

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 – Advisories



Below are questions we've heard from community members about the ongoing COVID-19 Advisories, put in place by the Lax Kw'alaams Council and Emergency Measures Committee.

Community Health

How long will the state of emergency last?

At this time, we don't know how long the State of Emergency will last - no one in the world knows. The Emergency Measures Committee spends all its time planning for the future. The procedures you see today were considered by the committee a month ago. We simply don't know the answer to this question. And yes, we are planning for increased vigilance. Community protection is now our priority.

Was the State of Emergency in Lax Kw'alaams passed by all of council?

The State of Emergency was passed by a Council motion, binding on all. No one opposed the motion.

What health equipment is in the community, if a COVID-19 case is detected? Are there any respirators?

Lax Kw'alaams does not have respirators. This is one of the reasons we are taking such precautionary measures. We do have extra oxygen tanks. Please watch the video by Mayor Garry Reece and our nursing staff on the Lax Kw'alaams website and Facebook page. This explains the situation with regard to respirators. The video can be found here: <http://laxkwalaams.ca/message-from-garry-reece-and-lax-kwalaams-nurses-covid-19/>

Are there COVID-19 tests in Lax Kw'alaams?

Yes, but they are only being administered for people who fall within strict criteria.

Are the nurses coming into the community at risk of bringing COVID-19 to Lax Kw'alaams? Are they required to self isolate?

Nurses are following a strict protocol put in place by the First Nations Health Authority and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

How will store owners self-isolate? Will their stores be closed?

Retailers who shop for groceries will be obligated to self-isolate, and are not be permitted to interact with the public. Store owners have been given instructions by our nursing staff. If they do not comply, they will be immediately shut off.

Travel

Why was the decision to restrict travel to Lax Kw'alaams made without notice?

A notice period would have resulted in a bottleneck and congestion of traffic to Prince Rupert, which is precisely what we are trying to avoid.



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Is the new ferry schedule only for store owners?

The ferry is still taking patient travel, mail, essential services, and groceries, to cite some examples. Store owners will be allowed because they are supplying groceries to the community, but the individuals who shop in Prince Rupert must self-isolate upon arrival, and they must speak to Administration and nurses first.

What are the essential services that are approved by the administration to travel?

Throughout this whole process, we have been thinking ahead: water, sewer, propane, gas, diesel, bulk food delivery, medivacs, RCMP, blood sampling, child protection. Essential service providers will be here for a quick in and out – no contact. This week we filled all the propane tanks. There was no interaction between the supplier and residents. We will soon be filling all diesel and gas.

What if a band member owns a house in Prince Rupert and Lax Kw'alaams? Are they permitted to travel to Lax Kw'alaams?

Homeowners in Lax Kw'alaams are not permitted to go back and forth between Prince Rupert and Lax Kw'alaams. They are permitted to come here and stay, if they self-isolate for 14 days.

Can we go on our boats to harvest seafood?

We encourage Band members to do so. However, please stay in our waters, and don't play games and go to Prince Rupert. Security is now in operation at Tuck and at the harbour. Please think of your community.

What about our internet and cable bills?

We are not charging for internet and cable services effective April 1. If you have paid, we will give you credit once things return to normal. Internet hook ups cannot be done unless we have the capacity to hook you up remotely from Prince Rupert. This will vary on your specific situation. We can't bring staff in to Lax Kw'alaams to do internet hookups. We don't see this as an emergency. It is an inconvenience.

Groceries

Will the store items be potentially contaminated?

The BC Centre for Disease Control has not informed us of any food contamination due to the COVID-19 virus.

Are off-reserve members allowed to send groceries to on-reserve members?

Yes, we encourage you to do so.

Will the Band be ordering more food for everyone in the community?

We are currently in the process of a larger, second order. It should leave Vancouver on Tuesday.

What kind of foods will be distributed to the community on reserve?

We are placing our second order now. The orders will change as we go along. For example, our next order will include meats, hygiene products, etc. We also have a refrigerated reefer truck that will be permanently stationed here for perishables.

Will the announcement be made on the CB and Facebook? (Not everyone has a CB or internet).

We will use the CB. The suggestion of Facebook is a good one but obviously this requires internet access. We are also putting out flyers when required.



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Will there be any food or financial assistance for off-reserve members?

At this time, our funding has been limited to on-reserve members only. We cannot fund off-reserve members because we simply do not have the resources.

Can I go into town for a multiple family grocery shop?

No. Please read COVID-19 Advisory #4. Many families are getting their Prince Rupert family connections to shop on their behalf and place the order on the ferry. By so doing, they are avoiding contact with others outside the community, which is what we are seeking to accomplish.

Is there a way to get pet food to Lax Kw'alaams?

You can use the same process as getting foods here (family places the pet food on the ferry). We have ordered a small quantity of pet food that should be here next week.

Is the Band going to monitor the price of food in stores on reserve?

This is difficult to do, and we are hearing rumours, but with each case we hear, the accusations are questionable. We have spoken to retailers on your behalf. If you have information, be precise, and let us know.



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