



Backgrounder: Order for Mines and Oil and Gas Remote Camps to Protect Against the COVID-19 Pandemic

Objective of the Order

The order is designed to protect public health in the Northwest Territories, and especially those of smaller communities who are more at-risk of serious strain from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reason for the Order

Mining and oil and gas companies have worked closely with our public health officials to implement many of these measures as advice already.

However, with the situation evolving quickly across Canada, Dr. Kandola believes additional measures are needed to ensure the right precautions are in-place to protect NWT residents from the risks of having a southern transient workforce entering the territory.

Measures in the Order

For workers

- **Every worker must practice 14 days of social distancing before returning to the worksite and report any symptoms:** this includes all southern transient workers *and* local employees. They will be screened and temperature checked **before they return to site**. Employees must also self-monitor closely and immediately report any sign of symptoms.
 - **Rationale:** If someone has been infected with COVID-19, the research shows they likely would have shown symptoms within this time. These measures will mitigate workers' risk of contracting COVID-19, and ensure anyone with signs of symptoms is screened out before traveling to the worksite.
- **Every worker must comply with all procedures and processes set up by their company to comply with the order.**

For employers

- **Companies must establish and ensure compliance with social distancing protocols for all employees at the worksite when they are not working or eating meals:** companies



will be held responsible if they do not have the right processes and enforcement policies in-place.

- **Rationale:** This is a way to make sure companies are doing their part to keep workers apart when not working on-shift and preventing virus spread.
- **Companies are ordered to use the absolute minimum amount of workers to continue operations:** this will be monitored by WSCC. Public health will act on any violations they discover.
 - **Rationale:** While most worksites have done so, this will reduce the number of workers on site and reduce risk of transmission while still maintaining operations.
- **Mandatory health screening must be done before travelling to site and before work starts every day:** this could include temperature checks, observation for symptoms, and assessments of every worker. If symptoms are shown, workers are ordered into isolation immediately and the mine site's medical director will immediately contact the Chief Public Health Officer for more instructions.
 - **Rationale:** This will prevent workers who may have the virus from spreading it to other workers at the jobsite.
- **Companies must complete workplace risk assessment before they travel to the worksite.** Each must be kept on-file and provided as-required to WSCC. High-risk workers are not to be permitted to travel to site.
 - **Rationale:** This will keep a record of all workers and their risk status, and mandate action to prevent high-risk workers from coming to site.
- **Companies must end the practice of buffet-style catering; establish high-quality disinfection and social distancing for common areas, and put up signs in front of all areas which are closed:** Common areas include gyms, recreational areas, communal areas, movie theatres, and personal services.
 - **Rationale:** Bringing people together within two metres of one another is one of the quickest ways for a virus to spread. Closing certain areas and establishing strict disinfection procedures will make work camps much safer.