



TULE RIVER TRIBE PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

Advisory: Covid-19 remains danger on the Reservation

Dear Tule River Tribal Community,

The Public Health Authority (PHA) continues to issue a Stay-at-Home order for the Tule River Indian Reservation, even though the state lifted their similar order earlier this week. See order below (No. C19-11), which requires everyone on the Reservation to stay at home unless you are doing essential activities, such as grocery shopping, working, or seeing a doctor.

We are keeping a Stay-at-Home order because the Reservation has more than 50 active cases of Covid-19 and approximately 30 people in quarantine due to direct exposure. In the last week alone, there were 14 new cases and there has been a steady increase in cases since December. Our plan is to lift this order when our numbers decrease, which we hope will be soon.

On Monday, January 25th, the state of California lifted their [Stay-at-Home Orders](#), including in Tulare County, because officials predict that the number of people in hospitals will decrease over the next 4 weeks. However, there are only 4 intensive care unit (ICU) beds available and less than 10% overall capacity of hospitals in Tulare County as of January 27, which are extremely low.

The Reservation remains at high-risk of Covid-19 until our number of active cases goes down. We are not out of the woods yet. Everyone must remain vigilant to protect yourself, your family, and your elders from Covid-19. If you have been vaccinated, please continue following the PHA orders, including wearing a mask, social distancing and reframing from large gatherings.

The health and safety of the residents on the Reservation depends on everyone following the orders. We must all do our parts to protect each other. We hope all our lives can return to normal once it is safe.

Please call the PHA hotline at 559-853-6123 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eric Coles, DrPH
Tribal Public Health Officer
Tule River Public Health Authority



TULE RIVER TRIBE PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

ORDER OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

No. C19-11

Amendment 1 (January 29, 2021)

SUBJECT: Stay-at-Home Order

I CURRENT SITUATION

Covid-19 is a highly contagious novel coronavirus that is spread mainly from person to person contact through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.¹ As of January 26, 2021, there have been 317 cases of Covid-19 identified through the Tule River Indian Health Center, Inc. and one death, 44,035 cases and 562 deaths in Tulare County, and 3,169,914 cases and 38,224 deaths in the State of California.² Recovered patients sometimes suffer permanent heart, lung, or neurological damage from Covid-19. The Tule River Indian Reservation must take precautionary steps to protect its people, community, and elders from Covid-19.

II SUMMARY GUIDANCE

The following order is designed to protect the Tule River Indian Reservation, its residents, and its way of life. It begins at 12:00AM on January 30, 2021 and continues until otherwise noted.

All persons on the Tule River Indian Reservation are required to stay at home and leave their households only when necessary for their health, safety, or welfare or as described below as 'essential activities.'

Individuals may leave their place of residence only for emergencies or to perform "Essential Activities," defined herein, which primarily include activities and tasks essential to health, safety, and welfare or in the event of an emergency, as described below:

1. To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their immediate family or household members (including, but not limited to, livestock and pets), such as, obtaining critical medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for an imminent health need.
2. To obtain necessary services or supplies such as canned food, dry goods, produce, pet supplies, meat, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residential living. When people need to leave home to obtain such necessities, they should do so in limited numbers and

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Basics>

² <https://tchhsa.org/eng/index.cfm/public-health/covid-19-in-tulare-county/>

should at all times adhere to all other PHA orders including mask wearing and social distancing.

3. Individuals are still permitted to cultivate food (i.e. farming) and tend to livestock. However, plan ahead to purchase hay and feed, if needed.
4. Individuals are not required to remain indoors. Outdoor activity is encouraged and individuals may leave their immediate residence or home site area for exercise such as running or hiking as long as they follow other PHA orders, especially mask wearing and social distancing.
5. Wood collection and hauling, with an appropriate permit issued; however, groups are limited to no more than 5 people, masks are required, maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible, and use hand sanitizer. Coal collection and hauling is also permissible with the same preventive measures.
6. Refrain from gathering with individuals from outside your immediate household.
7. Practice all individual preventative measures including wearing a mask in public, avoid public gatherings, maintain social (physical) distancing, remain in your vehicle for curbside and drive-through services.
8. These restrictions do not apply to Essential Employees reporting to or from duty at an Essential Business that is exempted from closure.

All Businesses not otherwise exempted herein shall be closed. The closure and cease operation requirement do not apply to Healthcare Operations, Essential Governmental Functions, or Essential Infrastructure Activities (as those terms are defined below). The closure requirement also does not apply to gas stations, grocery stores, laundromats, restaurants, food establishments, and hay vendors, provided they comply with the following requirements.

Rationale

The PHA believes that a Stay-at-Home order is needed to keep the reservation safe. Cases of Covid-19 have risen steadily since this order was first implemented in December 2020. In the last week alone, there have been 14 new cases of Covid-19 and our rate of new cases per person has been higher than Navajo Nation for several weeks. In addition, we have around 50 people in quarantine who were exposed to Covid-19. Our number of cases may still rise and there is widespread transmission on and off the Reservation.

Another risk factor is that the state of California has rescinded their stay-at-home order for the San Joaquin Valley earlier this week. This action was based on future predictions of hospital availability. But the current number of cases remains high. The PHA fears that this action will increase risk of transmitting Covid-19 in the upcoming days.

The PHA believes that a Stay-at-Home order is the best mitigation strategy currently available. We do not know where people are contracting Covid-19, a situation known as community transmission. We believe the best option in this situation is for everyone to stay home to decrease the risk of more transmissions.

Definitions

- a) “Essential Activities” are defined as (1) activities or tasks essential to the health and safety of one’s household (including livestock and pets), such as obtaining critical medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for an imminent health need; (2) obtaining necessary services or supplies (such as canned food, dry goods, produce, pet supplies, meat, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of a residence); (3) engaging in daytime outdoor activity such as walking, hiking, or running; (5) Cultivate food (i.e. farming) and tend to livestock; (6) Working for an essential business or in an essential government function, or providing essential infrastructure services; (7) Wood collection and hauling
- b) “Essential businesses” are any entity or organization defined, or deemed, by the Tule River Tribal Council as essential to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community.

III ENFORCEMENT

- 1) Violation of this order may result in civil fines set out in the Tribe’s Communicable Disease Ordinance, or any other applicable tribal, state, or federal penalties.
- 1) Pursuant to Tribal Resolution No. FY2020-110, the Public Health Authority requests that Chief of Police of the Tule River Tribal Police enforce this Order to ensure compliance with its provisions. The violation of any provision of this Order may constitute an imminent threat and an immediate menace to public health.
- 2) This Order shall become effective on December 17, 2020 and will continue to be in effect unless extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Public Health Authority.
- 3) The Public Health Authority must promptly provide copies of this Order as follows: (1) by posting on the Tule River Indian Health Center Inc., website (www.trihci.org/Covid-19) and all of the Center’s social media sites (2) by posting at the Tule River Tribal Council Administration Building and requesting that the Tribe distribute to all other tribal entities, departments, and organizations for immediate posting, and (3) by providing a copy to any member of the public requesting a copy. In addition, the owner, manager, or operator of any facility that is likely to be impacted by this Order is strongly

encouraged to post a copy of this Order onsite and to provide a copy to any member of the public requesting a copy.

- 4) If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

Signature: _____
Tribal Public Health Officer

Date: _____