

COVID-19 Update

For more information:
Canada.ca/coronavirus

Information for Indigenous communities:
Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region – March 24, 2022

Personal protective equipment supplier scam

On March 17, 2022, ISC issued an advisory to Indigenous communities due to the discovery of an apparent scam by a personal protective equipment (PPE) supplier.

ISC has been advised of instances of suppliers sending large unsolicited or unordered shipments of COVID-19 PPE packages to First Nations communities along with an invoice and demand for payment. This communication is intended to raise awareness and to ensure the safety of communities who could be impacted by this scam. The Government of Canada is not involved in the shipment of unsolicited PPE to Indigenous communities. Communities are reminded that you are not obligated to accept or to pay for shipments that you did not order.

We cannot vouch for the quality, efficacy, or safety of the PPE being delivered. We also cannot vouch for the legitimacy of any individual or enterprise that claims to be shipping unsolicited PPE to a community. ISC advises communities **not to use nor distribute PPE or any other materials or contents that have been delivered to the community under these circumstances.**

Should you or your community receive unsolicited or unordered shipments of COVID-19 PPE packages, ISC recommends that you do the following:

- Send a letter to the supplier, by registered mail or by courier, requesting that it provide you proof of the order, by return letter or e-mail, within seven business days after the date you send your letter.
- Indicate in the letter that if no proof is provided or no answer is received within seven business days, you will keep the supplies as a gift unless the supplier agrees to pick up the supplies at its own expense.
- If the supplier asks you to pay to send the PPE package back to it with a promise of reimbursement, do not do so. Require that the supplier first send you payment to cover the cost of returning the package.
- **Do not provide your back account number or accept any payment provided online as this may be part of an attempt to gain access to your bank account.** Instead, ask the supplier to mail you a certified cheque or money order.
- If the supplier threatens you with legal consequences, you may wish report this to ISC and to the police force that provides police services to your community.

Ontario changes masking requirements in indoor settings

As of March 21, 2022, masks are no longer required in many indoor settings in Ontario. Masks continue to be required in some settings; view the full list of settings requiring masks [here](#). While the requirement has been removed, this does not mean that masks should not be worn in your community. The province has been clear that there are settings where masking is still required.

The Government of Canada continues to be committed to supporting Indigenous communities in their response to COVID-19 in partnership with Indigenous leadership and organizations, as well as provincial and territorial governments. Given the high rates of COVID-19 in many communities, continuing to require masking in indoor settings may be the right choice to keep your community safe.

Supported by federal, provincial and territorial public health entities, Indigenous communities should institute health measures that best meet their unique needs based on their local epidemiology and context.

Finally, masking is only one of the tools that is used to slow down the spread of COVID-19. Getting vaccinated remains the most important step that individuals can take to protect themselves and their community. Avoiding gathering indoors and continuing to practice distancing are also important measures to keep everyone safe.

ISC will continue to provide public health expertise to support your decision-making in your respective pandemic response and recovery efforts.

COVID-19 Cases

*As of March 22, 2022 at 6 P.M.

- **13,606** confirmed in-community
- **1,008** active cases on reserve
- **59** deaths
- **12,539** resolved (92.2%)

COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario

*All data reflects totals from 8 p.m. on March 22, 2022

- **10,824** Daily doses administered
- **31,994,276** Total doses administered
- **12,098,568** People fully vaccinated

For the most up-to-date national information on COVID-19, visit the [Indigenous Services Canada](https://www.indigenousservicescanada.ca) website or the Government of Canada's Twitter and Facebook pages at @GCIndigenous and @GCIndigenousHealth.



Government
of Canada

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Canada

Government of Canada will remove pre-entry test requirement for fully vaccinated travellers on April 1

On March 17, 2022, the Government of Canada announced that effective April 1, 2022 at 12:01 AM EDT, [fully vaccinated travellers](#) will no longer need to provide a pre-entry COVID-19 test result to enter Canada by air, land or water. Fully vaccinated travellers seeking to arrive in Canada before April 1, 2022, must still have a valid pre-entry test.

As a reminder, travellers arriving to Canada from any country, who qualify as fully vaccinated, may need to take a COVID-19 molecular test on arrival if selected for mandatory random testing. For more information, please view the [full news release](#).

Call for proposals to help increase skills development opportunities for Indigenous people and aid in Canada's economic recovery from COVID-19

Indigenous people continue to face multiple and persistent barriers to labour market entry and success. At the same time, Canada's economic recovery from COVID-19 is challenged by labour shortages in key sectors. For these reasons, the Government of Canada is working with Indigenous people and organizations to help prioritize their access to targeted skills development opportunities that they need to succeed.

On February 28, 2022, the Government of Canada launched an open call for proposals for the Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF), a long-standing Indigenous labour market program that funds partnerships between Indigenous organizations and employers. The SPF 2022 call for proposals will be open for a 10-week period from **February 28 to May 9, 2022**.

Through targeted projects, the SPF program equips Indigenous people with the skills needed for in-demand jobs. The goal is to reduce the skills and employment gaps that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and increase Indigenous participation in the labour market. Priority will be given to projects that target the following sectors: the Green Economy, Information and Communications Technology, Infrastructure, Blue Economy and Indigenous Public Sector.

Indigenous organizations can apply by May 9 through [Grants and Contributions Online Services](#), by email or by mail. Visit the [Skills and Partnership Fund](#) for more information on how to apply as well as details on upcoming information sessions. Additional [background information](#) and associated links to the Skills and Partnership can also be accessed in the [full news release](#).

Click the banner below for a sharable list of mental wellness resources.

Help is available whenever you need it.

Immediate support is available 24/7 for all Indigenous people in Canada.

Update: Menstrual products for students

The Government of Ontario announced that they will begin distributing feminine hygiene products to all 72 school boards in Ontario beginning in the fall of 2021, in partnership with Shopper's Drug Mart.

On November 5, 2021, Minister Hajdu announced that menstrual products will be made freely available to all students at First Nations operated schools on reserve and in federal schools.

To best suit the unique needs of each First Nation community, ISC Ontario Region is providing \$557,355 in 2021-2022 to communities that operate schools on reserve. This will allow each community to determine the best approach to ensuring these vital products will be readily available to all students. For federal schools, ISC Ontario Region is working closely with the community leadership to determine how funding will be distributed to best support their student needs.

Government of Canada begins work on National Standards for Mental Health and Substance Use Services

On March 14, 2022, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, [announced that the Government of Canada is taking the first step in developing national standards for mental health and substance use services](#) by working with the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), as well as stakeholders and partners. National standards will help formalize what Canadians can expect in terms of the timeliness and quality of services across the country.

SCC will engage a diverse range of interested parties to inform this work, including provinces and territories, Indigenous partners, health organizations and people with lived and living experiences. To facilitate engagement, SCC will establish a National Standardization Collaborative that will provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute. Public consultations will also be launched later this year.

REMINDER: 2022 National First Nations Water Leadership Award

The annual National First Nations Water Leadership Award recognizes First Nations individuals or organizations that have demonstrated leadership and outstanding dedication to the advancement of clean and safe drinking water in First Nations communities. The winner will receive a trophy and \$500 art piece. Also, \$10,000 in bursaries will be awarded in the winner's name to First Nation applicants who are pursuing or furthering their career in the water and wastewater industry. **Nominations are open until March 31, 2022.** Learn more [here](#) and [click here](#) to learn about last year's winner.

Hope for Wellness Help Line and Chat
1-855-242-3310 or www.hopeforwellness.ca

Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line
1-866-925-4419

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Support Line
1-844-413-6649



Please feel free to contact the FNIHB Ontario COVID-19 generic inbox: sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca if you or your community members have any information needs.