

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK UPDATE
Bulletin #123e – COVID-19 – GNB News Release from Feb. 26 2021

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Changes to Orange and Yellow levels

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The provincial government has accepted Public Health recommendations to introduce changes to the Orange and Yellow levels under the province’s mandatory order.

The changes to the Orange level, effective at midnight tonight, include:

- Travel between Orange zones will be permitted and residents may include people from other Orange zones in their steady 10 contacts.
- Visits will be allowed in hospitals, as per regional health authority policy and guidance.
- Compassionate travel exemptions, with Public Health preapproval, will be extended to people living outside New Brunswick who are entering the province to attend a funeral, with public health guidelines in place, including a mandatory five-day self-isolation and a negative COVID-19 test upon arrival.

All zones remain in the Orange level under the province’s mandatory order. Further details about the updated Orange level [are available online](#).

Public Health has also recommended an updated Yellow level. It is expected that all zones will move to Yellow at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 7, as long as the situation remains stable and cases continue to decline.

The changes to the Yellow level include:

- Residents will be allowed to expand their steady 10 to a steady 15 list of contacts. They may visit venues together, including dining out at restaurants.
- Sports teams will be allowed to play within their league across zones, following their operational plan. Tournaments or larger events within a zone may be permitted, subject to approval of the plan.

- Formal indoor gatherings will be permitted with an operational plan in place as long as the venue is at 50 per cent capacity or less and physical distance can be maintained.
- Formal and informal outdoor gatherings of 50 people or fewer will be permitted with physical distancing in place.

A complete list of the updated Yellow level guidelines [are available online](#).

"If we are able to keep the spread of the virus contained, the rules and restrictions will continue to loosen as more people in the province are vaccinated," said Premier Blaine Higgs. "However, if we have outbreaks, we will not hesitate to move to more restricted levels to gain control quickly, as we have done throughout this pandemic, even if that means going from the Yellow level to lockdown."

"We recognize the importance of spending time with others in maintaining good mental health, but we must also be able to swiftly trace and isolate contacts when outbreaks occur," said Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health. "We have introduced the steady 15 in the Yellow level to strike this balance. With the presence of variants that can be transmitted more easily, it remains important to keep your circle of close contacts relatively small."

One new case

Public Health reported one new case of COVID-19 today.

The case in Zone 1 (Moncton region) is an individual 20-29. The case is travel related and is self-isolating.

The number of confirmed cases in New Brunswick is 1,428. Since yesterday, 9 people have recovered for a total of 1,360 recoveries. There have been 26 deaths, and the number of active cases is 41. One patient is hospitalized and is in intensive care. Yesterday, 858 tests were conducted for a total of 227,392.

Rapid COVID-19 test pilot project

A pilot project to provide rapid testing for asymptomatic people who regularly travel across the border for work or certain other purposes, as well as New Brunswick truck drivers will start today in Hartland.

“To help combat the COVID-19 virus, we are setting up rapid testing at a pharmacy for asymptomatic residents who regularly travel across the border,” Russell said. “The pilot project will take place at Pharmacy for Life in Hartland. Only asymptomatic individuals, who can provide proof that they regularly cross the border, may participate.”

Individuals who travel back and forth daily for work, truck drivers, and those who must travel for medical care or to obtain veterinary services, child care and child custody are encouraged to get tested weekly for COVID-19. Weekly testing for these groups is not currently enforced, as Public Health is working to ensure testing is more easily available. It is anticipated that testing at additional pharmacies will be in place in the coming weeks, and the public will be notified at that time. Some groups are exempt from mandatory weekly testing and a list of testing and isolation requirements are [available online](#).

“We have consulted with groups such as those in the trucking industry and have heard concerns from them regarding access,” Higgs said. “We want to make sure that testing is made easily available so that it does not place an unreasonable burden on people. Our goal is to increase COVID-19 safety for these individuals, their families and all New Brunswickers by detecting the virus early in the event anyone is exposed during necessary travel.”

The participating pharmacies must have a documented operational plan and follow proper infection prevention and control measures. In the rare circumstance that a person tests positive, the pharmacist will enter the client’s contact information online so that a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test at the nearest assessment centre can be completed. Individuals will also be advised to continue to follow public health measures.

Plan for rotational workers

The government is developing a plan to address travel restrictions for rotational workers.

“I know that the tighter border restrictions have been hard on many people,” Higgs said. “I have heard these concerns, specifically from rotational workers and their families.”

Higgs said the plan will be developed by Public Health and will be presented to cabinet and the all-party cabinet committee on COVID-19 during the second week of March.

He said more information will be shared publicly once it is available.

Exposure notification

Public Health follows a standard process when addressing instances where the public may have been exposed to a case of COVID-19. In cases where record-keeping is able to identify anyone who may have been exposed, officials contact these individuals directly and do not issue a separate announcement. In cases where officials cannot be certain of exactly who may have been exposed to the virus in a given location, Public Health issues an announcement to alert those who could have been affected and provides instructions.

Public Health identified a positive case today in a traveller who may have been infectious on Feb.14 while on the following flight:

- Air Canada Flight 8902 – from Montreal to Moncton that departed at 1:32 p.m.