



Tseshahat First Nation

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Safe Operating Plan | Version 6.1 | October 9, 2020

Response Overview

The novel Coronavirus COVID-19 has spread very rapidly worldwide and is the cause of an unprecedented number of deaths. Many countries have insufficient capacity for testing. At the same time, many people are infectious before they show symptoms with some carrying the virus and showing no symptoms and able to transmit it to others. Therefore, it is likely that communities have a large number of people with undetected COVID-19. This is a risk for your team members, their families and your community.

According to the research, social distancing and frequent hand washing are the most effective methods to slow down and halt the spread of COVID-19. Given the serious threat this virus poses to our vulnerable population and healthcare systems, the Tseshahat First Nation administration office is striving to mitigate the risk for our team, their families, and the community. Although the number of cases on the island is low, it is vital to continue to take proactive steps to prevent spread of the virus.

“For many, the transition brings anticipation, but it also, for many brings further apprehension and anxiety,” provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said Monday.

“Once again, we are still learning new ways of safe social interactions and doing things that we’ve never had to do.”

“As we enter this phase, (we need to) continue to think about consideration and generosity and respect for others,” she said. “That is what will get us through, with the easing of restrictions and the added social interaction and the potential for a flare-up in new cases.”

The Tseshahat Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) advised council on May 14, 2020 that it is not opposed to the administration office reopening for staff only starting the first week of June, provided that infection numbers remain the same on the island and that appropriate precautions are taken as outlined in this plan which follows recommendations made by WorkSafe BC.

This plan will change over time as new information becomes known and when measures adapt for the safety of staff and the Tseshahat community.

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Office Plan

Office is closed to visitors.

1. Staff are expected to report to work at the Administration Office as usual, provided they are healthy.
2. Sanitization tools (hand sanitizer, wipes, etc.) to be located at entrances and other key locations.
3. All interior doors in traffic areas are to remain open to reduce need for contact.
4. Office staff to adopt measures to maintain distance, especially in common areas and avoid gathering, particularly at the Welcome Center.

Office Staffing

1. The office is staffed full time.
2. Staff who have symptoms of illness but are not too sick to work may work from home with their manager's approval.
3. Supervisors/managers are responsible for setting work expectations with their staff.
4. Signage will be posted in common gathering areas alerting staff to the risks. This will include the Welcome Center, copy room and coffee room, and other areas identified during the course of time. While there is a cleaning routine in place to disinfect high-touch areas throughout the day, staff are reminded to be personally responsible for their own safety. E.g. do not assume that the copy machine has been cleaned in between your use and use by someone before you. Wash your hands after touching commonly touched items such as the copy machine, washroom doors, coffee room supplies, etc.
5. Supervisors/managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are familiar with this plan.

Guidelines for staff that work in the office

- Masks are to be worn at all times by staff, unless they are alone in their offices.
- Only two staff members may be in an office at the same time and masks must be worn.
- Only Welcome Center (WC) staff are permitted within the WC desk space. This is considered an office space and WC staff do not need to wear masks while at the desk. WC staff will pass items from mail slots to staff as needed.
- Wash your hands immediately after arriving at the office for at least 20 seconds with soap or by using the hand sanitizer available at the Welcome Center and to do so frequently while in the building.
- Avoid touching your face, mouth or eyes.
- Do not shake hands and maintain a distance of 6 feet between co-workers.
- When working in the office, use sanitizing wipes or spray to disinfect your door handle, light switch and high-touch areas in your office at least once per day.
- If you are feeling unwell, please notify your supervisor/manager and leave the office as appropriate. If you are unwell, contact your supervisor/manager and stay home. Report symptoms

immediately so others you may have come in contact with are aware and able to take necessary steps to prevent further spread of the virus.

Working Remotely

We are taking this unusual time as an opportunity to experiment with new ways of working.

- Meetings
 - All meetings with non-Administration persons are encouraged to be held remotely, at an alternate location, or after regular office hours.
 - Meetings with staff or members will be video/teleconference as much as possible, utilizing Zoom, Skype, Workplace Chat, etc.
 - If an in-person meeting must be held:
 - During office hours the Great Room may be used provided that it is limited to 3 people, or Boardroom 1 with a limit of 2 people and based on the comfort level of staff attending for distancing purposes.
 - After hours meetings may be held in the Great Room with a maximum of 15 people provided that a staff member is responsible for ensuring all attendees sign in, observe distancing protocols, sanitize their hands, and wear masks.
 - The Communications Coordinator will notify staff any time meetings are scheduled with non-Administration persons inside the office.
 - Coffee services are not to be offered at meetings with non-Administration staff.
 - Following any meetings held in the office, the staff member in charge of the meeting or their delegate is to sanitize the space with the appropriate product. Welcome Center staff may be utilized for sanitization based on availability and provided it is arranged in advance by the meeting organizer.
 - Staff may book meeting space with Communications Coordinator or Executive Assistant.
- Collaboration – We will be using email and Workplace to keep everyone up-to-date.

We want to be successful working remotely and here are some best practices to ensure this:

- Communication – Consistently communicate with your supervisor/manager what you are working on and from where you are working.
- Tolerance – Assume the best of intentions with written messaging. Without in-person interaction, it may be harder to interpret the meaning and tone of a message. If you are unsure, follow up by telephone. It is times like these when we should be especially careful to maintain positive communications.

Welcome Center

1. Welcome Center will be staffed to receive phone calls, receive and distribute mail and perform sanitization tasks including, but not limited to, wiping high-touch areas and ensuring hand sanitizer is available at the Welcome Center. This sanitization schedule to be developed by

Communications Coordinator and posted within the Welcome Center. Welcome Center staff to be familiarized with cleaning products anytime there is a change (e.g. various sprays or wipes).

2. Receiving deliveries:
 - a. During the delivery
 - i. The greatest risk is contact with the delivery person. When possible, deliveries are to be made by having the delivery person knock and leave the package at the door, then stepping back 2 metres so the package can be retrieved.
 - ii. If payment is required, clean the credit card and hands right away.
 - b. After the delivery
 - i. Wearing gloves, open the package outside if possible and discard packaging immediately.
 - ii. Clean the outside of delivered items using sanitizing wipes or disinfectant.
 - iii. Throw away any bags/boxes in garbage or recycling.
 - iv. Wash or sanitize hands and tools used to open the package.
3. A plexiglass shield will be put up at the Welcome Center to protect staff.
4. Welcome Center staff will keep a daily record of non-staff visitors; first and last names as well as telephone numbers. Staff arranging in-person meetings at the office are to notify the Welcome Center in advance.

Sanitization schedule

1. High-touch areas should be sanitized frequently with appropriate cleansers/ disinfectants by staff members (sanitization wipes or spray). E.g. door knobs, fridge door, coffee machines and dispensers, copy machine, etc. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used.
2. Cleaning staff (evening cleaning) to disinfect high-touch areas along with their regular cleaning duties. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used.
3. If cleaning supplies run low and become unavailable, the Executive Director will take measures to reduce number of staff in the office.

Set up technology and other ways of working to support remote work

1. Virtual communication tools aside from email and telephone include Zoom conferencing (contact Executive Assistant for availability/scheduling) and Workplace. Staff are welcome to set up personal accounts with Zoom (or other reputable video conferencing sites such as WebEx, Skype, etc.) for small meetings.
2. Staff who need assistance in learning how to use various communication tools or require offsite access to equipment to speak to their supervisor/manager.

Primary and secondary contact person for your staff

1. Staff members to provide feedback to supervisor/manager (primary contact) who will communicate information as needed to Executive Director (secondary contact).

2. Executive Director will maintain contact with supervisors/managers to collect staff feedback, monitor the local situation and provide analysis and updates to the management team.
3. Executive Director will maintain contact with the Emergency Operations Centre for regular updates on the status of the pandemic and provide updates to the management team.

Establish regular management meetings

1. Executive Director will schedule regular meetings with management team to ensure that everyone is engaged and able to perform their regular tasks to the best of their ability; weekly or as needed.
2. Anticipate a loss in productivity from your team members due to the stressful situation and be sensitive to this fact.

Supervisors/managers to invest time in building team morale and support

1. Check in with your team members daily to ensure that everyone is holding up and managing the stress well, offering support as needed.
2. Work to keep morale as high as possible to reduce the impact of the virus on staff and community.

Consider ways to continue operations

1. Supervisors/managers to examine any effects of lost productivity due to stress of the pandemic and report to the Executive Director, including ways to foster optimal staff performance.
2. Some staff may experience difficulties completing their tasks or attending the office due to child care constraints. Staff are to communicate this information to their supervisor/manager if it becomes a barrier to work.

Travel Postponement

We are postponing all work-related travel unless absolutely essential. We recommend that you also postpone all non-essential personal travel. If you must travel, take necessary precautions recommended by health authorities to prevent being infected by COVID-19.

Sickness and Absences

If you experience symptoms of COVID-19, particularly a fever and cough, if you have been to an area with an outbreak or if you have been in close contact with an infected person, please let your manager/supervisor know and contact the health authorities for further advice.

Staying Safe

Please be aware of your role in our community to help stop the spread:

- Contact - Avoid physical contact, such as handshakes and hugging.
- Hygiene - Wash your hands. Avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.
- Events - Avoid events with 10 people or more and stay 6 feet away from others at events.
- Coughing/sneezing - Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, ideally with disposable paper.

Mental Wellbeing

Please take the time to care for your mental wellbeing. Based on the World Health Organization's guidelines, here are some helpful principles to follow:

- Anxiety - If you are feeling anxiety, avoid watching, reading or listening to news that may increase your distress. Use news to take practical steps, and set aside a couple times per day to review the news, versus a continuous stream.
- Stress - If you are feeling stressed, take a break and do something relaxing, such as reading a book, going for a walk in nature or watching a television show.
- Empathy - If you are upset, be empathetic to the others around you that may also have higher levels of anxiety and stress.
- Language - Be careful in the language that you use by being thoughtful in your wording and by referring to “people who have COVID-19”, “people who are being treated for COVID-19”, and “people who are recovering from COVID-19.”

Subsequent Wave Strategy

In the event that a subsequent wave is imminent or occurring, this office will resume the measures previously taken to close the office to all but the most essential staff to provide services to the community to the best of our ability and as safely as possible, with the rest of staff working from home.

Conclusion

We believe these measures will help keep you, your family and our community safe. Our approach is based on learning what has worked in areas that have successfully contained COVID-19. We will continue to update our plan as information is updated as to when we will eventually settle into our “new normal”.

While this is an uncertain time, by working together and taking the measures needed, we can stop the spread of the virus and protect most vulnerable members of our society. Thank you for your help.

Darren Mead-Miller,
Executive Director

Resources

- Tsshaht COVID-19 information web page: <https://tsshaht.com/covid-19-pandemic/>
- The B.C. Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 self assessment tool: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>
- The First Nations Health Authority: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>
- Health Canada updates: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- NTC nurses are available by telephone for guidance: <https://hashilthsa.com/news/2020-03-19/nurses-now-available-phone-coronavirus-help>

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