

Public Health Considerations for Community Perimeter Security

During a public health emergency, such as COVID-19, First Nations have to weigh the benefits and risks of activities and also consider the importance of respecting individual rights and freedoms. Communities need to make these decisions in a way that best meets the needs of community members – while at the same time protecting the community based on the best available public health and community knowledge of risks to individuals, families, and the overall health of the community. Enacting community perimeter security can be an important means of complementing other public health activities in preventing and managing the spread of illness in the community.

Planning Considerations

It is important to weigh the level of public health risk and the community context in considering the when, where, how, and what of implementing community perimeter security.

Indigenous Services Canada's public health team (Medical Officers of Health, Environmental Public Health Officers, Nurses, etc.) are available to work with leadership, Health Directors, and Directors of Emergency Management to provide recommendations and decision support in the consideration of perimeter security options based on community context, preferences, needs, and strengths. The following are a few considerations for communities to explore in the decision-making process for perimeter security:

- Who will be allowed into the community based on the level of risk (members, essential service delivery, essential workers, members leaving to work outside of the community, etc.)?
- How many entry points does the community have? How many will be staffed? How many will be physically blocked off? What capacity does the community have to staff multiple entry points? If some access points have been barricaded, are there any impacts/delays to ambulance services to any residents?
- Are there outbreaks in nearby communities or local geographic areas? If there are outbreaks nearby, will this impact activities undertaken at security checkpoints?
- How will activities undertaken and information collected at security checkpoints be coordinated with the health centre and the First Nation's overall approach to COVID-19?
- What measures need to be put in place to ensure proper information management related to protecting individual's personal information?

Recommended Public Health Tools

The following information contains recommended public health tools and additional considerations to support decision-making in the use of perimeter security as a public health measure. Checkpoint staff should receive appropriate training/education relevant to all checkpoint activities, including opportunities to provide important public health information (general and specific to the community) to those travelling through the checkpoint.



Screening

- Incorporate a screening questionnaire to be completed for each vehicle. See the end of this document for an example of a questionnaire.
- Checkpoint staff should be familiar with the steps that need to be undertaken if someone answers “yes” to any of the screening questions (i.e. referral to the health centre in the community, referral to 811, denial of entry, etc.).
- Encourage everyone to conduct daily self-assessments for symptoms while they are in the community.
- Provide visitors with guidance on what to do if they become ill while they are in the community.

Testing

- Provide training to checkpoint staff on how to access COVID-19 testing in the community, so they can ensure this information is provided at the checkpoint.
- Consider approaches, informed by current risks and community testing strategy, to conduct testing – or direct referral to testing – at the checkpoint.

Provision of Public Health Information

- Consider posting signs at perimeter entry and exit points with public health messaging. This could include:
 - Actions to take to help prevent the spread of illness (i.e. staying home when sick, physical distancing, wearing a non-medical mask, etc.).
 - Contact information and hours for the Health Centre and advice to call 811 after business hours if they have any questions or concerns about their health
 - Encouraging people to download the [ABTraceTogether app](#) to help let them know if they've been exposed to COVID-19
- Consider providing handouts to all individuals passing through the checkpoint with public health information such as:
 - Measures that can be taken to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Examples can be found on <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19> and <https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx> and include the fact sheet [Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus \(pdf\)](#)
 - What to do if an individual develops symptoms.
 - Where individuals can access COVID-19 testing (if not included at perimeter site).
 - Mental health and/or other resources

Other Considerations

Security Staff Safety

The following measures are recommended to ensure employee safety at a perimeter checkpoint:

- All employees should wear a face mask if unable to maintain a distance of two metres as a means of preventing the spread of illness.
- Ensure alcohol-based hand sanitizer is on-site for staff to use.
- Maintain physical distancing of two metres.
- Staff are to self-screen prior to starting work.
 - If symptomatic, staff are to stay home and notify their supervisor
 - If symptoms present while on shift, staff should immediately notify their supervisor
- Establish a clear process in the event a staff member becomes ill or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Establish staff schedules/rotations that includes planning to reduce burnout and support the cultural/mental health needs of checkpoint staff.
- Provide adequate shelter for staff (a place to keep warm or out of the weather).
- Equip checkpoints with reduced speed signs and trained flag people (if necessary).
- Ensure staff have a reliable means to communicate (e.g. cell phone, two-way radio) should there be an emergency.

General

- Checkpoint staff should receive appropriate training/education and know who to contact should they require advice or decision support.
- Checkpoint staff should be made aware of current COVID-19 activity status and level of risk in surrounding areas each day to support a flexible screening process that reflects current state on a daily basis. This information is available on the Government of Alberta COVID-19 Status map at: <https://www.alberta.ca/maps/covid-19-status-map.htm>. The map shows the level of risk in regions and information about local health measures. It also shows the rate of COVID-19 cases, including the number of active cases within a given region. Based on this information, the daily screening process, including questions and assessments, could be adjusted to reflect changing levels of risk. For out of province data/numbers (to help assess risk if person from another province):
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html> (Change “Current Situation” drop down from “Count” TO “Rate”).
- To protect the privacy of any personal information collected, information management processes should be in place.

Sample Perimeter Security Screening Questionnaire

DD/MM/YYYY	Time: HH:MM AM / PM
License Plate Number:	Make and Model of Vehicle:

Name of Vehicle Occupant(s)	Phone Number(s)

<input type="checkbox"/> Non-residents: Reason for Visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Residents: Reason for Travel
Contractor	Returning from local travel Location:
Public Health Professional (doctor, nurse, environmental public health officer, etc.)	Returning from vacation Location:
Delivery service provider	Returning from an event (i.e. funeral, wedding, concert, party, family gathering, etc.) Event type: Location:
Visiting Family or Friends Name(s):	Returning from an area of elevated/high COVID-19 activity in Alberta (based on information given out at start of shift) Location:
Other (specify):	Other (specify):

Has anyone travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Has anyone travelled outside of Alberta within the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Has anyone provided care or been in close contact (within 2 metres) with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 without wearing personal protective equipment?	YES	NO
Does anyone have any of the following symptoms?		
Fever (feeling feverish or have the shakes or chills)	YES	NO
Cough	YES	NO
Runny Nose	YES	NO
Difficulty Breathing/Shortness of Breath	YES	NO
Other symptoms (fatigue, muscle aches, loss of appetite)	YES	NO
Names of those answering "Yes"		

*If a resident(s) answers YES to any of the above questions, advise the individual(s) to go home and self-isolate until contacted/interviewed by public health staff. Security staff would provide the Health Centre with a copy of the completed questionnaire.

*If a non-resident(s) answers YES to any of the above questions, advise the individual(s) that they cannot enter the community without the consent of leadership.