



[March 17, 2020]

ALL CORRECTIONS SERVICE STAFF
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

COVID-19 Response – Corrections Service

Given the heightened concerns over COVID-19, we want to assure all staff that contingency plans are in place and are being updated as the situation unfolds. Standing Orders/Directives have been updated for all correctional facilities and community corrections offices. Additional processes and procedures are being put into place to assist in this area.

In the interest of the health and safety of our staff, inmates, offenders and the public, the following precautions are being put into place for a minimum of 14 days (to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and as more information becomes available), effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

The following measures will be implemented:

1. Volunteers

Use of volunteers in correctional facilities and community corrections offices will be suspended (e.g. community AA).

2. Work Crews/Appointments

The activities of any facility off grounds work crews will be suspended. Essential appointments will continue as scheduled (e.g. medical).

3. Temporary Absences (TA's)

All temporary absences to/from correctional facilities will be suspended (e.g. work release).

4. Visitors (personal)

All personal visits for inmates/offenders will be suspended.

5. Legal Counsel/Spiritual Advisors/Elders

Confidential in-person meetings with official visitors (such as lawyers, spiritual advisors, Elders) will be accommodated as much as possible in exceptional circumstances, without permitting direct personal contact. The Visitor and Contractor Questionnaire must be completed prior to entry.

6. Contractors

Contractors providing essential services within the correctional facilities (physical building) will be permitted; however, the Visitor and Contractor Questionnaire must be completed prior to entry.

7. Community Corrections Reporting

Community corrections clients will be reporting by telephone. Each office will be responsible for notifying their local community RCMP detachment of this policy change.

8. Corrections Northern Recruit Training Program (CNRTP)

CNRTP at the NSCC is scheduled to begin April 1, 2020, though the program may be cancelled or rescheduled as necessary.

9. Leave

Staff leave requests will continue to be considered based on operational requirements. Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, previously approved leave may be subject to change to ensure we are able to maintain our facilities operational requirements.

10. Inmate Transfers

Regularly scheduled road transfers within the NWT will be suspended; however, air transfers will be considered, when required on a case-by-case basis.

These measures apply to all correctional facilities and community corrections offices in the Northwest Territories.

These measures are being made in consultation with public health officials, other correctional jurisdictions, and best practices, and will be reassessed on an ongoing basis. The GNWT is monitoring the status of COVID-19 in the NWT, and the Corrections Service will ensure that employees are updated as new information becomes available.

The GNWT has supports in place through the Employee Family Assistance Program. For immediate and confidential assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call 1-844-880-9142 or visit www.workhealthlife.com.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Supervisor, Warden or Regional Manager.

I would like to thank everyone for their professionalism and ongoing hard work during this time.



Blair Van Metre
Director of Corrections
Department of Justice

Additional resources:

NWT Public Health Website:

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/advisories>

Coronavirus Updates:

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/information-travellers>

GNWT Public Safety Notice:

<https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/public-safety-notices>

GNWT Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update for Employees website:

<https://my.hr.gov.nt.ca/node/5577>



Probation Services Exposure Control Plan

COVID-19

Government of
Northwest Territories

[July 9, 2020]

Purpose

The safety and well-being of all probations staff is of paramount importance. This plan is designed to ensure that all probations facility users are protected and the procedures, policies and environmental controls put into place to prevent and reduce the transmission of COVID-19 are effective.

Responsibilities

All employees, managers and facility users have a role to play in ensuring that the workplace is safe. Key responsibilities are outlined below:

Probation Services Management

- Ensure all employees and probation facility users are aware of the exposure control plans put into place, reasoning for controls and precautions to take in the worksite.
- Perform risk assessments with employees on job functions and update as needed.
- Implement controls identified in the risk assessments to protect workers and probation clients.
- Ensure up to date training is provided as needed and tracked.
- Provide personal protective equipment where appropriate and necessary and ensure it is being used properly.
- Ensure procedures are in place to communicate prevention procedures and protocols to all employees as well as other users of probation facilities.

Employees

- Understand the signs and symptoms of the virus
- Know how and when to report incidents of exposure.
- Keep apprised of workplace hazards and review the exposure control plan.
- Follow safe work procedures as outlined in the exposure control plan.
- Report any unsafe work practices to management.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment in a safe and effective manner where required.

Contractors and Clients

- Follow signage and direction from Probation Services with respect to entering Probation worksite areas.
- Follow required hygiene practices

Risk Identification, Assessment and Controls

This plan is specific to the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. COVID-19 is spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.¹

Signs and Symptoms (From Government of Canada COVID-19 website)

Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are similar to a cold or flu.

Symptoms have included:

- cough
- fever
- difficulty breathing
- pneumonia in both lungs

Recent evidence indicates that the virus can be transmitted to others from someone who is infected but not showing symptoms. This includes people who:

- have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic)
- never develop symptoms (asymptomatic)

While experts know that these kinds of transmissions are happening among those in close contact or in close physical settings, it is not known to what extent.

Risk Exposure: Activities, Tasks and Jobs in the Workplace

The risk of transmission in the workplace is primarily through the following means:

Direct Contact	Contact between co-workers, members of the public, clients, etc. where someone may be infected with COVID-19.
Indirect Contact	Contact with surfaces such as photocopier, counters, door handles, files, washrooms, etc. where someone who may be infected previously touched the surface.
Airborne Transmission	Infection where droplet or airborne spread is caused by an infected person

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>

	coughing, speaking or sneezing in close proximity to another person.
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The followings activities, tasks and jobs within Court Services have been identified as areas where the risk of exposure is present through direct contact, indirect contact or airborne transmission:

Activity, Task or Job	Risk Area
Court Functions	Direct Contact (employees and other court participants), indirect contact (surfaces within courtrooms including tables, recording equipment, etc.), airborne transmission (employees and other court participants.)
Client Meetings	Direct Contact (employees and clients), indirect contact (surfaces within shared office space), airborne transmission (employees and clients.)
Use of Shared Office Space	Direct Contact (employees), indirect contact (surfaces within shared office space), airborne transmission (employees.)

Risk Assessment

A detailed risk assessment by job function for Probation Services is attached as **Appendix A**. This is a living document and will be updated regularly in conjunction with both management and employees as needed. The risk assessment details risk levels of exposure and controls in place for each job function and the control limitations.

Preventative Measures

The following preventative measures have been established to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. This plan is aligned with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer’s (OCPHO) advice with respect to indoor gatherings and office environments as outlined in the “Emerging Wisely Plan²”.

Measures taken to ensure staff safety are below.

Phase 1

Probation Office’s

All probation officer’s transitioned to work from home, only managers attending work sites.

² <https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/sites/covid/files/resources/emerging-wisely.pdf>

Physical Distancing	All staff to remain 2m apart from others at all times in the event of need to attend office space.
Administrative Controls	All probation officers transitioned to work from home. Only Managers remaining in office space.
	All staff advised to wash hands regularly and follow appropriate respiratory hygiene etiquette.
	Staff who are sick are to stay home. Staff who need to attend office are required to self-assess for symptoms and complete worker screening form.
	Staff who self identify as 'high-risk' to discuss with Manager and Client Services Representative to review on a case by case basis requirements for employee
Engineered Controls	Office's remain closed to Public access with alternative service delivery options in place (phone/email communications.)
Personal Protective Equipment	N/A
Infection Protection and Control Procedures (IPAC)	Frequently touched surfaces to be disinfected regularly within office space. Staff responsible for wiping down any shared work spaces, communal areas (kitchen, etc.) Maintenance staff or the building landlord are responsible for the frequent cleaning of other areas within the facility (elevator buttons, railings, washrooms, etc.)

Phases 2

Probation Services is an essential service mandated by the Courts. Client supervision can't be suspended. Probation Officers were transitioned to remote work environments however difficulties with phone reporting have occurred which are impacting service levels and adequate supervision of clients. It has been manageable to this point only due to the fact that the courts have been delayed along with sentencing's. Once courts reopen in full, it will be imperative that probation offices are functioning at full capacity in order to process the work they will generate. PO's will need to be physically in their offices to meet with new clients directed to report by the courts, input client information on our information systems and to complete assessments in accordance with our supervision policies. This necessitates the return to the worksite.

Physical Distancing	All staff to remain 2m apart from others at all times. Where distance can't be
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	<p>maintained staff are to wear non-medical mask. All offices where physical distancing can be met, tape should be placed on the floor layout at least 6 feet apart to provide a visual aid to physical distance.</p>
<p>Administrative Controls</p>	<p>Number of staff scheduled in each workplace limited to maximums as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellowknife Office: 8 Behchoko Office: 2 Hay River Office: 6 Fort Smith Office: 2 Fort Simpson Office: 2 Fort Liard Office: 2 Fort Providence Office: 1 Fort Resolution Office: 1 Inuvik Office: 7 Norman Wells Office: 2 Tuktoyaktuk Office: 1 Ft Macpherson Office: 1 Fort Good Hope Office: 1 Deline Office: 1 Tulita Office: 1 <p>All staff advised to wash hands regularly and follow appropriate respiratory hygiene etiquette.</p> <p>All shared spaces are to be limited to one staff member at a time (kitchen, photocopier, etc.) Staff members are to wipe down area following use in accordance with enhanced cleaning protocol posted in worksite.</p> <p>Staff who are sick are to stay home. All staff required to complete worker assessment immediately upon attendance at work site and send to supervisor.</p> <p>Staff who self identify as 'high-risk' to raise concerns with supervisor who will work with Client Services Manager to review on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Engineered Controls</p>	<p>Wherever possible, all client meetings to occur in secure interview room with barriers in place. At any time a client is</p>

	required to enter the office space, a WSCC Covid-19 Client Screening form will be conducted, masks for employee and client will be mandatory as well as a temperature reading. Covid – 19 office procedures will be explained to the client.
Personal Protective Equipment	Disposable gloves provided to staff for cleaning surfaces. Masks provided to staff for court attendance and for any areas where 2m distance can't be maintained.
Infection Protection and Control Procedures (IPAC)	Frequently touched surfaces to be disinfected regularly within office space. Staff responsible for wiping down any shared work spaces, communal areas (kitchen, etc.) Maintenance staff or the building landlord are responsible for the frequent cleaning of other areas within the facility (elevator buttons, railings, washrooms, etc.)

Education, Training and Safe Work Procedures

All employees will be provided training on the preventative measures to be taken for completing their job duties as well as how to reduce the exposure to COVID-19. Managers are responsible for compiling training plans specific to the job functions (template attached as **Appendix C**). All training plans will be revised by management as information with respect to COVID-19 evolves. Management is responsible for keeping records of the training delivered.

Refresher training is required to be provided at minimum every 3 months for staff (or if practices/direction is changed) and must be provided to all new staff upon sign on.

The following guidance and procedures are to be posted in each worksite:

- Staff COVID-19 self-assessments
- Surface and equipment disinfection
- Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Correct donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (as required).

Public Areas

All public areas are required to have the following signage and direction:

- Direction to hand sanitizing station prior to entry of client interview room
- Self-Monitoring information sheet for COVID-19 symptoms

Reporting Requirements

Any staff member who feels that they were or could have been exposed to COVID-19 is to report the incident to their supervisor immediately. The supervisor is responsible for notifying the Director, Corporate Services or their delegate soon as possible. In the event of a staff members exposure to COVID-19, the following procedures are to be completed as soon as practical:

- In the event of an interaction with a symptomatic individual where there was risk of exposure, the employee is to notify their supervisor, go home, self-isolate and contact Public Health.
- The supervisor is responsible for clearing the immediate work area and restricting employee movement to the area.
- An investigation will be required for each instance of potential exposure to determine:
 - The route of exposure.
 - Determine the circumstances in which the exposure occurred.
 - Review existing preventative measures and whether they failed or were ineffective.
 - Recommend measures to prevent further infection and exposure in the worksite.
- The Director, Corporate Services is responsible for notifying the building facility owner, arranging cleaning and notifying the appropriate safety committee and coordinating the investigation in a supporting role to the Committee.

Contact Information

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Monitoring

Weekly safety meetings will be required for all staff and management to participate in. This meeting will present an opportunity for revisions to risk assessments, the exposure control plan and improvement of processes where required. If any staff members feels that there is a risk that is being unaddressed by the policies and procedures put into place they must report this to their supervisor as soon as possible.

Training Template – Safe Work Practices for COVID-19 appendix C

Employee name: _____

Position (tasks): _____

Date Training Provided: _____

Person providing training (name and position): _____

All supervisors are responsible for reviewing the below information with any employees attending a worksite. In the event of group meetings where information is presented and discussed, please ensure all employees sign off their understanding of the material on the group employee sign off page.

Topic	Initials (trainer)	Initials (worker)	Comments
<p>1. COVID-19 symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ cough ➤ fever ➤ difficulty breathing ➤ pneumonia in both lungs <p>Recent evidence indicates that the virus can be transmitted to others from someone who is infected but not showing symptoms. This includes people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic) ➤ never develop symptoms (asymptomatic) <p>While experts know that these kinds of transmissions are happening among those in close contact or in close physical settings, it is not known to what extent. It is therefore imperative that all employees follow the safe work procedures developed in response to COVID-19.</p> <p>There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19.</p>			
<p>2. COVID-19 is transmitted through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. b) Close or prolonged contact with an infected person such as shaking hands c) Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands. 			
<p>3. Safe work procedures for carrying out tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Proper hygiene and respiratory etiquette (reference posters in worksite). b) How to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering (reference posters in worksite) c) In all common areas, such as washrooms, photocopy area, kitchens, physical distancing of 2 meters should be kept at all times, and where that isn't possible only one person should be in the area at a time. d) How to properly handwash (reference poster in worksite) 			

Topic	Initials (trainer)	Initials (worker)	Comments
<p>4. Personal protective equipment (PPE) — what to use, when to use it, and where to find it. Provide employee overview of how to don and dof as well as direction as to where instructional information is posted for reference. Check each PPE item discussed and initial.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Gloves</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Procedural or N95 mask</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Hand sanitizer</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Disinfectant wipes should be used daily in individual offices and after all client visits. Common areas, such as a coffee area, kitchen area, photocopy area and washrooms should be wiped down after use.</p>			

