

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: January 18, 2021

Health Unit Closes OFSC Snowmobile Trails

NORTH BAY, ON – The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is requiring all Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' (OFSC) trails and trails utilizing Crown Land in the Health Unit district to close effective January 21, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. for the duration of the Stay-at-Home Order and will be reassessed at such time. This closure is done under the Medical Officer of Health's ability to increase restrictions within their district.

In accordance with the provisions of the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act, and the Regulations thereunder, specifically Stay-at-Home-Order, and the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, and the Regulations thereunder, specifically Rules for Areas in Stage 1, the Medical Officer of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit deems it reasonable and necessary to close all Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' (OFSC) trails and trails utilizing Crown Land in the Health Unit district effective January 21, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. throughout the entire district served by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit in order to decrease or eliminate the risk to community health presented by COVID-19.

"We have been told to stay home and we need to do this. I have received many complaints about people travelling from other districts to use the local snowmobile trails, thus putting our district at risk of COVID-19. The OFSC recommends that snowmobilers avoid trailering and travelling to destinations that are outside their health unit region to snowmobile, but people have not taken the direction seriously," explains Dr. Jim Chirico, Medical Officer of Health. "We are also seeing groups of snowmobilers congregating on trails, in parking lots and other locations not maintaining a two metre distance and exceeding the gathering limits."

On January 12, 2021, the province of Ontario announced the change in outdoor gathering limits from 10 to five. Individuals must maintain a two metre physical distance from people they do not live with. Individuals who live alone are allowed to be in close contact with one unique home, but must physically distance with anyone who does not live in that home. Face coverings are also recommended to be worn outdoors.

"I do not recommend anyone gather with people you do not live with or if you live alone people who are not a part of your unique close contact home," states Dr. Chirico. "We are seeing an increase of COVID-19 cases locally and the provincial projections do not look good. Our local hospitals have very little surge capacity and limited resources which must be protected for the health and safety of our community. We must take extra precautions to keep our district safe. However, the key is we must all work together."

Outdoor physical activity, such as walking, running, playing outside and biking are important for physical and mental health and still recommended by the Health Unit. However, all activities outside the house need to be

done with extreme caution, following the COVID-19 public health measures, and should be done close to home.

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care. If you need further assistance call your health care provider or the Health Unit at [1-800-563-2808](tel:1-800-563-2808). If you have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, you should call 911 and mention your symptoms.

Visit [Ontario's website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

For more information please visit myhealthunit.ca/COVID-19.

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