

2020: A YEAR WE CAN LEARN FROM BY STICKING TOGETHER



On November 30th the Government of Nunavut (GN) announced that on December 2nd that some COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted or eased

throughout Nunavut (with the notable exception of Arviat, Whale Cove and Rankin Inlet). This was the second COVID-19 'shut-down' of 2020 - and the first one with the pandemic present in our Territory.

I urge everyone to keep-up-to date with Territory-wide, Regional and Community specific restrictions and guidelines by visiting <https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update> regularly.

We have publicly supported the GN's COVID-19 measures, precautions and restrictions, but in this message, I wanted to take the opportunity to recognize the citizens and residents of Nunavut. Specifically, I want to recognize the people who have been the first line of defense starting in March 2020 and are continuing their selfless public service even now that COVID-19 has worked its way into our Territory.

Thank you to the nurses, who in many cases are now having to isolate from family between shifts (especially in the Kivalliq communities). These professionals should be in all our thoughts and deserve our unwavering gratitude for all they do – each and every day – to keep us safe from this devastating pandemic.

The same is true in the Continuing Care Centers across Nunavut that care for our aged and infirm individuals. If things escalate many of the staff will be reassigned to different and unknown roles.

Other employees such as IT professionals are working to ensure that government services are able to be maintained while their coworkers were working from home. This is only a partial list of public servants who are working to keep us safe. Municipal workers and those who provide us with the power that keeps us warm and safe have made adjustments under this

bizarre and unprecedented situation.

I would also like to say thank you to all those in Nunavut who have been wearing masks, practicing social distancing and following COVID-19 related protocols and restrictions.

In my [previous message](#) I said that “together we can keep safe” and now I am asking all those in Nunavut to recognize those that are the glue that will help us ‘keep it together’.

As we enter the holiday season, many of us who call Nunavut home may not be able to travel to be with the ones we love and cherish. We may not have enough vacation time to cover travel and quarantine (both Nunavut and Southern requirements in some cases).

There are two ways people can deal with felling lonely or not being able to be with those that matter to us. One way is to let your feelings get the better of you, or the preferred method is to reach out to a neighbor or co-worker and make sure that they are doing well.

This simple act will not replace the warm feeling we get when we are with our loved ones, but, it connects us and gives us all a true sense of the holiday spirit.

Much in the same way the clear majority of those in Nunavut respected shut-downs and public health precautions to protect themselves and those around us I am asking us to take the same approach during the holiday season by sticking together.

Lastly, to our GN Members who are working through this unparalleled situation without a new Collective Agreement I ask for your patience and understanding.

We still have a Statement of Claim pending in the Nunavut Court of Justice asserting that the GN has engaged in Bad Faith Bargaining and we still have a dedicated and exceptional Bargaining Team ready to work for you. We look forward to providing an update and working towards a resolution to this unacceptable yet unavoidable situation.

Stay safe and healthy and enjoy the season wherever you find yourselves and remember that together we can get through anything - pandemics and the holidays.

In solidarity,
William (Bill) Fennell President, NEU

Your input is needed: The mandate of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) North Nunavut Regional Health and Safety Committee is to identify, promote and assist union's actions around workplace health and safety. PSAC Members, including NEU Members in Nunavut are encouraged to participate by responding to a survey so that they can better understand how the Health and Safety Committees are working.

The questions are intended to assess whether the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee in your workplace has fulfilled its duties and functions. Please visit <https://psacnorth.com/workplace-health-safety-nunavut-survey>.