



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Public Service Announcement – January 4, 2022

YELLOWKNIFE January 4, 2022 – The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) is announcing temporary suspension of some of the activities and household gathering limits outlined in the Gathering Order – Northwest Territories Public Health Order (PHO). The suspension will go into effect at 5:00PM later today, January 4, 2022.

Over the holiday period the COVID-19 samples sent to an Alberta lab for testing were confirmed to be the Omicron variant. All new COVID-19 infections in the Northwest Territories (NWT) are assumed to be the Omicron variant.

The Omicron variant is extremely contagious and is spreading in communities throughout the NWT. The activity and household gathering limit suspensions being announced today are intended to slow the spread of the disease so any significant increase of individuals requiring hospitalization do not occur all at once and risk overwhelming our health system.

The temporary suspension of parts of the PHO will be in effect until 11:59PM on January 21, 2022 unless otherwise shortened or extended by the Chief Public Health Officer.

- Households will be limited to no more than 10 people indoors at one time with a maximum of five (5) non-household members allowed.
- High risk activities outlined in section f of the current PHO and below, will be suspended. Applications for variance under this PHO will not be considered at this time.
- Establishments, like bars and lounges, which primarily serve alcohol, will have a maximum of six (6) people to a table with no mingling of guests.

High risk indoor activities include:

- Dancing
- Singing
- Playing of wind and brass instruments
- Traditional hand games
- Contact sports
- High intensity fitness classes (gyms can remain open)
- Winter sports (examples are: curling, hockey, figure and speed skating and broomball)
- Swimming

Residents concerned about individuals or businesses not following the rules outlined in the PHO are encouraged to contact ProtectNWT to share their concerns. It is recommended that you include as much information as you can when you are calling (8-1-1) or emailing (protectNWT@gov.nt.ca). All complaints are reviewed and investigated where appropriate.

Rapid antigen tests are being distributed at both the Yellowknife and Inuvik airports to

travellers arriving in the NWT. People are being asked to test themselves upon arrival and either 72 hours or 4 days after their initial test. If you test positive using a rapid test please call ProtectNWT at 8-1-1 to report your test results and for guidance on the next steps. Individuals at low risk for severe health outcomes will be asked to isolate at home and follow the advice given by ProtectNWT on next steps.

Persons may direct inquiries about public health orders to ProtectNWT at protectNWT@gov.nt.ca or call 8-1-1 (in the Northwest Territories) or 1-833-378-8297. Full details and copies of the order will be available on the [GNWT COVID-19 website under the Current Public Health Orders](#).

Attribution

All commentary is attributable to Dr. Kami Kandola, Chief Public Health Officer for the Northwest Territories.

Relevant links

- [NWT COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [GNWT Daily COVID-19 Symptom Check](#)
- [Understanding Isolation](#)
- [Isolating Safely at Home](#)
- [GNWT COVID-19 website](#)
- [Vaccination Bookings](#)

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