



State of Alaska  
DNR  
Division of Forestry  
Covid-19 UPDATE

Issue 2.  
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Thanks for all that you are doing to help keep yourselves and those around you healthy. Keep that up! We appreciate your questions and are doing the best that we can to provide you with timely and accurate answers with some understanding that the answers may change over time. We have been able to answer many of your questions; however, the unanswered questions are among the most important ones. In our attempts to answer some questions related to travel, cleaning, testing, and other best management practices, we have found that the answers can be conflicted or not available yet. We are working with our Management Team, the DNR Commissioner, interagency partners, and many of you to give the correct answers. We appreciate the best practices that you are using and developing. Together we will establish the final BMPs and use them consistently throughout the Division. Thanks for your understanding and patience. Keep those questions coming and if you have suggestions how we can better serve you and keep us healthy, let us know.

**Important tasks for you/your office to complete by April 15, 2020:**

1. [Emergency Contact Form](#)
2. Continuity of Operations Plan for your Area/Office/Facility [[COOP template](#)]
3. Employee Availability Spreadsheets
  - a. Available/Unavailable to complete essential functions of each employee's position, projected out for two weeks, completed daily. Tim Dabney will share through OneDrive. All permanent employees will be listed on the form.
  - b. Detailed tracking form—Tim will email an optional form to area leads. You can use a different form, but keep in mind Tim's form doesn't violate HIPAA, and might be useful to compile all area tracking forms later.

An online resource link for employees can now be accessed by buttons on the [DOF home page](#) called "[COVID-19 Response Tools](#)."

Answers to the questions from the last two weeks are attached in a document accompanying this newsletter. Supervisors will also have access to questions and answers in MS Teams [DNR DOF COVID-19 PLUS.../General/Questions & Answers/...] We will be continuously be updating the website and the frequently asked questions (FAQs) as more tools are developed and responses are validated.

Norm McDonald, Chief of Fire, has issued a [letter of intent](#) outlining the strategies and impacts of resource limitations and impacts of COVID-19.

The Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) **has suspended all burn permits, both small and large-scale, effective at midnight on April 30.** This is an example of the impacts of COVID-19 and anticipated shortages on Alaska's wildland firefighting resources.

Feel free to share this newsletter with friends and family. Thanks for reading,

Tim Dabney, Tom Kurth, Sarah Saarloos, Danette Berkowitz, Alison Arians, Tom Greiling, Tim Mowry, Kelly Clemons

## **SAFETY:**

### **Cleaning Supplies Bulk Order and Sources!**

We have gotten a source of cleaning supplies for a DOF bulk order through Three Bears. Please, each area submit your wish lists for cleaning supplies ASAP to Michael Burkhead [michael.burkhead@alaska.gov] **no later than close of business on Monday, April 13th.**

Also, Food Services of America (FSA) has gloves and disinfectant spray, and DOF has an account, so you can try ordering cleaning supplies through them.

**Area offices should try to purchase as many cleaning, sanitizing and PPE items as possible from local sources. We are prioritizing warehouse stock for offices that are remote or limited in their ability to purchase these supplies locally.** DOF is working on statewide inventory and needs for the State for the 2020 fire season.

Currently, medical supplies are given a priority to healthcare providers. Stand by as this status is likely to change. DOF Fire Support staff is working with State EOC (Emergency Operations Center) to get on the priority list, but direction now is to go to our own vendors or local retailers first.

### **Employee Testing for COVID-19**

Area Offices should seek out their local resources (Health Care, Clinic, etc.) and determine which provider is most suitable for their needs. Services may vary, for example, some may require a physician's referral, while others offer a simple triage or questioning process to assess access to their testing services. Emergency First Responders are given priority access to testing. Some testing providers may provide an alternative test series for first responders who do not have signs and symptoms or known exposure. The intent is to narrow down the quarantine window for employees who have travelled from 14 days to a shorter period of approximately 3-6 days, while waiting for return of test results. This would depend on your provider (you will need to inquire with them about this).

Other items of consideration to ask a provider are: How many people can they test at one time, what is the process for registration, and what is the billing process?

Once you have identified and established a viable resource for testing your employees, please provide that information to Tom Greiling. We will then develop a list for statewide access to these resources.

### **Teledoc**

**You can take work time to set up your registration—get signed up NOW in case you get sick!**

[Teledoc](#) is a great way to consult a doctor or nurse if you don't want to visit a hospital or clinic. Teledoc gives you 24/7/365 access to health care for non-emergency conditions by web, phone (1-800-Teledoc) or mobile app. For example, if you have symptoms of the flu, you can contact Teladoc and a doctor can evaluate and help with next steps when necessary.

### **Decontamination (Decon) for facilities and/or equipment**

Vendors can be identified and established at the Area or Sectional Office level. Tom Greiling is in communication with vendors and in the process of establishing their services for DOF. Once these vendors have been established through procurement, we can add them to our Decon toolbox. Like the COVID-19 testing, we need to tract these resources on a statewide level. Communicate the information to Tom Greiling if you establish

these services. We are working on employee guidance and procedures for implementing a Decon response from start to finish.

**Facilities:** CDC guide for [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#) and [Household Cleaning](#) for suspected or confirmed Coronavirus disease.

**SIGNAGE/POSTERS:** Here are some links for CDC posters for offices: [Hand-washing posters](#) and [Stop the spread of germs](#)

### **Face Coverings:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released [updated recommendations](#) on the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

The CDC and the State of Alaska Chief Medical Officer (Dr. Anne Zink) is advising that all persons should wear face masks when in proximity of other people. This is an effective mitigation for COVID-19 and is critical in preventing its spread. **If you are on the job with other people or out in the public, you should wear a face covering.** Bandanas or buff face masks can be used in place of a mask. Cloth face coverings should be laundered daily, so each employee should have at least two masks. N-95 masks are prioritized for medical workers (EMTs and Fire Medics).

Face coverings should be maintained in a sanitary manner and should not be distracting or offensive to others. The CDC provides [information on how to make and wear cloth face coverings](#). CDC recommends that face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- be secured with ties or ear loops;
- include multiple layers of fabric;
- allow for breathing without restriction; and
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

How to wear a face covering:

1. Make sure the face cover covers both nose and mouth
2. Do not remove the face covering until you return home
3. When removing face covering, do not touch the front (it could be dirty) and remove by grabbing the ear loops and put into a laundry container.
4. Wash hands before and after removing face covering
5. Wash face covering in hot, soapy water between uses.
6. Continue practicing social distancing, washing hands often.

### **Physical/Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene:**

It is important to emphasize that face coverings are not a replacement for proper physical distancing and hand hygiene. Employees should continue to:

- Minimize your contact with others as much as possible through proper social distancing.
  - Increase distance between yourself and other mission-essential employees within your workspace as much as possible.
  - Limit conversations with other mission essential employees and stand as far apart as possible.
  - Do not hold large, in-person meetings.
- Clean your hands often.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desk phones, and keyboards.

### [Disinfecting with a bleach solution](#)

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant, or if that isn't available, you can use a diluted bleach solution:
- Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - To make a bleach solution, mix:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
    - OR
    - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
  - Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute

## **WORKING ENVIRONMENT:**

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Everyone needs to download the [emergency contact information excel form](#), fill it out, and email it to your admin person and to Joel Del Rosario [[joel.delrosario@alaska.gov](mailto:joel.delrosario@alaska.gov)]. You can also get this excel form from your admin staff.

### **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**

Every DOF location, including warehouses and offices, should develop **by April 15th** a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for Pandemic Infectious Disease: Coronavirus Disease 2019. Here is a link to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s [Continuity of Operations Planning](#) template.

When complete, all COOPs need to be submitted to Alison ([alison.arians@alaska.gov](mailto:alison.arians@alaska.gov)) for filing, or uploaded into MS Teams in Channel "Post COOPs here." Each Area Forester should make sure to get COOPs from all satellite locations.

### **Employee tracking:**

#### **Available/Unavailable spreadsheet**

Tim Dabney will email supervisors a link to a required **Available/Unavailable spreadsheet** on OneDrive that needs to be maintained Division-wide. Supervisors will be able to share the OneDrive form (populated with all employees' names) with others. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, each supervisor must begin filling in availability of each employee for the following two weeks. This tool will allow DOF to see who is mission-ready now and into the future.

#### **Detailed Tracking Spreadsheet**

Each area also needs to fill out a detailed employee availability form. Tim Dabney will send a suggested form to area and section leads that may be used. If an area is already filling out another tracking form (Phil Blydenburgh's Mat-Su form, for example), they may continue to use that instead. However, keep in mind that any information other than what is shown on Tim's spreadsheet may be a HIPAA violation if shared with anyone other than section leads.

### [Office Closure Information and Links](#)

**Phone or Email:** Receive notifications by phone or email when you sign-up or manage your [GovDelivery subscription](#) (select OFFICE CLOSURE list after login).

**Web/Online:** Check [Alaska.gov](#) for alert notifications and updates

**Facebook:** On your home computer and with a person profile, sign up for the SOA Office Closure alerts on [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#) .

**Hotline:** Check the State of Alaska Notification Hotline at [1-877-326-5551](#)  
(Please note that this telephone link is provided for smart phones and will likely generate an error on your desktop computer.)

**Teleworking:** See [Current Employee's "Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQ](#) for many answers to employees' questions. Specific to telecommuting, refer to these two documents which address telecommuting: [Telecommuting Policy \(PDF\)](#) and [Telecommute FAQ](#).

The Division of Forestry allows for teleworking when approved by the employee's supervisor at the location identified on the [Telecommuting Work Agreement form](#).

The telecommute address should be within commuting distance from the main workplace address and may not be farther than a two-hour callback timeframe from the main workplace address. Any exceptions to this standard require Director approval.

See [Attachment A of Gov Mandate 010](#), specifically:

- iv. "First Responders," which includes emergency management personnel, emergency dispatchers, court personnel, and law enforcement personnel.
- v. "Essential Governmental Functions," which includes all services needed to ensure the continuing operation of government agencies and provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. This includes Department of Defense personnel returning from temporary duty or engaging in mission essential travel. This also includes Office of Children's Services personnel acting in an official capacity.

### **Coding your timesheet**

**COVID-19 LDPs** (Labor Distribution Profiles): COVID-19 LDPs are to be used ONLY for COVID-19 administrative leave and/or time spent working on virus-related activities. At this point, the only staff charging work hours to a COVID-19 LDP will be those assigned to the COVID-19 Response Team, and possibly a few support people preparing Resource Orders. If people are teleworking for their normal function, they should remain charging to their normal COR (Code of Record). If you are working on COVID-19 response, your code will depend on your usual tasks, as follows:

- Forest Management and Development - #3009
- Fire Preparedness - #3018
- Fire Activity - #3722

Note: the "#" is part of the LDP so don't omit that.

### **To use COVID-19 Administrative leave, employees must:**

- Complete the [Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus 2019 form](#) and attach it to their timesheet along with the leave slip.
- Select "other" on their leave slip and note the leave code **19ND**.

- Report the leave code 19ND on their timesheet and enter the appropriate LDP Override code.
- Employees should work with their respective admin staff, for proper guidance on what LDP Override code they need to use with the leave reported on their timesheet to make sure the appropriate accounting information is reflected.
- Please make sure to review the [leave usage guide](#) for additional instructions.

This is not currently covered in the [Alaska Incident Business Management Handbook \(AIBMH\)](#) and bargaining unit contracts. See AIBMH language below:

**Hazard Pay**

Hazard pay is addressed in GGU Article 21.05 B., LTC Article 13.06 D., and SU Article 24.5 A. To provide clarification about Forestry’s operations, two types of activities are considered when working under a helicopter. Those two activities include 1) hover hook-ups, and 2) loading or unloading people or equipment when the helicopter rotors are in motion. See State Forester memo of August 17, 2007 (Appendix C) for more information.

**COVID-19 allowable expenses:**

Keeping in mind that all expenses charged to COVID-19 for FEMA purposes will need to be well documented and only reimbursed by FEMA upon review and approval.

Procurement: code to your normal area template/task, be sure to include **activity code CV19**.

- Disinfectant wipes, gloves and other cleaning supplies, masks for staff on the fire line and other items that we would not normally be purchased without COVID-19 in the mix, OR quantify the supplemental purchase intended specifically for COVID-19.

\*The above are basic examples. Any further resources can be defined.

**Personal Services:**

- COVID-19 LDPs are to be used **ONLY** for COVID-19 administrative leave and/or time spent working on virus-related activities. At this point, the only staff charging work hours to a COVID-19 LDP will be those assigned to the COVID-19 Response Team and, on occasion, support personnel. If people are teleworking for their normal function they should remain charging to their normal COR (Code of Record).

Example of how to record regular hours on timesheet:

- #3009 - Forest Management & Development
- #3018 - Fire Preparedness
- #3722 - Fire Activity

In lower left-hand section of timesheet select regular pay and input your associated LDP number.

Event Code & Description	DOF USE ONLY 8 DIGIT FIRE CODE	LDP Override / Ref #	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
			4/1	4/2	4/3	4/4	4/5	4/6
105 REG HOLIDAY		N9999						
100 REGULAR PAY		30018	6:00	5:00	6:30			6:15
100 REGULAR PAY		#3009	2:00	2:00	2:00			2:00

Example of Admin Leave:

In lower left-hand section of timesheet select enter activity code **19ND** and associated LDP number. To help payroll please add Admin Leave or additional notes in the comment section located at the bottom of the employee’s timesheet.

Event Code & Description	DOF USE ONLY 8 DIGIT FIRE CODE	LDP Override / Ref #	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
			4/1	4/2	4/3	4/4	4/5	4/6
105 REG HOLIDAY		N9999						
160 ANN LEAVE USE		N9999						
<b>ACT 19ND</b>		<b>#3009</b>	8:00	8:00	8:00			8:00

If you have further questions about financial issues with COVID-19, check with admin staff.

### Microsoft Teams Tips

#### **Microphone & Camera Issues**

Are you having trouble with an audio connection, or lacking a microphone or a camera on your desktop or laptop when you’re signing into MS Teams meetings? Here are some solutions:

- Download the MS Teams app onto your PHONE or tablet and use that for the audio and mic. You can still use your computer to look at the bigger screen—just make sure your speaker is turned off on the computer, so you’re not getting an echo between the two.
  - Note: if you have the app loaded on your phone, you can participate in meetings even if you’re out of the office (home or work). Just make sure you mute your audio when you’re not talking.
- If you have a personal laptop, or a personal computer with a camera and a mic, and you’re working at home for now, you can download the MS Teams app onto your home computer. You can still use your work computer while you have the MS Teams app running on your personal laptop.
- If you have headphones with a microphone in it, you can plug that into your laptop or desktop computer.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

Do you have a question about COVID-19? Before you ask someone else, try to answer it yourself with the information on the [State of Alaska’s website](#). If that doesn’t help, you may submit a question to be answered in future issues of this Update. **Please submit your question to your Management Team Member or their designee.** They will then submit your questions to the COVID-19 Response Team. If your question didn’t get answered, you can follow up with your Management Team Member.

**Credible sources.** As you are searching for answers online, remember to go to scientifically accurate and credible sources. We recommend the [CDC](#) and the [State of Alaska](#). There are lots of interesting ideas out there but try to stick with science-based sources.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are attached in a Q&A document accompanying this newsletter.**

### **ONLINE RESOURCES:**

**Division of Forestry:** [Division of Forestry on Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#). DOF staff can also subscribe to [Alaska Fire Info](#), the interagency blog that is the main conduit for fire information for both the Alaska Division of Forestry and BLM Alaska Fire Service.

**Federal:** [National Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) FAQ](#)

**State of Alaska (SOA):** [SOA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQ](#), [SOA Telecommuting Policy](#), [SOA Facility Closure Policy](#), [COVID-19 Leave Instructions](#), [COVID-19 Employee Paid Leave Form](#), [Governor's News Room/Press Releases](#)

### **Mental Health Resources**

We Alaskans are resilient and ready to meet the challenges life throws our way. We are also not afraid to seek help when we need it. The uncertainty and upheaval caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 may cause feelings of stress and worry for you or your family members. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, please know that help is available and please don't wait to reach out. A wide range of mental health resources are available to you:

### **Employee Assistance Programs**

Most state employees and their families have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAPs typically offer confidential assessments, counseling, referrals and other services and information to employees and their families free of charge. Your EAP can support you as you tackle health and well-being issues, including COVID-19 related anxiety; they are geared to provide assistance with difficulties you might encounter at work, family or personal relationship problems, stress, depression, grief, addiction and recovery, and more.

\* For Alaska Care Members (ACOA, APEA, AVTECTA, CEA, IBU, MEBA, TEAME, and Exempt Employees)

\* Call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to talk to a professional counselor at 1-855-417-2493

\* More information about your EAP is online at

<http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/alaskaCare/employee/information/eap.html>

\* For ASEA Health Trust Members (GGU and PSEA Employees)

\* Call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to talk to a professional counselor

\* 1-877-234-5151

\* TTY/TDD: 1-800-999-3004 (toll-free)

\* En Espanol: 1-888-732-9020 (toll-free)

\* More information about your EAP is online at <https://www.aseahealth.org/your-benefits/employee-assistance-program-eap>

\* For MMP Members

\* Call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to talk to a professional counselor

\* 1-877-234-5151

\* More information about your EAP is online at: <http://www.lifeworks.com/>

\* Company name: MMP Password: 5100

\* Careline: Alaska's suicide prevention and someone-to-talk-to line

\* Call any time, toll free (877) 266-4357 (HELP) or Text 4help to 839863, 3-11 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

--From Kate Sheehan, Director of DOA's Division of Personnel and Labor Relations