



NRS SECTOR COVID-19 ASSISTANCE

- Over 400 NRS staff
- 63,000+ staff hours
- 7 days a week

NRS SECTOR AGENCIES

NRS agencies engaged in these activities include:

- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Environmental Assessment Office
- Agricultural Land Commission
- BC Oil and Gas Commission

In the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Provincial Health Officer issued orders under the *Public Health Act* that delegated authority¹ to staff in Natural Resource Sector (NRS) agencies to assist with the Province's response to the pandemic. The authority enabled staff to assist with activities such as conducting inspections of industrial camps (forestry and mining work camps), conducting inspections of farm worker accommodations and conducting screening at the Vancouver International Airport and the US/Canada border crossings.

COVID-19 FARM INSPECTIONS

Domestic and temporary foreign farm worker inspections were established to allow for B.C. food production to continue under safe conditions. COVID-19 requirements included worker quarantine, accommodation inspections and work site inspections to ensure safe working conditions.

- 750+ site inspections were completed
- 6,800+ temporary farm workers have been successfully and safely employed

Staff from across the NRS have come together to provide COVID-19 support wherever it is required. Many staff assumed different roles in order to respond to emerging needs. For example, forestry and range staff assisted with farm accommodation inspections. Across the sector, the demands of meeting the response to the pandemic require staff to demonstrate their flexibility and responsiveness in meeting new and evolving challenges.

COVID-19 inspections and monitoring will be ongoing as long as the delegated authorities from the Provincial Health Officer are in place. NRS agency staff will continue to support the Government of B.C.'s efforts to control COVID-19 and keep the natural resource sector operational as our understanding and management of COVID-19 continues to evolve.

¹ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

NRS COVID-19 RELATED ACTIVITIES

INSPECTIONS

- Domestic farm worker inspections
- Temporary foreign farm worker inspections
- Silviculture tree planting camp inspections
- Forestry activity inspections (logging camps, etc.)
- Mining camp inspections
- Oil and gas industrial camp inspections

NRS COVID-19 RELATED ACTIVITIES

MONITORING and OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Land and air border crossing checkpoints and traveller quarantine plans
- BC Parks closures and related park patrols
- Enhanced field presence due to increased pressures on the land base (eg. illegal hunting, angling and harvesting)
- Supporting access restrictions to locations such as Haida Gwaii

Snapshot of Activities from 2020

With experience gained from wildfire emergency management, a critical incident command system team was established that oversaw much of the coordinated COVID-19 work across the agencies.

The team established a self-reporting online application for companies to report when an industrial camp was being established and attest that they were meeting COVID-19 protocols. This information was then used to identify and track both remote and on-site inspections. If mandatory requirements were not met after attestations and inspections were complete, further enforcement action was undertaken by the regional health authority.

Industrial camp inspections were completed by various agencies. For example, the Site C project was inspected by the regional health authority, while mines were inspected by Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation staff. The BC Oil and Gas Commission inspected oil and gas camps to ensure companies have the proper COVID-19 health and safety protocols in place.

The early pandemic brought an unprecedented amount of activity and pressure on outdoor recreation throughout British Columbia. BC Parks saw an increase in use of parks as people sought to spend more time outdoors. The Conservation Officer Service saw a dramatic increase in hunting, fishing and backcountry activity. Natural Resource Officers from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development also increased their field presence during this time. These agencies were required to monitor and enforce emerging COVID-19 restrictions such as closed areas and large gatherings and increase monitoring and enforcement of illegal activity.

COVID-19 MINING EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT CAMP INSPECTIONS

Market conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic diminished the number of mining field camps in 2020. Mineral development and exploration are core components of the life cycle of mining and a key employer and contributor to local economies.

- 120+ remote and on-site inspections completed
- 1,600+ workers provided COVID-19 safe accommodations and camp operations

