

COVID-19 Regional Update – November 19, 2020

Lots of important news to share as the Province has just issued new orders that go into effect at midnight tonight and apply to the entire Province of BC, including the East Kootenay.

The rate of transmission in BC has exponentially increased, and the new orders are being introduced in the hopes of acting as a "circuit breaker" in the chain of transmission. BC is seeing a significant rise in new cases and some hospitals and ICUs are starting to be stretched. As a result, we need to take more action now. I have tried to summarize as much of today's announcement as possible for you (as you will see it is lengthy). Please note that these orders - and the response to COVID-19 - is being directed by the Province and any questions you have about the new rules, status of COVID, etc. should be directed to the Province at 1-888-COVID19.

Latest Provincial Statistics (as of 4pm Thursday, November 19/20):

- *Note: the statistics posted on the dashboard and given in today's update varied by one or two in some areas (I have used the dashboard statistics in this update).*
- In the past 24 hours, there have been 536 new positive cases in BC.
- Of the new cases reported since yesterday afternoon, 177 new cases were in the Vancouver Coastal Health region, 308 in the Fraser Health region, 12 in the Island Health region, 28 in the Interior Health region, and 11 in the Northern Health region.
- There has been a total of 24,958 cases in British Columbia since January 1.
- There are currently 6,926 active cases in BC and 9,929 people under active public health monitoring after being exposed to someone who tested positive.
- There are 217 people in hospital and 59 people in intensive care.
- 17,206 people who tested positive have recovered.
- There has been one new COVID-related death in the past 24 hours, for a total of 321 since January.
- There have been four new health-care facility outbreaks in the past 24 hours. In total, 40 long-term care or assisted-living facilities and 19 acute-care facilities have active outbreaks.
- There has been one new community outbreak at an LNG worksite in the Kitimat area.
- In Interior Health, there were 28 new cases in the past 24 hours, bringing our total number of active cases in IH to 223. There are two people in hospital and one person in ICU. Of the 1,172 total cases in IH since January, 946 people have recovered. There was one exposure event reported this week at Kimberley Independent School and anyone directly affected will have been contacted by IH.

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- Link to video of today's update with Dr. Henry and Minister Dix: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P00avsC7KPo>
- To view the daily COVID-19 dashboard (updated at 5:30pm Monday to Friday): <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6f23959a8b14bfa989e3cda29297ded>

New Orders & Restrictions:

In an effort to break the chain of transmission, and to keep essential services, health care facilities and schools open, Dr. Henry has introduced **new orders for all of BC effective midnight tonight until at least December 7th at midnight**. The orders are focused very directly on reducing social gatherings, high-risk transmission activities and functions for the next two weeks minimum.

Below is a summary of today's orders and restrictions (*the last bullet point is the link where you can review the full data*):

- There are to be no social gatherings anywhere in BC. You can only socialize with your immediate household. Immediate household can include your roommates and if you live on your own, it can include 1 or 2 people you regularly spend time with.
- Delay inviting friends and family over.
- Reduce all social interactions outside of our homes.
- **NO** social gatherings of any size - in our homes or larger venues. If we have people who are doing renovation work in our house, grandparents coming over to pick up children, etc. those are not social gatherings and are not affected by this order.
- **The Province has now implemented the mandatory wearing of masks in all indoor and public retail spaces.** This does not apply to anyone unable to put on or remove mask on their own, or to children under the age of 2.
- The requirement of wearing of masks applies in all public and retail spaces and includes staff and customers except where eating or drinking. In a restaurant when you are not at table, you must wear a mask (including when coming in, leaving, going to washroom). Masks can only be taken off at the table to eat.
- All indoor and outdoor events as defined in the indoor and outdoor mass gathering order are immediately suspended across the Province for the next two weeks.
- There can be no in-person services for the next two weeks in places of worship. Weddings, funerals, baptisms are permitted (at this time) with a maximum of 10 people including officiant. No receptions.
- **Group Activity impacts** - All businesses and recreation centres that organize or operate indoor activities including spin, hot yoga and High Intensity Interval Training must stop until further notice. All other indoor activities are still permitted; however, facilities must

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adhere to the updated guidance the Province will soon be posting (which includes things like requiring additional space, reduced numbers, pre-booking classes, etc.).

- **Sports** - all sports will continue with ViaSport Phase 3 activities; however, there will be no spectators permitted at indoor and outdoor sports and no sport-related travel outside your local community.
- **Office space impacts** - Office space employers are being urged to suspend efforts to get workers back into workplaces and support working at home until the new year. Employees are asked to minimize all social interactions with colleagues. There will be additional requirements in offices that will include daily health checks and more guidance will be provided by the Province.
- **Travel** - The Province has not put a travel order in place; however, it is their expectation that everyone in BC limit travel as much as possible unless it is essential. Recreational and social travel should be limited - including travel within Province and other parts of Canada. Everyone is being asked to stay local and stay within your community as much as possible (this does not apply to people needing to travel for work, medical reasons, etc.). Anyone from outside BC is being asked to postpone their trip.
- **Link to page with full details of Order and restrictions:** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions>

Whew...that was another doozy. Throughout the news conference today, I couldn't help but think that we have a choice about the way we look at this situation. My hope is that we will all rally and that we choose a focus that will be both on ourselves individually *AND* others...with a lens of compassion and kindness. If we focus on how we apply these rules to ourselves (by wearing the masks, continuing with the handwashing and social distancing, restricting our social interactions, eliminating non-essential travel, and following the new rules announced today), we will be helping keep ourselves and others safe. If we continue to show others kindness and compassion, check in on people, and (even though I know it has been a long haul) double down on our efforts to ensure we don't see widespread community transmission here, we will collectively make a difference. On the other hand, if we focus on elements outside our control - like who is travelling from where - or criticize others for not following the rules, etc. - all we end up with is being angry and divided. That serves no one...especially when we do not know anyone else's circumstances. So, let's rally. Let's stay focused these next two weeks. And let's stay positive. I hope that our collective efforts will in fact "break the circuit" and help us get through these next few months together.

Take care of you and yours.

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