

## EEYOU ISTCHEE DECONFINEMENT

May 22, 2020

### Why it's time to consider deconfinement

From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic on March 12, Eeyou Istchee adopted many measures to protect the health and well-being of our communities.

This resulted in our region having the **lowest rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Quebec to date**, because of cooperation between Cree entities, local leaders, and people in our communities.

Yet, these restrictions have come at a cost. They have affected the mental and social well-being of our people, and our local economy.

For these reasons, Eeyou Istchee, like many nations around the world, now sees the need for **a gradual return to some kind of "normal"** to reduce the negative effects of confinement on our population.

### What does "deconfinement" mean?

- **Deconfinement means gradually loosening some restrictions** put in place to reduce COVID-19 transmission, and allowing a return to some activities. As such, deconfinement marks an important shift in our mindset about COVID-19.
- **Deconfinement does not mean the pandemic is over.** It means the situation is stable enough for us to start thinking about how we can reduce the long-term effects of confinement on our communities, culture and traditions, while continuing to protect our population against the virus.
- **Deconfinement is a balancing act with its own risks.** Loosening current public health measures could lead to an increase in cases in our region.
- **Deconfinement is NOT a sudden removal of all restrictions.** It is a gradual process of easing some (not all) of the precautionary public health measures in a planned and organized fashion, over several weeks and months. What measures to lift first, and in what order will be decided in consultation with the Cree Nation Government, based on our region's specific needs.

### How will deconfinement happen in Eeyou Istchee?

While many regions of Quebec have started the deconfinement process, our region will wait at least 14 days after the end of Goose Break. This extra time will allow the CBHSSJB Regional Public Health Department to monitor a potential increase in the rate of infection, as families return from their camps.

- **If all goes well, Eeyou Istchee can start the deconfinement process in the second week of June.**

**We will take a very cautious approach.** Our population has particular vulnerabilities, and our health care system has limited capacity to cope with a large number of cases. For these reasons, we must be extra careful. Eeyou Istchee's deconfinement will take place in 5 phases, with a gradual loosening of measures at each stage.

## 5 PHASES OF THE DECONFINEMENT PROCESS

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resume outdoor activities</li><li>• Allow small outdoor gatherings (2 households maximum)</li><li>• Resume some health care services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reopen local businesses</li><li>• Allow small indoor private gatherings</li><li>• Gradually resume all health care services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reopen personal services and restaurants</li><li>• Reopen daycares and schools</li><li>• Allow medium-scale private and public gatherings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reopen all other businesses including recreational &amp; entertainment activities</li><li>• Allow larger public gatherings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remove all remaining measures including community checkpoints</li></ul>

**Each phase of deconfinement depends on the success of the previous phase.** The steps and measures of each phase may be adjusted as we move ahead.

We will watch the situation carefully for 14 days (equivalent to one incubation period of the virus), to make sure there are no negative effects, before moving to the next phase.

### Staying safe during all phases of deconfinement

In order to continue protecting each other, our Elders and vulnerable people, we must continue to follow basic public health and hygiene measures until the end of the deconfinement process:

- Wash your hands carefully
- Observe respiratory etiquette (cough/sneeze in your sleeve. Throw used tissue in a closed garbage can).
- Avoid touching your face (especially your mouth, nose, or eyes)
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect public spaces
- Maintain a physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) when in public places, particularly among vulnerable people, including Elders and those with underlying health conditions
- Stay home if you are sick, or if you have been exposed to the virus
- Limit non-essential travel. Mandatory 14-day self-isolation after traveling to a high-risk region will continue. Regions considered “high risk” will change as the situation evolves.