

April 17, 2020

## TAHLTAN NATION COVID-19 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

### Important Message from Tahltan Leadership:

#### **NON-TERRITORY RESIDENTS ARE CURRENTLY NOT WELCOME IN TAHLTAN TERRITORY**

COVID-19 is not just a danger to our **ELDERS**. More and more, **ADULTS** and **CHILDREN** are starting to die because of this virus. **NONE OF US ARE IMMUNE.**

It cannot be stressed enough: **WE CANNOT AFFORD TO ALLOW FOR COVID-19 TO GET INTO OUR COMMUNITIES.**

By the time a person tests positive for COVID-19 in a Tahltan community, 50% of the community will likely have already been exposed. That means we will **LIKELY LOSE MOST OF OUR ELDERS** in that community. This virus will devastate our communities if we allow it to reach our Territory.

Right now, our communities are at a **CRITICAL STAGE**. Right now, we are **MOST VULNERABLE** because confirmed COVID-19 cases are both to the North and South of us.

Prevention is the only thing that stops this virus from reaching our communities and the only thing that will save Tahltan lives.

Please ensure you do the following:

**STAY HOME:** Unless you must go to work, or you are going onto the land to exercise with those in your household (people you live with).

**AVOID ALL NON-ESSENTIAL TRIPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY:** Stop going to other communities. Limit the number of times you to high traffic areas such as the store and post office.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING:** Do not gather in groups. Ensure you stay a minimum of 6 feet away from other people.

**WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY:** Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds or more. Soap is the best-known remedy for killing this virus so wash frequently.

**COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO ELBOW OR TISSUE:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your tissue in a waste basket. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

**DON'T TOUCH FACE:** Don't transfer the virus into your body by touching your face.

**SELF ISOLATION:** Anyone returning to the Territory must go directly to their home and self-isolate for no less than 14 days – so bring supplies with you. YOU MUST avoid all situations where you can accidentally or unknowingly pass the virus to our community members. Importantly, anyone can be a carrier, not have symptoms, and pass the virus to others. It is strongly recommended that those at higher risk, with compromised immunity including Elders, self-isolate. In other words, stay away from people outside your household. Overall, we ask that people stay at home as much as possible until we get through this severe threat we are faced with for the immediate future.

**WEARING A NON-MEDICAL MASK:** Wearing a homemade cloth mask in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing, will reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus.

Wearing a non-medical mask is an additional measure you can take to protect others around you. Wearing a non-medical mask is another way to cover your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from contaminating others or landing on surfaces. Just like our recommendation not to cough into your hands (instead, cover your cough with tissues or your sleeve), a mask can reduce the chance that others are coming into contact with your respiratory droplets.

If wearing a non-medical mask makes you feel safer and stops you from touching your nose and mouth, that is also good. But remember not to touch or rub your eyes.

It is important to understand that **non-medical masks have limitations and need to be used safely.**

**DRINKING ALCOHOL:** Alcohol damages your immune system, increasing your risk of catching COVID-19.

### **Tahltan Healthcare**

Tahltan Leadership has secured the services of a fixed wing plane, stationed in the Lower Mainland, that takes care of the medical needs of northern communities. What this means is that this plane can land in Dease Lake each day to pick up COVID-19 tests and fly them to Vancouver for same day results. This plane also enables us to bring in medical staff and prescriptions if necessary.

### **Red Chris (Newcrest)**

Newcrest provided 30 loads of firewood logs split equally between Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek. Tahltan Forestry Ltd. was engaged to do this work. Newcrest also covered the costs of delivery to the three communities.

Newcrest delivered a 200-litre drum of hand sanitizer, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, to each of our three communities.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the new measures put in place at Red Chris please contact either:

**Lorraine Callbreath**

**Email:** [lcallbreath@redchrismine.ca](mailto:lcallbreath@redchrismine.ca)

**Phone:** 250-771-4200

**Shannon Wilson**

**Email:** [swilson@redchrismine.ca](mailto:swilson@redchrismine.ca)

**Phone:** 604-800-9200 ext 162

### **Dease Lake Update**

The Dease Lake EMC has been working on ways to support our community with the cost of groceries, so we can keep everyone in our communities safe at home and the virus outside of the Territory. Super A gift cards – FOR GROCERIES ONLY – will be distributed. Those in receipt of these gift cars will receive a discount on groceries at the point of purchase.

Households of two people or less will receive \$40.00 per week while households of three or more people will receive \$60.00 per week. The Dease Lake EMC will do this for the months of April and May and will reassess before the end of May to gauge if this is an effective approach.

On April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 13<sup>th</sup>, you will receive Super A gift cards, which are for the two weeks following these dates.

Please rest assured that we understand that this is a challenging time and we are working on options to help you.

Dease Lake has received a 200-litre barrel of Hand Sanitizer. Everyone can go pick some up for there household. Thank you to Newcrest (Red Chris).

Please remember that the Dease Lake EMC is requesting that if you are leaving Dease Lake, if you have been out of town, and are returning to Dease Lake, or if you have someone who is new to your home to please contact:

Kailene Louie at the Peoples Haven: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday at 250-771-5577 alternate number is 250-771-3442

After hours please contact Andrea Louie at 250-771-3032

It is essential that as a community we do not travel unless necessary. Also, if you are returning to Dease Lake or are new to Dease Lake please follow the Self-Isolation guidelines which have been provided via Facebook and Mailouts.

EMC Coordinator is Tina Etzerza - 250-771-3405 or 250-631-2442 - [EMCDL@tahtlan.org](mailto:EMCDL@tahtlan.org)

### **Iskut Update**

In order to keep our people at home, the Iskut Band will begin covering the freight costs for our groceries; as a result, the Kluachon Store has been given direction to pass these savings onto our members by reducing the price of goods.

The Kluachon Store has increased grocery orders and produce is well stocked. Our store manager has ordered a new cooler to stock even more groceries. Milk has been hard to keep stocked, as the supplier is having a hard time keeping up with demand; as a result, we are exploring other options to ensure we have milk for our community.

Kluachon Café had a successful and busy first day back. A lot of happy community members enjoying good food!

Iskut has received a 200-litre barrel of Hand Sanitizer. Everyone can go pick some up for there household. Thank you to Newcrest (Red Chris).

The gate monitors are still working 24/7 ad doing a great job of providing critical information to people returning home from camp.

After our successful Easter activities and contests, new ones are in the works. Bingo is still going great and everyone is happy about that.

Any questions or concerns please email the Emergency coordinator of Iskut [emergencycoordinator@iskut.org](mailto:emergencycoordinator@iskut.org).

### **Telegraph Creek Update**

In order to keep our people at home, the Tahltan Band will begin covering the freight costs for our groceries; as a result, the Telegraph Creek Store has been given direction to pass these savings onto our members by reducing the price of goods.

The Telegraph Store has increased grocery orders to ensure we have what everyone needs.

Telegraph Creek has received a 200-litre big barrel of Hand Sanitizer. Everyone can go pick some up for there household. Thank you to Newcrest (Red Chris).

### **Tahltan Nation COVID Website**

TNCEMT understand that our members want to be informed, especially during times of crisis. That is why we have set up a Tahltan Nation COVID-19 Emergency Management webpage - <https://tahtlan.org/covid-19/> - where all of our members can inform themselves about COVID-19 and our response.

## **TNDC**

TNDC's priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, our communities and everyone we work with. We appreciate this a stressful time for Tahltan members and TNDC's employees, the majority of whom work at our Newcrest Red Chris jobsite. We work diligently to be a good partner with the companies we work with and the communities we work in.

TNDC has been working closely with the Newcrest team to support the initiatives and programs they have established relating to COVID-19 and provide similar programs and standards for our employees. We believe these programs and initiatives are valuable measures in supporting our employees and their families. We are working to provide clear guidance and strong support to help our employees and communities, to help ease concerns and to get through this together.

TNDC is also working with the Tahltan leadership to protect the local communities and respect the measures being put in place. We have been sharing information bulletins issued by the Tahltan Nation and Newcrest with our employees as well educating our employees on coronavirus prevention safety measures and requirements. TNDC has also taken measures at our office, restricting visitors, cancelling all business-related travel, and those TNDC employees based outside the Territory are being asked not to travel to Dease Lake until further notice.

## **TNDC PARTNERS**

TNDC-SRS and Sodexo provide camp services at Red Chris. They have joined forces with Newcrest to support communities in Tahltan Territory during the COVID-19 health pandemic. They will use their combined purchasing power to deliver groceries to the communities.

## **Employment, Contracting and Tahltan Businesses Update**

TNCEMT understands that many of you will be negatively affected - employment wise - by what is happening. If you or a family members employment has been negatively impacted due to the virus, please reach out to the TCG's Employment Director Kody Penner [employmentdirector@tahtlan.org](mailto:employmentdirector@tahtlan.org). The Tahltan Nation is here to help assist you and your family through these trying times.

Please continue to check the Tahltan Nation COVID-19 Emergency Management webpage regularly - <https://tahtlan.org/covid-19/> - to inform yourself of the services and benefits that are available to you.

## **3Nations Update**

Across the 3Nations the communities continue their hard work to protect, prepare and prevent their members from COVID-19 infections. Each community has taken their own

unique approach led tirelessly by their own Emergency Operation Centres/Emergency Management Committees.

Each community, and Nation, take amazing strides week after week and are all finding a steady pace to what is historic work. The 3Nations Regional Operations Centre has also transitioned from what was a frantic first few weeks, to now feeling grounded, and with regular coordination meetings emerging with each of the communities.

Over the years the Tahltan, Kaska and Tlingit have proven over and over that they can accomplish anything when they support each other. This fight against COVID-19 is no different and the sharing of knowledge and community best practices is helping neighbouring communities leap over what may have been time consuming obstacles. There is no need to recreate the wheel when your neighbours are willing to share and lend a hand.

Next week the work continues across partners, and Yukon/BC borders, to ensure there are clear standard operating procedures, so everyone has 100% clarity on roles, processes and supporting each other in a unified way.

Food distribution and supply lines remain strong, medical system is ready to treat as needed, partners are standing with all communities, and members continue to empower each other to stay committed, stay safe, wash hands and keep physical distancing.

It's hard to know just how much hardship and illness the various emergency teams and Leaders have saved, but we know it's working, and the Tahltan, Kaska and Tlingit are flattening the curve! Congratulations to everyone so committed to this fight.

ENDS