



March 16th

(COVID-19) Coronavirus Preparedness at Heart River Housing

Heart River Housing is following the recommendations of Alberta Health Services and taking the following precautions to continue to protect residents from the Coronavirus:

As of March 16, 2020, we are restricting access to the Lodges to essential visitors only (designated support persons) until further notice and, to this end, we are posting notices at all entrances to our lodges. We have also cancelled all bus trips and volunteer activities.

As of March 16, 2020, we are advising our staff that all employees returning from outside Canada, and that all employees who have anyone in their residence or household returning from outside Canada, must self-isolate for 14 days after the return and notify their Manager prior to returning to work. In addition, all employees who are travelling must notify their manager of their travel plans prior to leaving.

For more information on self-isolation please go to <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/health-self-isolation-information-sheet.pdf> to download a document from Albert Health Services.

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses.

- Some coronaviruses cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from common colds to severe pneumonias. Others cause illness in animals only.
- Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can spread from person to person through close contact.
- COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that had not been detected previously in humans. It is the cause of the respiratory outbreak in mainland China that has now been detected in many other countries around the world.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Patients with COVID-19 infection have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.
- While COVID-19 can cause serious illness, many patients have only mild symptoms. It appears the illness caused by COVID-19 tends to be less severe than some other coronaviruses like the one that caused SARS.

We all know that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) sounds scary and there are legitimate concerns about it spreading around the world, however we need to keep in mind that it is a contagious virus and we have a strong history of responding to contagious viruses and infections in our Lodges. From an operational perspective, we will respond to COVID-19 as we already do for things like influenza or other viruses.

All of our Lodges have stock of masks, gowns, gloves and other supplies necessary to respond to infectious disease control. We already have, and review yearly our policies, procedures and training in techniques to prevent the spread of germs specific to individual roles in serving residents. Hand sanitizers are available at our facilities and we are ensuring that they remain full and ready to be used.

We will continue to monitor that all staff are following proper handwashing techniques, and focusing on keeping our common areas as clean and sanitized as possible, as well as increasing the frequency of sanitizing the common areas, handrails, doorknobs, etc.

In addition, we are reminding our residents on how they can protect themselves by following proper handwashing techniques and the usage of hand sanitizers. Hand sanitizers are always available at our Lodges and we are ensuring that sanitizer is available and clearly marked at our entrances so that visitors have access as well.

If there is an outbreak we are prepared to initiate established quarantine protocols to minimize the spread of this, or other diseases as needed.

The Heart River Housing is receiving, reviewing and disseminating daily updates from Alberta Health Services (AHS), and Health Canada, as they relate to information and best practices for protecting our clientele and responding to this situation as it develops.

For further information from Alberta Health Services on the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) please go to:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

For further information from the Government of Canada please go to:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

For further information from the World Health Organization please go to:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>



What about Family Housing and seniors' apartments (Non lodge facilities)?

No administration/finance or unassigned maintenance workers are permitted to visit any lodges, unless cleared to do so.

Staffing access to provincially managed sites will also be limited to emergent items as we reduce our exposure to other sites.

All managers and any staff are to cancel any previously scheduled meetings, conferences, training, etc. until further notice.

All Heart River Housing Employees

All vacation requests received as of March 16th will be denied until further notice. We will continue to honor those that have already been received but will not be approving new requests until further notice.

All staff returning from out of the country will be required to self-quarantine for the 14 days and will be provided the ability to choose either sick days, vacation or banked time (if they have).

If a staff member takes testing and is positive, they may also be eligible for the recently announced federal employment insurance benefit to cover their time off. Staff that are experiencing the signs/symptoms are to call 811 and proceed with testing for the virus and immediately notify their manager of the results.

Any questions or concerns please contact your local lodge manager or Heart River Housing CAO Lindsay Pratt 780-523-5282 office 780-523-8518 cell or email lindsay@heartriverhousing.ca

Thank you for your understanding and continued cooperation

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q. Can I leave the lodge for regularly scheduled medical assistance (such as bandaging)?

A. No -Work with home care to provide any medical assistance you need within the lodge, if possible.

A. Yes only if arrangement can not be made and it is essential, then you may leave the lodge

Q. Can I still pick up my prescriptions/medications?

A. No. - Request for prescriptions/medications to be delivered or make arrangements with your Lodge Manager.

Q. Can I go out to buy specific groceries/snacks not available within the lodge?

A. No. Arrange with family/friends to get for you and contact the Lodge Manager to schedule delivery to the main entrance of the lodge; lodge employees will deliver to your room.

Q. Can I leave the lodge to attend special events (such as a family member's birthday)?

A. No. If you choose to leave, plan to stay with your family/friend indefinitely.

Q. Are we in a full lockdown?

A. NO, BUT only essential people are allowed into the lodge and we ask residents not to leave the facility unless it is essential.

Q. Are delivery services allowed?

A. Yes Delivery is restricted to essential services only and must be pre-arranged with lodge employees.

Q. When will the restrictions be change?

A. Heart River Housing is in hourly contact with Alberta Health Service and will make changes according to their direction.