

Media Release



Provincewide shutdown and stay-at-home order extended in Timiskaming district February 8, 2021 - For immediate release

The Government of Ontario has extended the provincewide shutdown and stay-at-home order in Timiskaming district for one week. The province plans to re-assess the situation and return Timiskaming district to the provincial COVID-19 response framework on February 16.

The extensions are due to two recent developments: a COVID-19 variant of concern identified in Timiskaming district on Saturday, and the proximity of a North Bay cluster of cases, one of which has been confirmed as a variant of concern. Prior to these developments, speculation in the media had suggested that Timiskaming district would move to the Green/Prevent zone in the province's COVID-19 response framework.

“Situations with variants of concern can change even faster than with the dominant strand of COVID-19,” said Dr. Glenn Corneil, Acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO for Timiskaming Health Unit. “Given the variants of concern in and near our district, the province needs more time to see how the situation develops before they re-open the district.”

All current restrictions will remain in effect until February 16. No new non-essential businesses will be able to open to the public until this time.

The Timiskaming Health Unit asks that everyone follow the stay-at-home order and especially avoid non-essential travel outside of the district.

“Variants of concern are more contagious—for instance, data shows that the UK variant has a 56% higher transmission rate—and they spread after shorter time periods of exposure to a contagious person,” said Dr. Corneil. “Many areas of Ontario, including Timiskaming and our surrounding health units in North Bay, Sudbury, and Porcupine, are now reporting variants of concern. It is essential that everyone avoid travel at this time.”

Timiskaming district is currently in shutdown. District residents need to stay home except for essential travel and need to avoid social gatherings. District residents are reminded to:

- Continue practicing physical distancing
- Wear a mask or face covering in public indoor spaces
- Wash hands with soap and warm water or use alcohol based sanitizers and do not touch your face
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Gatherings with people outside of your household are prohibited under lockdown
- Avoid non-essential travel within and outside of our district, especially to high transmission areas
- Stay home if unwell and contact your local Assessment Centre (AC) to schedule an appointment for testing
- Respect public health and any additional safety measures businesses have put in place
- Reach out to vulnerable people in your community who may need support

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.timiskaminghu.com and the [Ontario Coronavirus website](#).

- 30 -

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