substance use services, spiritual services, and First Nations services are offered, upon inmate request, in a secure manner, with a physical barrier between the service provider and the inmate to prevent droplet and contact transmission;
- All inmate disciplinary hearings are conducted on-site at the WCC using video technology. This measure reduces the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission between independent hearing adjudicators and inmates without sacrificing procedural fairness;
- The Forensic Complex Care Team (FCCT) has two designated members who continue to attend the WCC weekly to meet with inmates. In addition, the phone numbers for FCCT counselors have been added to the list of “free calls” and inmates have been provided with their counselor’s number to facilitate communication and essential check-ins;
- The First Nation Liaison Officer has scheduled weekly talking circles and continues to meet regularly with inmates;
- Work is underway to facilitate the online delivery of various courses offered through Yukon College;
- Work programs, as well as indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, continue to be offered at the WCC;
- All inmates discharged from WCC will be provided with information related to COVID-19 including safe community practices; and,
- All individuals in custody at the WCC are held in their own cell that has solid walls and a solid door.

### **Yukon Community Corrections**

- While all YCC offices remain operational, the Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Dawson City offices have reduced the hours during which they are open to the public;
- In Whitehorse, clients who are required to attend in person for reporting and intake assessments are directed to use a designated telephone within the office to liaise with their Probation Officer or Bail Supervisor. Cleaning materials are available to enable each individual to clean the area and telephone prior to beginning the session;
- In Watson Lake, intake assessments are conducted at the YCC office in a secure manner, with a physical barrier between YCC staff and clients;

- Weekly in-person staff meetings have been temporarily suspended and replaced with daily individual meetings between the YCC supervisor and staff to promote and facilitate social distancing; and,
- Weekly case consultation meetings between YCC staff and the FCCT have been temporarily suspended, though staff have been reminded and encouraged to consult the FCCT via telephone where appropriate.

The Corrections Branch will continue to work collaboratively with health and justice partners in responding to the dynamic situation presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic. As developments arise, the Branch will maintain its measured, proactive approach which prioritizes the health and safety of correctional staff, clients, and the public while also ensuring that humane essential services are provided to Yukoners.

Sincerely,



Andrea Monteiro  
Director, Corrections