



Province Enhances COVID-19 Prevention Measures

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Today, Premier Scott Moe, Health Minister Jim Reiter and Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Saqib Shahab announced new measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan.

The Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan has made the following order pursuant to Section 45 of The Public Health Act effective Monday, March 16:

- The Chief Medical Health Officer orders that no public gathering of over 250 people in any one room take place. This does not include settings where people are distributed into multiple rooms or buildings, such as schools, universities or workplaces.
- The Chief Medical Health Officer orders that no events of over 50 people with speakers or attendees who have travelled internationally in the last 14 days take place.
- Retail locations and Faith based organizations are exempt, however, they should have measures (such as crowd size monitoring) that support safe social distancing and should seek guidance from the local medical health officer if necessary.
- Effective immediately, people who have travelled outside the province in the previous 14 days or have acute respiratory or flu-like symptoms should avoid visiting long term care homes and hospitals.

Additionally, the Government of Saskatchewan as an employer is imposing a number of policies regarding government employee travel, as well as self-monitoring and self-isolation procedures:

- Effective immediately, international travel (including the U.S.) for government employees on government business has been prohibited.
- Any out-of-province travel for government employees on government business within Canada will be restricted and is subject to approval by the Deputy Minister to the Premier.
- Any government employees who are currently travelling internationally (including to the U.S.), or plan to travel internationally for personal reasons will be required to self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada as a precaution. If they have or develop acute respiratory or flu-like symptoms, they should contact Healthline 811.
- All government employees who are experiencing symptoms of an acute respiratory or flu-like illness will be required to stay at home.

While these measures are being implemented as a policy for Government of Saskatchewan ministries, crowns, and agencies, the Chief Medical Health Officer strongly recommends that all employers and individuals across the province adopt these measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan, protect residents from exposure to the virus and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the health system.

In keeping with these new policies, budget day events on Wednesday, March 18, will proceed without the participation of invited guests. Members of the Legislative Assembly, media, and a limited number of staff will gather for these events while practicing social distancing. Further, all tours and public events at the Legislative Building are suspended and general public access to the Legislative Building will also be suspended.

Concerns regarding Healthline 811 have been heard, and following an action plan ordered by the Minister of Health, the capacity of Healthline 811 has been more than doubled effective 9 a.m. this morning, with additional capacity being added going forward.

The Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority continue to work together to expand testing capacity for COVID-19, including the introduction of COVID-19 assessment sites over the coming days.

“While these are significant steps that will help limit transmission of COVID-19, most important is the responsibility we all have to ensure we reduce the risk to ourselves, our families and our communities,” Moe said. “The best way we can do this is by practicing social distancing, washing our hands often, avoiding close personal contact like handshakes or hugs, and self isolating if we feel any symptoms of illness.”

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