March 27, 2020

VIA EMAIL

To mining companies and contractors within the Public Health Sudbury and District catchment area:

Public Health Sudbury and Districts is working diligently with all levels of government and community partners to limit the impact of COVID-19 in our communities. The primary focus to this end is supporting the implementation of measures to prevent spread from person to person. Protecting the health of your workforce and capacity of the health system are two related priorities for which we are seeking your cooperation.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts staff have recently been in contact with several mining companies within our catchment area. During these conversations companies have discussed the ways in which they are setting up policies and procedures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread within their operations. While some of these policies and procedures – which include screening at the worksite entrance, fewer employees in the lifts, and staggering of lunches, shift start, and shift end – can help reduce the spread of COVID 19, Public Health continues to receive complaints regarding social (physical) distancing at the mine sites. Without proper social (physical) distancing, a single case of COVID-19 could result in a large number of secondary cases.

Public health units across northern Ontario have been discussing ways to support large employers and all are moving in a similar direction. Many other large employers in the north, including some mines, have already moved to maintenance-only mode as a measure to protect the health of their employees while maintaining integrity of their business operations.

We urge you, if you are unable to implement effective measures to maintain adequate social (physical) distancing for all employees, to consider moving to maintenance level operations.
Public Health Sudbury and Districts has numerous recommendations for social (physical) distancing on our website which can be adapted for the mining sector. A Public Health Inspector may follow up with you in the coming days to learn more about the measures you are taking to protect employee health and prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition, please contact Burgess Hawkins at hawkinsb@phsd.ca or 705-522-9200 ext. 218 to discuss issues and potential options.

We thank you for your continued commitment to our communities’ wellbeing.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

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