

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #42 / May 20, 2020


Good Afternoon,

We hope you all had a safe, enjoyable long weekend and welcome break from routine. So many of us are finding it hard to be both parent and teacher in these challenging times. We wanted to begin this update by sharing **a video that the Westbank First Nation has posted** which reminds us that learning is not just school work and text book exercises. Thanks to Councillor Jordan Coble and his production team for sharing a traditional oral story with a lesson for us all to share the best of ourselves, even in uncertainty.




While the Province of BC is officially in Phase 2, most of us are weighing what that means in terms of continuing to protect our families and communities. How do we expand our bubbles and return to some of the activities of before, and still stay safe and protect the vulnerable? We encourage everyone to continue to follow the **advice of health officials**: wash your hands, practice physical distancing and **consider wearing a non-medical mask** when in places where physical distancing is not possible.

Don't bring the COVID virus home



Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. Keeping it clean can keep yourself, your family and your community healthy and safe.



UPDATE

The Prime Minister repeated today that the decision of when and how to re-open their communities remains with First Nations. "Indigenous communities are at a greater vulnerability to COVID-19 than others. That's why we put in place measures early on to help these communities protect themselves and be supported in this pandemic time. We know that as economies start to reopen, as activity picks up across the country, we're going to have to make, and local jurisdictions will have to make, decisions about how and where to reopen and we need to make sure that every step of the way people are working with all local stakeholders, including and specifically Indigenous communities and leadership, to ensure that we're not bringing in greater risks." he said.

As you consider what measures are needed for a safe re-opening of your administration offices and First

Nations businesses, please note that the Province of British Columbia has published a **guide to returning to safe operation – Phase 2**. BC advises employers develop a **COVID-19 Safety Plan** that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It is recommended employers involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace.

Opening of program to protect jobs and help businesses

The Prime Minister also announced today that the application documents and updated criteria for **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)**

for small businesses are now available, and that the program will be opened for applications beginning on May 25. CECRA will provide forgivable loans to eligible commercial property owners, who in turn will give a rent reduction of at least 75 per cent for April and May (retroactive), and June, to their small business tenants.

Applications will be accepted through the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website** beginning on May 25, and application documents can be accessed now.

Government announces support program for large employers is open for applications

Additionally, Finance Minister Bill Morneau and Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains, today announced the opening of the application process for the government's **Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF)**. To qualify for LEEFF support, eligible businesses must be seeking financing of \$60 million or more, have significant operations or workforce in Canada, and not be involved in active insolvency proceedings. The LEEFF program will be designed to protect the interests of taxpayers and will require the cooperation of applicants' private sector lenders, to ensure government financing is focused on sustaining operations.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SURVEY

Share your ideas and input! B.C. has flattened the curve and we are preparing to carefully re-start services, the economy and our lives. Your input is important as we develop our action plans.

Share your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

PARTNER INFORMATION

New supportive homes

In response to COVID-19, the BC government also says more than 2,400 spaces in hotels, motels and community centres throughout the province have been secured for vulnerable people to reside.

On Tuesday, **BC Housing, announced that it has purchased the former Raffles Inn motel in Prince Rupert** and will convert it into a permanent supportive housing building with up to 48 units, each with private washrooms, showers and mini kitchens. Construction will begin in fall 2020. The shelter portion of the building is expected to open in early 2021, with the supportive homes ready by fall 2021. Additionally, in Prince Rupert BC Housing has identified another site with 35 spaces as temporary accommodation for vulnerable people as part of its COVID-19 response.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to share resources and updates being offered by communities:

- **Binche Whut'en First Nation** shared the "Is your home prepared for the wildfire season?" video from FireSmart BC.
- **Siska Indian Band** posted a safety alert about the potential risk of alcohol-based hand sanitizer igniting if not completely dry (from hand sanitizer) before touching anything. They also shared information on BC's plan to restart school.
- **?aqam** posted reminders of the upcoming Ktunaxa Language with Elders Zoom Lesson and online Environmental Youth Summit.
- **Homalco Indian Band** posted about the opening of the 2021 Inspire Awards nominations.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Practical advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and business are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at:
Canada.ca/coronavirus and **Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

USEFUL LINKS

- Economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. As information is rapidly changing we strongly encourage you to visit the **federal** and **provincial financial supports** websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – **Information for community leaders**
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a **COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals.**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests:
aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

