



Remote Tourism - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What will the tourism season look like this summer in the NWT?

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), with input and engagement from Northwest Territories Tourism, has created a plan to enable remote tourism operators to host clients from outside the NWT at remote locations beginning this summer. This applies only to remote tourism operators in order to follow the current self-isolation measures that are still in place for travellers coming into the NWT. The operators must create and follow an *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan*, which will allow remote tourism operations to proceed with safety measures in place.

2. Where are remote tourism operators located?

Remote tourism locations are scattered throughout the NWT. Because they are remote, many of us who live here have never taken part in remote tourism services. This is an important reason why the GNWT can put this new plan in place. The kinds of operations that take place at these remote locations include big game outfitting, fishing and paddling.

3. What will remote tourism operators be required to do in order to host out-of-territory clients?

Remote tourism operators looking to resume operations in 2021 must submit an *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan* to the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) for approval. Each operations plan must address how clients will be brought to the NWT before self-isolating at a remote location to ensure there is no, or very minimal, contact with NWT residents or communities. Extra safety measures include not relying on commercial accommodations or food services within an NWT community, except while in transit, and following the proper social distancing protocols. Operators must have the ability to keep clients and all workers self-contained to a remote location. The Operations Plan must describe detailed plans for managing clients and employee interactions from arrival in the NWT through departure. The OCPHO will be working with operators to ensure these plans are well understood and followed.



4. Why are remote tourism operators allowed to bring in clients from outside the territory when leisure travel is still not allowed in the NWT??

Only those who have an exemption under Public Health Orders, like returning residents and essential workers, or those who have been granted an exemption under exceptional circumstances are allowed to travel within the Northwest Territories. Everyone who comes into the territory needs to file a self-isolation plan with a travel exemption request.

Now, the same is true for these out-of-territory clients, but they will be self-isolating at the remote tourism location instead of one of the NWT's isolation hubs. The remote nature of these businesses means clients from out-of-territory will have no, or very minimal, contact with NWT residents and communities during their stay.

5. Where will the tourists be coming from?

Remote tourism operators will be able to provide services to clients who are legally allowed to be in Canada. The GNWT cannot override any restrictions on international travellers that the federal government has put in place. Currently most foreign nationals are NOT allowed to travel into Canada – including for leisure travel, but this may change over the next few months as the rates of vaccination increase in Canada and other countries. For more information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

6. Does this mean clients from the U.S. or other foreign countries could be hosted by remote tourism operators in the NWT?

Currently, most foreign nationals are NOT allowed to travel into Canada – including for reasons such as leisure travel. The GNWT cannot override any restrictions on international travellers that the federal government has in place. If a foreign national from the U.S. or another foreign country is legally allowed to be in Canada, remote tourism operators will be able to provide services to these clients.

7. When will these out-of-territory clients start arriving the NWT?



Clients will start arriving in the summer of 2021. Before any tourists arrive, the tourism operators they intend to travel with will have to have an approved *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan*, and the tourists will have to have approved self-isolation plans.

8. Why is the Chief Public Health Officer making this change now?

This change is being made now to give tourism operators time to work through logistics to be ready to accept clients this summer. This includes submitting their application packages and providing any additional information required for approval of the plan by the OCPHO. They will also need to make any changes required to their operations to ensure they meet the terms of their approval by the CPHO. This is an addition to the usual planning and logistical work needed to set up their operations for the season, including booking clients.

Pandemic restrictions have taken a toll on the NWT tourism industry, which affects jobs, businesses and communities. While other businesses can survive by serving customers locally, a large part of the tourism sector in the NWT caters to out-of-territory visitors. By finding innovative solutions like this one, we are better able to support operators but also communities, other businesses and residents.

9. Will out-of-territory clients be able to arrive at and leave their remote tourism locations without having to stop in NWT communities?

Each remote tourism operator must address how clients will be brought into the NWT before self-isolating at a remote location to ensure there is no, or very minimal, contact with NWT residents or communities. If scheduled overnight layovers are necessary for out-of-territory clients while they are in transit, they can only take place in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Norman Wells or Fort Simpson. This must be noted in any Self-Isolation Plan submitted by out-of-territory clients to ProtectNWT.

During these layovers, strict rules will ensure there is little to no contact with NWT residents. During these layovers, tourists and tourism outfitters must follow the same or similar restrictions related to social-distancing protocols that are currently in place for essential workers.



10. Where will these clients and staff stay if they must make scheduled overnight layovers in these communities?

All operations staff and clients must isolate at an established Self-Isolation Centre or identify alternative arrangements in their submission for OCPHO consideration. Costs for these stays will be the responsibility of the tourism operator or the client.

11. If out-of-territory clients are flying into a local airport, how will operators ensure they don't interact with residents?

Each remote tourism operator must address how clients will be brought into the NWT before self-isolating at a remote location to ensure there is no, or very minimal, contact with NWT residents or communities as part of their approved *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan*. The remote tourism operator will be responsible for providing detailed information to their clients regarding arrangements, behaviour and responsibilities while in the NWT.

12. How will interaction between out-of-territory clients and NWT residents on flights originating from outside the NWT be minimized?

Transport Canada has jurisdiction over air travel and has measures in place related COVID-19 and air transportation to reduce the spread of the virus in Canada. These measures include:

- Requiring travellers to wear a non-medical mask at all times throughout their entire travel journey. Travellers who provide false or misleading information or refuse to wear a non-medical mask when directed could face fines.
- Conducting health checks of all travellers before boarding.
- Denial of boarding for symptomatic travellers or those who have been refused boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19, or is the subject of a provincial, territorial or local public health order.
- Denial of boarding for travellers who refuse to answer questions related to the health check, refuse to have their temperature taken, or refuse to comply with an instruction given by a gate agent, airport security screening personnel, or a crew member with respect to wearing a non-medical mask or face covering.



Airlines also have measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including strict cleaning routines and high fresh air turnover rates on flights. While there is not zero risk, taken together the measures adequately manage the COVID risk.

13. What about out-of-territory clients who must fly within the territory to get to their remote tourism location? How will interaction between them and NWT residents who aren't part of the remote tourism operator's staff be minimized?

The same measures Transport Canada has in place related COVID-19 and air transportation to reduce the spread of the virus in Canada for flights originating from outside the NWT apply to flights originating inside the NWT. Additionally, as part of an approved *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan*, operators must address how clients will be brought to the NWT before self-isolating at a remote location to ensure there is no, or very minimal, contact with NWT residents or communities.

14. If out-of-territory clients can self-isolate at remote tourism locations, can I self-isolate at my cabin or another remote location as well?

The OCPHO will consider exemptions to allow people to isolate at cabins or remote locations. Isolating at NWT campgrounds is not permitted. Factors that weigh into the OCPHO's public health risk assessment of this exemption request would be:

- Immunization status
- Communication abilities (can complete symptom checks)
- Ability to quickly access healthcare services if needed
- The cabin or remote location is not within small community borders or proximity to cabin communities with limited health infrastructure (e.g. no permanent healthcare staff)

15. What if I see tourists or tour operators in my community this summer?

Remote tourism operators can now operate with an approved *NWT Remote Tourism Operator COVID-19 Operations Plan*. As part of this plan, tourism operators will need to have measures in place to ensure there is no, or very minimal, contact with NWT



residents and communities and will be expected to follow them. There may be circumstances where tourists will transit through NWT communities under certain conditions. As well, once tourists have completed self-isolation, they may be able to make stops in nearby communities for supplies or services.

16. Will out-of-territory clients be able to stay in the NWT after they have completed their required self-isolation period in a remote tourism location?

If these clients have completed their required self-isolation period at a remote tourism location, they will be able to stay in the NWT longer if they choose to. These clients will be arriving in the summer of 2021. At that point vaccination levels nationally and internationally are expected to have increased significantly.

17. When can we expect to be able to allow tourists to visit the NWT without any restrictions?

The pandemic is constantly evolving and there is no precise timeframe for when tourists will be able to return to the NWT without restrictions. There are a variety of factors that will impact this such as:

- When COVID-19 infections will fall in other jurisdictions and vaccination rates rise, both nationally and internationally.
- Learning more about how effective vaccines are in preventing transmission of the virus and how well they protect against emerging variants of concern.
- What changes the federal government will make on international traveller restrictions.