

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

To: All Staff and Professional Staff

From: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, COVID-19 Incident Manager

Date: October 30, 2020

RE: Public Health Travel Restrictions: Guidelines and Process for Staff Travel and Time Off Requests

The health and safety of staff, professional staff, patients and the community is our utmost priority. Limiting non-essential travel is an important element of a strategy to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please refer to the guidelines and process below regarding travel and time off requests.

Thunder Bay District Health Unit recommends avoiding all non-essential travel outside of Northern Ontario. Our Hospital strongly recommends that staff only travel for essential reasons. As a result, the following requirements are in place to ensure a safe workplace for our staff, patients and families:

1. Staff who plan to travel outside of Northern Ontario are required to:
 - a. complete the Travel Form <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/> prior to travel;
 - b. Review the completed travel form with their Manager;
 - c. Submit the completed form electronically to ohs@tbh.net with the subject line 'TRAVEL' prior to the date of travel. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) will confirm the required self-isolation period based on the current guidelines for the travel destination.

2. If the employee has existing approved vacation that does not include the isolation period, the Manager, in consultation with Staffing Office as applicable, will determine if it is operationally feasible to approve the additional required time off to comply with the required isolation.
 - a. If so, the employee will request an unpaid leave of absence. The employee may request bank time (OT/STAT) or a vacation payout if available to compensate for unpaid time off.
 - b. If not, the employee must revise or cancel travel plans to ensure a return to work as scheduled.
 - c. For travel scheduled prior to October 6, 2020 that cannot be changed without penalty, the Hospital will make a reasonable effort to accommodate the required isolation period.
 - d. Employees who decide to cancel their travel plans may request to cancel their previously approved vacation per the collective agreement or Hospital policy.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is a leader in Patient and Family Centred Care and a research and teaching hospital proudly affiliated with Lakehead University, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and Confederation College.

Le Centre régional des sciences de la santé de Thunder Bay, un hôpital d'enseignement et de recherche, est reconnu comme un leader dans la prestation de soins et de services aux patients et aux familles et est fier de son affiliation à l'université Lakehead, à l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario et au collège Confédération.

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3. New requests for vacation/time off for the purpose of travel must include the required isolation period.
4. Employees travelling for compassionate or necessary medical reasons will not be unreasonably denied the unpaid time off for travel or self-isolation. Documentation may be requested by the Manager or OHS to justify this need.
5. Employees who are directed by the Hospital to travel outside of Northern Ontario for work purposes will be compensated for lost time for any required self-isolation and may be assigned remote work, where possible, during paid hours.
6. Depending on the circumstance, accommodations may be possible, such as remote work or rapid COVID-19 testing combined with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff deemed essential to patient care in order to facilitate an earlier return to work. A Manager can make a request for an essential staff to be considered for a rapid test if they can demonstrate operational need. Approval must be granted by the Director and EVP in consultation with OHS and is subject to the availability of the rapid test.
7. If travel restrictions/isolation requirements are lifted or altered an employee may request to cancel any additional approved time off as long as the shifts are available in the unit/department.

For more information, please contact your Manager/Supervisor.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.