

NAN Evacuation Questions in a COVID-19 Context

*Answers completed by Emergency Management Ontario

What should I expect when getting evacuated? Will I be screened first? What if I cough, will I be left behind? If I screen positive does my whole family have to stay behind?

- All evacuees will be screened prior to departure using a questionnaire to determine their risk of having been exposed to, or demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19. Those who screen at a higher risk will be put onto a different plane. If one person screens at a higher risk, the others who live in their home would also be at a higher risk, so they would be isolated together. Regardless of the screening, no-one will be left behind if a community is being evacuated.

How many members will be allowed per plane due to social distancing measures? If the passenger number is limited how will this be factored into the evacuation timeline? What will happen if families need to separate due to flight restrictions/ manifest issues? What PPE will be supplied to the community for travel and by who?

- The Transport Canada guidelines state that on an airplane, passengers should either be physically distanced from each other, or they should all be provided with masks to wear on the flight. In the interest of getting as many people on the planes as possible, our intent is to provide masks to all evacuees to wear on the planes.

Will there be any screening done of passengers and/or luggage when loading the plan? Who does this?

- Passengers will be screened as described above. Luggage will be weighed, but not scanned. It is noted that, if we evacuate to mining sites, they do have requirement that all luggage is screened before entering their site. This will be done by the site operators using x-ray technology.

How much luggage can I bring? If I need more of my kids activities/games do I have to do it within the 40lbs limit?

- Yes, the 40lb limit still applies. This is a requirement to ensure the aircraft is not overloaded, and therefore continues to operate safely.

How will transportation from the airport work, will the driver have been self isolated for 14 days prior to picking up evacuees? How many members will be allowed per bus/van due to social distancing measures? Will PPE be required for this stage as well?

- The PEOC will arrange for buses to move evacuees from the airport to the evacuation sites. The bus drivers will not have self-isolated for 14 days, however they will have been screened and will wear appropriate PPE while operating the bus. Further, the bus will have been fully sanitized before being used for this purpose. Evacuees will also be required to continue to wear masks while on the bus. Again, the guidelines are that passengers should either be physically distanced on the bus, or be required to wear masks. Our intent is to have people wear masks.

Will there be any wellness checks when the evacuees arrive at the host site? Who does this?

- There will not be additional wellness checks on arrival at the evacuation site, as the screening will have taken place prior to departure. Wellness checks will be conducted throughout the stay at the evacuation sites, as per the usual protocols.

How will registration work? Will it be face to face or virtual? If phone or virtual, will there be translators? Who will do this?

- Registration will be done in person, with physical distancing protocols in place, as per the usual registration procedures. Currently registration at all sites will be done by the Canadian Red Cross, except in Kapuskasing where it will be done by municipal staff.

How will Liaisons work? Still with cellphones? Will they be given office space to work?

- Community Liaisons will continue to be employed as per the JEMS standard.

Will there be community drivers? If so, how do you track where they are going to go? What if someone goes into the host community?

- No, there will not be community drivers hired, as evacuees will be discouraged from going in to the host municipality. If one of the evacuees does find their own means into the host community, they will be screened upon re-entering the host facility.

What if someone needs medical aid and goes to the hospital, once discharged will they come directly back to the host site? Who looks after them once they are there?

- The specific answer to this question will vary depending on the particular circumstances which led to the hospital visit. Medical care will be provided at each evacuation site to provide for the needs of all evacuees.

How are meals served? How are snacks, coffee and tea served? Will they be allowed out of their hotel room? What spaces are available for public use?

- The intent is not to serve meals in congregate settings, but rather to deliver meals to rooms. Snacks will be handled in the same fashion. Evacuees will be encouraged to stay in their rooms as much as possible, and will be further encouraged to respect the physical distancing and other public health guidelines at times when they do choose to leave their rooms. Communications will be posted, in appropriate languages, throughout the evacuation sites to encourage this.

How do I get diapers and shampoos from Red Cross? How will they hand it out? Are they wiping everything down?

- The Canadian Red Cross will operate a tuck shop at each site, as per the usual process. Physical distancing and other public health guidelines will be followed in the operation of these tuck shops.

How can I do my laundry? Am I allowed to do my own laundry?

- In order to reduce the potential for exposure to COVID-19 which could be present in a common laundromat setting, the PEOC will arrange for a laundry service to do any laundry that is required. That said, evacuees are encouraged to bring enough clothing with them to last for the anticipated duration of the evacuation, where possible.

What activities will be available for me to do while evacuated? Where can I go to practice safety and be outside?

- Specific activities will vary depending on the location, but activities will be made available for all evacuees which respect the public health guidelines currently in place.

**Who will ensure people are staying on the host site? How will this be enforced?
Who is ensuring outsiders aren't coming onto host site?**

- As stated above, evacuees will be encouraged to stay on site, and not venture into the host municipality. We ask for the First Nation community's leadership to assist in conveying the importance of this message. That said, there is not vehicle in law to enforce this within an evacuation site, so evacuees will be free to leave the site if they choose to. On the other hand, all of the sites that will be used as evacuation sites are on private property, and therefore there is the ability to keep people out who do not belong at the site, under the auspices of the Trespass to Property Act. Security will be hired at each site to assist in enforcing this.

**Can community members be evicted from host sites? If so, what happens to them?
If they go out to the host site, will they be isolated for 14 days before being sent home to the community?**

- Although this is possible, to ensure the safety of the rest of the evacuees, there will be a high threshold applied before this is considered. Again, we would request the assistance of the Community Liaisons and the community leadership in assisting with any evacuees who may be causing problems.

Will all evacuees be isolated for 14 before coming back into their community? Will COVID wellness checks be conducted throughout the evacuation? Will extra test kits be sent to the hosting health unit?

- Wellness checks will be conducted regularly throughout the evacuation, as per normal protocols. Whether or not evacuees will be required to self-isolate within their community following their return will be at the discretion of the community leadership. Evacuees will not be isolated at the evacuation site before returning to their community. COVID-19 testing will be done as per the current public health protocols, so extra tests will not be designated for this purpose.

Will host staff stay onsite? If not, how are they screened?

- This will depend on the specific site used, but in most cases, staff will not stay at the site. Staff will be screened on a daily basis as they come in to work, and will follow public health guidelines at all times while working.

Will evacuees be given PPE for use at host site? Will they be given their own cleaning supplies at the host site (i.e. lysol wipes for tables, door knobs, light switches)?

- Yes, it is our intent to make masks available for evacuees to wear at times when they need to leave their rooms. Cleaning of rooms and common areas will be done by the site staff.

How many evacuees will be in one room? Do families have more flexibility to decide size limits/ room dynamics?

- Room designations will follow normal protocols, except that evacuees will not be asked to share rooms with others who are not from the same household (i.e. two single people will not be asked to share a room if they do not live together in their own community)

Will there be FN foot patrol? Will they be expected to enforce public health measures? Will they get PPE?

- Yes, foot patrol will be hired. They will be asked to encourage evacuees to follow public health guidelines, when they see that they are not being followed, but they do not have the ability to enforce that. They will be provided with appropriate PPE.

Will FN hired representatives get the essential worker wage increase?

- No, FN representatives hired do not meet the criteria to receive the essential worker wage increase. Wages paid to FN representatives will be as per the JEMS standard.

How will housekeeping work? What if they don't want staff entering their room?

- To mitigate against the possible exposure to COVID-19, it is important that all rooms are properly cleaned on a daily basis, using the enhanced cleaning protocols which will be in place. It will therefore be a requirement for evacuees allow cleaning staff into their rooms to complete this important step.