



DIVISION OF FORESTRY COVID-19 HANDBOOK

Date Issued: August 6, 2021 (Version 18)



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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

The safety of our employees is our first and foremost priority. We want to ensure that all DOF employees are aware of the resources available to them as we work together to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This manual is the DOF reference guide for memos, directives, and operational guidance related to health and safety of all employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Updates will occur periodically and, where appropriate, will be incorporated into this manual.

We are working with our Management Team, the DNR Commissioner, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), other interagency partners, and many of you to establish the final Best Management Practices and apply them consistently throughout the Division.

All up to date advisory information as of April 26, 2021 can be found at the [State of Alaska Health COVID-19 Response and Recovery Advisories](#) web page.

Essential Employees

See [Health Advisory 4](#) and its linked [Critical Infrastructure Workforce Definition](#) for essential employees. Since DOF is a first responder agency, all DOF employees are considered essential.

LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND OTHER FIRST RESPONDERS

- Public, private, and voluntary personnel (front-line and management, civilian and sworn) in emergency management, law enforcement, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services (EMS), and security, public and private hazardous material responders, air medical service providers (pilots and supporting technicians), corrections, and search and rescue personnel.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- Workers who support sawmills and the manufacture and distribution of fiber and forestry products, including, but not limited to timber, paper, and other wood and fiber products, as well as manufacture and distribution of products using agricultural commodities.

II. Vaccinations

As of March 9, 2021, the State of Alaska opened COVID-19 vaccinations for anyone living or working in Alaska who is age 16 or older.

ALL DOF employees are eligible for and encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine!

- Find the list of [COVID-19 vaccine providers near you](#).
- Here are some [FAQs about scheduling appointments](#).
- And here is a phone number to call if you need additional help:
1-907-646-3322 from 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekends.

Benefits of the vaccine

See the [CDC's benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine](#).

See the [CDC's key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines](#).

Beyond the obvious benefit of being highly immune to COVID-19, other benefits accrue to those who are fully-vaccinated. (You are considered fully vaccinated for ≥ 2 weeks after receiving the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks after you have received a single-dose vaccine.)

- On April 26, 2021, the [Alaska Health Advisory 2, International and Interstate Travel](#) was updated. If you are fully-vaccinated when you travel (whether for work or personal reasons), you do not need to
 - get tested before or after travel, or
 - self-quarantine after travel.
- According to the [CDC's July 27, 2021 guidelines](#), fully vaccinated people:
 - no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, but fully vaccinated people are recommended to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#).
 - might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they are immunocompromised or at [increased risk for severe disease](#) from COVID-19, or if they have someone in their household who is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease or not fully vaccinated.
 - who have come into [close contact](#) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are recommended to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

Deciding whether to get the vaccine

- See the [CDC's myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- Also, please see the link on our [DOF COVID webpage](#) to Dr. Thomas Quimby's presentation at Spring Ops 2021. Dr. Quimby is a former wildland firefighter and a current COVID expert (He's the COVID-19 taskforce chair at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center.), and we encourage all DOF employees watch the video to help you decide whether to get vaccinated.

See the [CDC's Six Ways to Help Build COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence](#).

According to CDC, the vaccine has been mostly effective. However, those fully vaccinated could still get COVID-19 for reasons such as:

1. The body did not have enough time to build immunity and the person contracted the virus shortly after getting the vaccine.
2. The vaccines might not be as resistant to new variant strains of the virus.
3. The length of effectiveness of the vaccine is still being researched.

Therefore, if you have been vaccinated for COVID-19, you should follow existing CDC guidance on when and how long to [self-isolate](#) if you have COVID-19.

Can a supervisor ask me if I have been vaccinated?

Yes. Whether or not you have been vaccinated affects how your supervisors and co-workers need to respond if you have been exposed to COVID. For example, you are not required to quarantine after an exposure to someone with COVID if you have been vaccinated. Division of Forestry can ask if you have been vaccinated because it helps make safe workplace decisions. Be ready to show your vaccination card to your supervisor if asked. Your supervisor will, of course, maintain confidentiality about your vaccination status.

While your supervisor may ask whether you've been vaccinated, they may not ask about your [reasons](#) for not being vaccinated, because that might elicit information about a disability, which could violate ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) guidelines.

Can an employer require an employee be vaccinated?

While the State of Alaska is not requiring its employees to be vaccinated, it is legal for employers to require vaccines before employees return to the worksite if the failure to be vaccinated constitutes a direct threat to other employees, because the virus is easily transmitted in the workplace.

EEO and ADA guidelines

As an employer, the State of Alaska follows ADA guidelines. The following information is from Camille Brill, State of Alaska EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) manager.

Does the ADA allow an employer ask an employee if he or she has already received the vaccine or, similarly, require proof that the employee has been vaccinated?

ANSWER: Generally, yes. The EEOC guidance explains that these particular questions do not constitute a “disability-related inquiry” because an employee may choose not to have the vaccine for a variety of reasons wholly unrelated to any medical condition. However, an employer has to meet certain requirements if it wants to find out why an employee has not received the vaccine. Questioning the employee about the reasons that individual has not been vaccinated **does** constitute a “disability-related inquiry” because of the possibility that it will elicit information about a disability.

That inquiry can only be made, according to the EEOC, if the question is “job-related and consistent with business necessity” as provided under the ADA. To meet this job-relatedness standard, the employer will need to establish that the worker’s failure to be vaccinated would pose a “direct threat” to the well-being of that employee or others with whom the employee would have contact as part of his or her job duties. Language elsewhere in the EEOC pandemic guidance suggests that an employer should be able to establish that “direct threat” standard if the employee has significant contact with other workers or third parties as part of performing his or her job duties.

What does ADA say about requiring an employee to be vaccinated?

On Dec. 16, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) confirmed that a COVID-19 vaccination requirement by itself would not violate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). That law prohibits employers from conducting some types of medical examinations.

“If a vaccine is administered to an employee by an employer for protection against contracting COVID-19, the employer is not seeking information about an individual’s impairments or current health status and, therefore, it is not a medical examination,” the EEOC says.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996)

The State of Alaska and the Division of Forestry are not health care providers, so therefore do not operate under HIPAA, but under ADA. However, since there have been a lot of questions about HIPAA, here is some information about the law.

Your employer asking you if you have a vaccine does not violate HIPAA. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that required the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge. Asking whether you have been vaccinated does not constitute sensitive patient health information; rather, it is a way to collect “information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease...” (45 CFR § 164.512(b)(i))

More resources:

- This [AARP article](#) goes into more detail about vaccines and the workplace.
- This [National Law Review article](#) has more information about requiring vaccines.

III. Facilities and Work Environment

Facilities Access

On May 6, 2021, the State of Alaska issued its [Return-to-Work Policy](#). With vaccinations for COVID-19 readily available, our offices are opening back up as a hybrid model, with some telework agreements still in place.

Masks are no longer required while in state facilities or office buildings.

General Actions:

- Isolating after encounter with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID (if you are not fully-vaccinated).
- Cleaning the workplace regularly.
- Cleaning and disinfecting the workplace if someone in the workplace has been diagnosed with COVID.
- Ensuring a system is in place for reporting incidents of exposure.

Administrative Actions:

- Managing staff working a combination of telecommuting agreements and personal leave.
- Responding to concerns from employees, family members, and the public regarding our response or lack of response relative to COVID-19.
- Facilitating staff telecommuting agreements.
- Developing requirements for Emergency Contact lists, Continuing Operation Plans (COOP) and Employee Availability lists.
- Submitting required forms, timesheets, and documents online.

Training Measures:

2021 Interagency Spring Training will focus specifically on courses necessary for task book and position development, including flex plan requirements. Courses not required for development that cannot be delivered virtually will be postponed to 2022. DOF will be offering courses through multiple platforms; virtual, blended and in-person based on course design and content to deliver the best quality class, while also providing for the safety of our students and cadres regarding the COVID pandemic.

Field Operations Actions:

- Located in the Area COVID-19 Mitigation Plans at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/covid>.
- Wildland Fire Operations [Prevent & Manage COVID Flyer](#)

Facilities Supplies:

- Area offices should purchase cleaning, sanitizing, and personal protective equipment (PPE) items from local sources. Warehouses can support offices that are remote or limited in their ability to purchase these supplies locally, but warehouses need to maintain inventories to supply incidents in bulk.
- Warehouse stock is prioritized for statewide inventory for the 2021 fire season.
- COVID information signs from CDC may be posted in offices:
 - [Hand-washing posters](#)
 - [Stop the spread of germs](#)

Cleaning of facilities and/or equipment:

- The virus that causes COVID-19 can land on surfaces. It's possible for people to become infected if they touch those surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. In most situations, the risk of infection from touching a surface is low. The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer. – [CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- Use CDC guide for [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#) and [Household Cleaning](#).

When to Clean and When to Disinfect: CDC

- Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and may also weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces.
- When no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility.
- Disinfecting (using [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)'s List of Disinfectants](#) for COVID-19) kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.
- If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in your facility within the last 24 hours, you should clean AND disinfect the space.

Personal Protective Equipment:

EFF and regular DOF employees should try to keep PPE, sanitizer and wipes with them, and bring them to their assignments; it is a personal responsibility to be prepared. In-state incidents will provide these items but there is no guarantee what will be supplied for out-of-state assignments. Be prepared and bring these items with you.

OSHA requires job specific assessments be conducted to determine the need for an N-95 mask prior to authorization for use. Employees identified for authorization are required to be fit-tested to wear an N-95 mask. N-95 masks are required for medical personnel and anyone working in close proximity to COVID-positive patients. All DOF personnel who are medically trained, certified and designated to provide medical aid will need to be fit tested for the N-95 mask. Contact your Safety Officer, Tom Greiling (thomas.greiling@alaska.gov) for more details or questions related to the N-95 mask.

Face Coverings

On May 6, 2021, the Governor issued a [return to worksite policy](#). The policy states that masks are not required for employees or the public while in Division of Forestry facilities or office buildings. While not required, wearing masks is allowed.

DOF will follow [CDC requirements](#) regarding face coverings:

- Fully-vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance

You should keep a mask handy, in case you are required to wear one in a public place that requires one, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, etc.

Physical/Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene:

- Minimize your contact with others as much as possible through social distancing.

- Increase distance between yourself and other mission-essential employees within your workspace as much 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.
 - Wash your hands after touching your face.

IV. Employee COVID-19 Evaluations

Employee Screening

All personnel are strongly recommended to undergo a screening process daily to check their health on a routine basis, both objectively and subjectively. This applies to all employees on DOF premises, including vendors that access facilities and have contact with our staff. For a paper screening tool, see Appendix B, or go to the [DOF COVID webpage](#) for a link to a sample JotForm electronic screening tool. Email alison.arians@alaska.gov for a cloned copy of this tool for your own group.

The goal is a culture where a “Health and Safety Minute” is a routine part of every day. Your Minute can include safety stand-downs on a rotating basis, giving personnel time intervals to make an individual health report and decontaminate all work equipment and supplies.

Key categories for screening all personnel:

- **Travel history:** Has the employee or their crew/team members travelled in the last 14 days?
- **Contact:** Has the employee been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 (within 6 feet for 15+ minutes within a 24-hour period)?
 - **Note:** fully-vaccinated employees (2 weeks after their final vaccine dose) need not quarantine after exposure, but they are recommended to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
- **Symptomatic:** Does the employee have any respiratory symptoms—i.e., shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing? Does the employee have a fever or chills, fatigue or muscle/body aches? A cough, sore throat, congestion, headache or runny nose? Does the employee have nausea, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or new loss of taste/smell? You can check the [current list of CDC symptoms](#).

Follow the process below as you report for work:

1. If you are symptomatic, stay home. Call your supervisor to discuss your sick leave options and to keep the chain of command informed. When your condition improves, call your supervisor before returning to work. If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, see **Symptomatic Employees** section, below.
2. At the beginning of workday, employees entering the work site are strongly recommended to complete a screening and self-check at the designated location to determine if symptomatic or not symptomatic. They must notify their section lead, verifying that they have completed a self-check:

Temperature screening/Other Symptoms screening:

 - a. Fever is defined as 38 °C / 100.4 °F (or higher).
 - b. Complete screening questions for other symptoms (see below).
3. If a staff member has one or more of the following symptoms, have them immediately put on a face covering, leave the location and return to their vehicle, and call their supervisor to report their

symptoms. Their supervisor should send them directly home for self-quarantine and testing. For further guidance, see Symptomatic Employees section, below.

- a. A recorded fever of 38 °C / 100.4 °F (or greater), or they have experienced symptoms in the past 24 hours that could represent fever, such as unexplained chills.
- b. A condition causing an employee to have episodes of sneezing, or nose blowing not controlled by simple over the counter medication or patient's own prescription.
- c. Sore throat associated with fever.
- d. An uncontrolled cough such that the employee is likely to cough when among colleagues or a cough lasting more than two weeks and not under the care of a health care professional.
- e. New onset or ongoing common cold or Influenza-like illness (such as fever and cough, or shortness of breath).
- f. Any diarrhea associated with an acute illness.
- g. Body aches and pains of a presumed infectious cause.

Screening for new hires

Areas should screen employees when they physically show up to work. When EFFs are taking a new assignment, they should be screened at that office.

Screening for emergency hires

If it is possible to screen contractors and emergency hires, do so, but it might not be possible to screen people during an Initial Attack response. DOF staff should do the best they can to enforce Division and Area protocols and mitigations, such as asking all employees (contractors and emergency hires included) to wear face coverings when practical, keep a 6-foot distance from each other outside of the module, wash hands, clean surfaces, sanitize shared equipment, and screen daily. DOF does not have the authority to require contractors to follow these guidelines, but we can request it if time and opportunity allow.

Supervisors: Determining Risk for Exposure

In the setting of COVID-19, employee screening provides a critical role in determining the risk of exposure for all personnel involved in the workplace.

Supervisors' authority to send home employees exhibiting flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms [SOA Dept of Law]

When a supervisor reasonably believes, based on objective evidence, that an employee is experiencing symptoms akin to COVID-19 (according to the CDC: fever, cough, and shortness of breath), the supervisor can send the employee home. The supervisor may make inquiries about the employee's medical condition and may require an employee submit to a medical examination. Those inquiries and/or examinations must be reasonably effective methods of achieving the State's goal of combatting the pandemic. The Department of Administration highly recommends supervisors document their observations and reasons for sending an employee home, and how those reasons help achieve the State's goal of combatting COVID-19.

By reporting for duty and completing the screening, each employee affirms to the on-duty Supervisor (Section Lead or Designee) that they do not have any of the symptoms listed above.

Symptomatic employees who test negative

Symptomatic employees must obtain a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. If the employee's test results are negative, and their fever has resolved for at least 72 hours (no fever without fever-reducing medications), the employee may return to work. See #10 of [Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) FAQ For State of Alaska Employees](#).

See the Alaska Division of Public Health's [What to do while you wait for your test results](#), if you suspect you may have COVID-19.

If an employee tests positive

If an employee's COVID test results are positive, whether or not they have symptoms, they need to isolate¹ for at least 10 days at home. They may return to work after 10 days if their fever has resolved for at least 72 hours, and all symptoms are resolved. The employee must telework or use COVID leave during isolation. If confirmed positive, CDC recommends close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated to isolate and monitor for symptoms as well. [CDC also recommends](#) that fully vaccinated people who have come into [close contact](#) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

EMPLOYEE EXPOSURE

The July 27, 2021 [CDC guidelines](#) recommends that fully-vaccinated people (2 weeks after the final dose):

- wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#).
- might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they are immunocompromised or at [increased risk for severe disease](#) from COVID-19, or if they have someone in their household who is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease or not fully vaccinated.
- who have come into [close contact](#) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

If an unvaccinated employee has had a **confirmed exposure**² to COVID-19, including the two days before the person with the positive test shows symptoms or tests positive, they must quarantine³ at home. See the **How Long to Quarantine** section on the following pages for specific instructions.

Unvaccinated employees must follow these guidelines after a confirmed exposure:

1. Put on a mask, go to your vehicle, notify your supervisor that you have been exposed to COVID, and go home to self-quarantine. See the **How Long to Quarantine** section on the following pages for specific instructions.
2. To schedule a test, you may ask your area forester or agency administrator to contact DHSS at communitycontracts@alaska.gov, or get a free test elsewhere in your community. See the [Alaska COVID Locator](#) to find a site near you to get tested. Click on the location to determine the cost of the test, and find a free one.
3. If you get a positive test result, see the section above called "If an employee tests positive."

How long to quarantine after a close contact with COVID

- [New guidance for vaccinated people](#) was issued by the CDC on July 27, 2021. **If fully vaccinated, you do not need to quarantine after a close contact with someone who has COVID-19** (within 6 ft of an infected person for at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period). However, the CDC recommends fully-vaccinated people who have come into [close contact](#) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-

¹ Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. For more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html

² A confirmed exposure is being coughed or sneezed on, hugged by, or being within 6 feet for 15 minutes within a 24-hour period of a person who has tested positive for COVID.

³ Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. For more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html

19 be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

- You are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after you have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after you have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

If you are NOT fully vaccinated

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a 14-day quarantine period is still the safest quarantine duration; however, based on emerging science, CDC has issued updated guidance to provide two acceptable alternatives to shorten the quarantine period after a close contact with someone who has COVID-19 (within 6 ft of an infected person for at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period).

- See the table below. If testing is available, you may be able to end your quarantine after 7 days of quarantine, on the 8th day. You can take a COVID-19 test within 48 hours prior when you hope to end your quarantine (on day 6 or 7). You must continue to quarantine until your test comes back negative, which may be longer than 7 days. Even if your test is negative and you end quarantine, you must continue to wear a mask when around others and monitor for symptoms for the full 14 days. If you develop any symptoms or your test result is positive, you must self-isolate.
- If testing is not readily available, quarantine for a full 10 days after you were exposed. You may end your quarantine on day 11 if you do not develop symptoms. You must continue to wear a mask when around others and monitor for symptoms for the full 14 days. Self-isolate if you develop symptoms and get tested.

Options to reduce quarantine period for close contacts.

	Option 1	Option 2
	<i>7-day Quarantine + Test</i>	<i>10-day Quarantine</i>
What type of test is required and when should it be obtained?	Molecular or antigen; specimen must be collected <48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (i.e., on day 6 or 7 of quarantine)	No Test Required
Can quarantine be further shortened with a negative test result?	No	No
When is the earliest that a person can be released from quarantine and go back to work or school?	8 days after exposure with a negative test result	11 days after exposure
What should patients do if they haven't gotten their test result back before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation?	Remain in quarantine until they get a negative test result or 10 days have passed, whichever is earlier	No Test Required
Estimated residual post-quarantine transmission risk	5% (upper limit: 12%)	1% (upper limit: 10%)

<p>What added precautions should people take after being released from quarantine under option 1 or 2?</p>	<p>Take extra precautions until 14 days after exposure: watch for symptoms, wear a mask when in public areas, avoid crowds, maintain 6-foot distance from others, wash hands frequently, avoid any contact with high-risk persons, discuss with employer whether it is safe to return to work.</p>
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Notes:

1. The above options are only for contacts who have remained asymptomatic for the entire duration of their quarantine. Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days of an exposure (regardless of whether or not they remain in quarantine) should immediately self-isolate and seek testing.
2. Persons can continue to be quarantined for 14 days per existing CDC recommendations; this option maximally reduces the risk of post-quarantine transmission and is the strategy with the greatest collective experience at present.

--From [Alaska DHSS Quarantine Guidance](#).

Worker’s Compensation

If an employee reasonably believes they were exposed to COVID *in the workplace*, they can apply for worker’s compensation. The CDC defines “reasonably” as being in close contact with an infected person (within 6 ft of an infected person for at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period) *in the workplace*.

It is the responsibility of both the employee and management to complete the [Report of Injury \(ROI\)](#). Worker’s Compensation (WC) will determine that employee’s eligibility. The ROI must be completed regardless of whether an employee can telework.

Patient Advocacy

Employees being demobilized and in need of quarantine and/or isolation outside of the home unit will need logistical support for lodging and meals during their quarantine and/or isolation. The Area will communicate with the home unit about how to compensate costs and ensure that support will be provided. Daily contact should be maintained to determine patient status and needs.

Hospital Liaisons and COVID-19 Patients: For DOF employees who are treated for COVID-19 at a hospital emergency room, medical clinic, etc., a hospital liaison will be assigned to the individual employee in need of medical treatment. This is no different than any other typical medical treatment for DOF employees. The hospital liaison is typically provided by the incident when an Incident Management Team (IMT) is assigned. For cases when an IMT is not assigned, the hospital liaison will be arranged by the hiring agency office, forest, ranger station, etc. It is critical that the assigned hospital liaison or patient advocate be established immediately as this is the primary person who will communicate with medical staff on behalf of the incident and/or employee’s agency. The appropriate DOF home unit managers and Division Safety Officer will need contact information for the hospital liaison and will need to be in communication regarding patient status at all times. All policies and procedures for the notification process still apply.

Testing asymptomatic employees

As of December 2020, Alaska DHSS continues to recommend testing for all non-vaccinated individuals who have been identified as close contacts to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.

The [CDC's guidance from May 13, 2021](#) states that fully-vaccinated people need not be tested after a known exposure.

Please see the **How Long to Quarantine** section on the previous pages for specific length of time to quarantine.

Testing asymptomatic people during their quarantine period helps to identify those who are infected with the virus, their need to be in isolation, and the need to notify and quarantine their close contacts

TRAVEL

Protocol for DOF employee travel

As of April 26th, 2021, Alaska DHSS's [COVID-19 Response and Recovery Health Advisory Number 2](#) guides travel in and out of Alaska.

Any person currently positive with COVID-19 **cannot travel to Alaska** until they have been released from isolation or cleared for travel by a medical provider or public health agency.

Since testing of non-vaccinated travelers is the best means for limiting the spread of COVID-19 virus and variants, it is recommended that non-vaccinated travelers test prior to travel or take advantage of FREE and OPTIONAL COVID-19 testing available at primary ports of entry in Alaska.

Exemption for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

Fully-vaccinated travelers do not need to get tested before or after travel, and do not need to self-quarantine after travel. "Fully-vaccinated" is defined as more than two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or more than two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

Although optional, **non-vaccinated travelers are highly advised to pre-test for COVID (molecular-based test) within 72 hours of departure** and upload the results to [Alaska Travel Portal](#), bring a physical copy of results, and fill out personal information on the portal. If you haven't received your test results before arrival in Alaska, social distancing (see definition below) is recommended until test results are available. A second test is recommended, but optional, five to 14 days after arrival.

In the travel portal, you may:

- request a free SARS-CoV-2 test upon arrival to Alaska,
- request a free COVID-19 vaccination upon arrival to Alaska, and
- upload viral test results.

For travelers coming to Alaska, or between communities in Alaska, DHSS has set up COVID-19 testing and vaccinations at airports with inbound flights from outside Alaska (including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan). All testing at the airport is 100% free of charge, whether or not you are an Alaska resident.

DHSS has contracted with Beacon to perform testing and vaccinations of incoming fire resources upon arrival, and for testing and vaccinations as needed in the field. Requests for Beacon's testing and vaccination services should be made to communitycontracts@alaska.gov.

If the COVID-19 test result is positive, the traveler must remain in self-isolation. Follow the guidelines on previous pages "If an employee tests positive."

Strict social distancing is [defined by DHSS](#) as:

- You may be in an outdoor public place, but stay six feet away from anyone not in your immediate household and wear a face covering.

- You may arrange curbside shopping or have food delivery.
- Do not take public transportation during the time you are practicing strict social distancing.
- Please do not enter restaurants, bars, gyms, community centers, sporting facilities (i.e., ice rinks, gymnasiums, sports domes), office buildings, school or daycare facilities.
- Do not participate in any group activities, including sporting events and practices, weddings, funerals, or other gatherings.

While many DOF employees must travel for work, the [CDC recommends that wait to travel until you are fully vaccinated](#). The CDC has posted recommendations for travel for [fully vaccinated people and unvaccinated people](#).

Guidelines for Lower 48 Resources traveling to Alaska

Nonresident fire resources should adhere to the guidelines above, but **DOF recommends that they arrive in Alaska ready to work**, without first requiring strict social distancing.

DOF recommends that travelers be fully vaccinated. If not vaccinated, they should get tested within 72 hours of departure and receive negative results by the time they arrive in Alaska.

- Fire suppression resources are to travel and arrive at the receiving unit with an initial supply of specialized PPE, hand sanitizer and disinfecting supplies. Personnel should plan to travel self-sufficient for three days.
- Incoming resources, if not fully vaccinated, will track their physical contacts from the time of departure from their home unit throughout their assignment.
- Resources will wear the proper personal protective equipment and practice social distancing when possible.
- Resources will be self-sufficient and directed by resource order as to reporting requirements. If not fully vaccinated, single resources are likely to be required to obtain a vehicle, self-quarantine in a hotel, and report to their ordering unit, minimizing contacts.
- If directed by resource order (generally multiple people), resources may be picked up at the airport by designated agency personnel with pre-arranged logistical support (lodging, transportation, subsistence). Personal protective equipment should always be worn during these transports.
- If not fully-vaccinated, workers who are tested at the airports will remain in quarantine in either Anchorage or Fairbanks until test results are returned. They will continue on to their work site and adhere to protocols in this Handbook.

Quarantine before test results

Note: According to [DHSS Health Advisory 2](#), fully-vaccinated people need not follow strict social distancing after testing.

If an unvaccinated traveler has **not** gotten a COVID test 72 hours before departure to Alaska and received negative results, while waiting for their first test results, DOF employees and EFF should quarantine at home. For five days, they should follow strict social distancing, which also requires the employee to work remotely. A second test taken between five and 14 days after arrival is recommended, but not required.

- Full-time DOF employees should telework from home if they can during this quarantine and strict social distancing period. If teleworking is not an option, until June 11, COVID leave may be used, but after that, you must use annual leave. See [Return to the Worksite Policy and Guidelines](#).

- Until June 11, 2021, the [SOA COVID-19 Leave Policy](#) provides up to 10 days (75/80 hours for a full-time employee) at a time of paid leave for eligible employees due to a need for leave because the employee is unable to work remotely (telework). Employees will need to submit a [Verification Form](#) for Paid Leave due to Coronavirus.

Supervisors cannot fully monitor what the employee does or doesn't do relative to the travel mandate that applies to Alaska residents returning to Alaska; however, we can direct the employee not to enter the workplace until they have complied.

MOBILIZATION TO LOWER 48

Alaskans taking L48 assignments

Chief of Fire Norm McDonald prepared a [memo for the 2020 season](#) that was used by employees to help them decide whether and where to take fire assignments in the Lower 48. Chief McDonald will issue a new memo for 2021 to address the 2021 season. COVID risks in the Lower 48 may be greater than in Alaska, and our employees need to be aware of the potential risks in each geographical location and with each jurisdictional and protection agency. The memo addresses the following:

- Pre acceptance of assignment
 - Determine what state and agency an employee's order is for and provide as much information as we can, including COVID-related data, opportunities for vaccination, mitigations, and plans. We will arm our staff with knowledge.
 - Ensure the employee has the needed PPE to be self-sufficient while on assignment. Masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies and most importantly, training.
 - Ensure the employee understands the benefits of vaccination, and the risks of not being vaccinated before traveling.
- Acceptance of assignment
 - Provide clear direction and guidance should one of our employees show signs and symptoms when on assignment.
 - Will the host agency pay for quarantine expenses (staying in a hotel)?
 - If the employee needs to pay for self-quarantine, do they have the means to accommodate that, at least until reimbursement? What are the guidelines for using a OneCard for quarantine?
 - Who will pay the costs if an employee needs diagnosis and treatment?
- Returning from assignment process: see guidelines, below.

Several other resources are also available to help employees evaluate risks of L48 assignments:

- Some L48 states have posted information about COVID mitigations on the [Geographic Area Coordination Centers \(GACC\) website](#).
- Harvard Global Health Institute has published a [map of COVID risk, by county, of the entire United States](#), so employees can compare the COVID risks by location in the assignments they are considering. National Public Radio published an [article about the map](#).
- The State provides detailed [COVID-19 Traveler Information](#).

Travel back to the L48 during travel quarantine

Note: According to [DHSS Health Advisory 2](#), fully-vaccinated people need not follow strict social distancing after testing.

After an unvaccinated DOF employee or EFF returns from the Lower 48, they are encouraged to wait at least for their first negative test results before returning to the L48 for another assignment. However, in instances of critical need, employees need not wait until their test results are received or strict social distancing is over to go back to the Lower 48.

Traveling from state to state in the L48

When traveling in the Lower 48 from state to state, the traveler is responsible for determining COVID mandates for each state and complying with them.

Paying for a COVID test in the L48

If required to take a COVID test on a fire assignment, that test should be billed directly to the incident. OneCards should not be used for these tests individually or for multiple resources because of the difficulty in reconciling these charges. Rather, the incident should arrange testing for its fire resources, especially if testing is required while on assignment. Free COVID testing is available for Alaska residents at airports upon arrival if testing cannot be done prior to returning to Alaska.

INTRASTATE TRAVEL

DEMOBILIZATION

Returning home after L48 travel

[Health Advisory 3: Intrastate Travel](#) governs travel between communities on and off the road system to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Local communities are permitted to enact travel restrictions to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Fully-vaccinated people do not need to get tested before or after travel, and do not need to self-quarantine after travel.

If an unvaccinated employee or EFF returns from a fire to Anchorage or Fairbanks and needs to travel in a State of Alaska vehicle to return to their community (for example, Tok, Soldotna, Delta, etc.) before they have received a negative test result, they should drive themselves and travel alone in the vehicle, rather than having another employee drive them. As usual, the employee is eligible for *per diem* until they reach their home office. When the vehicle arrives at its destination, it should be sanitized and returned to its home base. The vehicle sanitation and vehicle transportation should be charged to the incident, since this is an additional cost to DOF of the firefighter's deployment.

After intrastate (within Alaska) travel to communities on the road system

There are no testing mandates for intrastate (within Alaska) travel on the road system or on the Alaska Marine Highway system, and each Forestry area is screening employees daily. However, travelers have the option of free testing at the airport sites, to prevent bringing the virus into our small communities. Employees may use this free testing at their own discretion. If they receive a positive test result, or if they have symptoms or have had a suspected or confirmed exposure, see the section "Steps to follow when an employee has symptoms or is notified of a positive COVID test." Areas should continue doing screening as usual, including screening of recently demobilized employees returning to their home area.

Protecting yourself, your family, and your community

For people coming back into their homes and villages from a fire assignment, here is a list of things to do to protect themselves, their families and communities.

1. Get vaccinated before you travel.

2. Get tested for COVID at a free testing site at airport sites.
3. If not fully vaccinated, follow strict social distancing for five days after arriving at your destination. A second test taken between five and 14 days after arrival is recommended, but not required. Strict social distancing is [defined by DHSS](#) as:
 - a. You may be in an outdoor public place, but stay six feet away from anyone not in your immediate household and wear a face covering.
 - b. You may arrange curbside shopping or have food delivery.
 - c. Do not take public transportation during the time you are practicing social distancing.
 - d. Please do not enter restaurants, bars, gyms, community centers, sporting facilities (i.e., ice rinks, gymnasiums, sports domes), office buildings, school or daycare facilities.
 - e. Do not participate in any group activities, including sporting events and practices, weddings, funerals, or other gatherings
4. Keep personal tracking/travel record (See Appendix E.)
5. Identify at-risk family members and develop a home risk exposure plan.
6. During travel status, wear your mask, wash/sanitize your hands frequently and social distance as much as possible in congregate areas.
7. Avoid social gatherings until you can safely be tested or quarantine until possible transmission window has passed upon return.
8. As much as possible, leave fire gear at the station or in your work vehicle, or make sure to wash immediately and keep separate from family laundry/gear. Disinfect all gear.
9. Plan for yourself and family in case you need to self-quarantine. Examples may include 14 days of money, food, hotel, etc.
10. If symptomatic, you will not be allowed to use forestry facilities, so plan accordingly.
11. Recommended to change clothes and shower upon return home to protect your family.
12. Follow return-to-work matrix if you are symptomatic, are a confirmed exposure or have tested positive.
13. Upon return or during quarantine, update your direct supervisor regularly on status, needs, etc. so we can track your progress. If teleworking: update your supervisor frequently.

DOF will adhere to whatever mandates and policies are in place at the time of the travel.

Demob for resources from Alaska to L48

L48 resources will have guidelines from their own home states on what needs to be done before they arrive home, and after they arrive home, in terms of testing and screening. If someone is symptomatic, or has a confirmed exposure, they should be tested here in Alaska. (See sections: “Symptomatic employees” and “If an employee tests positive” on the previous pages.)

High risk considerations:

DOF recommends that people at higher risk of severe illness work remotely if possible and practice social distancing in large groups of people as much as possible. People at higher risk include those:

- over 60 years of age,
- with underlying health conditions (heart disease, lung disease or diabetes),
- with weakened immune systems, or
- who are pregnant.

Teledoc:

- [Teledoc](#) is a great way to consult a doctor or nurse without visiting a hospital or clinic, giving you 24/7/365 access to health care for non-emergency conditions by web, phone (1-800-Teledoc) or mobile application.

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.

- Employees may take work time to set up registration on Teledoc. Get signed up *prior to* needing the service.

Emergency Contact Information: Download the [emergency contact information excel form](#), complete it, and email it to your admin person and to Joel Del Rosario [joel.delrosario@alaska.gov]. You can also get this Excel form from your admin staff.

V. Finance, Coding & Allowable Expenses

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](tel:1-877-326-5551) (Please note that this telephone link is provided for smart phones and will likely generate an error on a land line.)

Timesheet Coding

The following guidance is subject to change by any applied directive from the Division of Payroll & Labor Relations (DOPLR).

How to use SOA COVID-19 Administrative leave: only until June 11, 2021

The [Return to Worksite Policy and Guidelines](#) issued on May 6, 2021, states that the COVID leave policy is rescinded on June 11, 2021.

Until then, you have the option to use COVID-19 Administrative Leave (leave code 19ND) if you:

- Meet specific criteria as defined on the [Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus 2019 form](#):
 - a. You are subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 (i.e. travel self-quarantine);
 - b. You tested positive for COVID-19;
 - c. You are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- Are unable to telecommute.
- COVID-19 leave may not be used for illness after vaccination, but personal leave may be used if needed. Managers are encouraged to be flexible with leave, and to allow people to work from home if they feel able.

If an employee meets the specific criteria as defined on the **Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus 2019 form** but has the ability to telecommute then:

- That employee must continue to work from home as long as they are able.
- If the employee is unable to work and meets the specific criteria as defined on the Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus 2019 form then they can use the leave code 19ND as explained above.
 - Please note: If an employee can work at least part time they can use the 19ND leave code intermittently to make up for hours they were unable to work.

Does the COVID-19 Leave policy apply to EFF?

If EFF meet the criteria under a, b, or c, above, they are eligible for COVID leave until COVID leave ends on June 11, 2021. The EFF would need to complete the [verification form](#) and potentially provide documentation from a health care provider that they need to quarantine if they use reason c.

If an EFF becomes symptomatic on an incident, they may be eligible for subsistence.

ALL Other Personal Services that do not apply to the above scenarios:

Hazard Pay

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

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:

What should we be keeping track of for COVID expenses? Personnel time and extra expenditures for materials. Document all of this for later reimbursement. Keep in mind that all expenses charged to COVID-19 for FEMA purposes will need to be well documented and will only be reimbursed by FEMA upon review and approval.

Procurement: Code to your normal area template/task, and 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 purchase 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.

Example of coding:

The screenshot displays a software interface with several tabs: General Information, Reference, Fixed Asset/Intent Reference, Fund Accounting, Detail Accounting, and Payment Details. The 'Detail Accounting' tab is active. The interface shows the following fields and values:

- Event Type: P005
- Accounting Template: NT34BO
- Line Description: Clorox Sanitizing Wipes, Palmer and McGrath
- Line Amount: \$481.80
- Reserved Funding: No
- Roll Indication 1:
- Roll Indication 2:
- Budget FY: 2020
- Fiscal Year: 2020
- Period: 10
- Freight %: 0.0000
- Modified: No
- Number of Attachments: 0
- Line Closed Amount: \$0.00
- Line Closed Date:
- Line Open Amount: \$481.80

Below the main form, there are additional coding fields:

- Location: [dropdown]
- Sub Location: [dropdown]
- Activity: CV19 (highlighted in yellow)
- Sub Activity: [dropdown]
- Function: [dropdown]
- Sub Function: [dropdown]
- Reporting: [dropdown]
- Sub Reporting: [dropdown]
- Task: 34BO
- Sub Task: [dropdown]
- Task Order: [dropdown]

Recording time during quarantine

L-48 resources who have been tested upon arrival and are quarantining while they wait for the test results will continue in travel status until they arrive on station where they are ordered. They can be paid for 8 hours, or

what their normal work day would be. If they are in quarantine part of a day and then are clear to continue on to their assignment, they would get a combination of worked hours and guaranteed hours to give them a minimum of 8 hours.

Coding for L-48 resources who test positive for COVID

If a L-48 resource tests positive at some point (whether on arrival, during their assignment, or before returning home), charges for testing, lodging, per diem, and any other charges would go to the fire number or prepo that they are assigned to.

VI. Telework Environment

Teleworking:

According to the May 6, 2021 [Return to the Worksite Policy and Guidelines](#), the State of Alaska is transitioning to a “hybrid model” of telework. This allows teleworking eligible employees to return to the worksite a percentage of time and work from home a percentage of time (the percentage will be determined in accordance with department leadership approval and DOA Telework Policy).

Employees must submit a new [Telework Agreement form](#) to reflect the hybrid model. Approval must be received from their supervisor. For those employees whose positions are eligible to telework and are currently teleworking, plans should be submitted to department leadership no later than June 1, 2021. Plans will be implemented no later than 30 days after they are approved, finalized, and employees are notified of the final telework agreement. Please see the [Telework Policy](#) for specific information. Please note that Directors may require Employees or sections of Employees to return to the worksite in order to effectively manage its mission.

Telecommuting from a location away from the permanent duty station

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.

EFF telework agreements

Supervisors may work with any employee, including EFF, to create a telework agreement, if there are duties that can be performed remotely. Telework agreements must be renewed with chain of command management team member’s approval.

The DOA telework policy indicates that wi-fi data plans are covered by individuals’ own plan.

The telework agreement you sign makes it clear that you must be prepared to set up your own office and provide your own data plan and supplies. Per SOA teleworking policy, Section M:

The telecommute location will require adequate workspace, light, telephone service, power and temperature control. The employee will provide telecommute worksite furniture and equipment and should maintain a clean and safe workspace. The State will not pay operating costs, maintenance, system upgrades, or other incidental costs (e.g., utilities, telephone, or Internet access) associated with the use of an employee’s telecommuting site.

Technology Tips

Our platform for discussing fire, resources, or responses to COVID-19 within SOA is Microsoft Teams. Documents may be shared within teams, videoconferencing can easily be set up, tasks assigned, etc. Employees of other agencies may be added as guests to these State of Alaska teams. WebEx can be used for teleconferencing with groups that include many other agencies and/or members of the public.

For more information, see the “Technology Tips” section of DOF’s [COVID web page](#).

VII. Continuity of Operation Plans for Office Shutdowns

In case of complete shutdown of an office due to multiple illnesses, Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) have been developed by all offices and sections.

Sign up for closure notifications here: [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 a land line.)
- **Nixle Alerts:** Simply text any zip code to 888777 and receive real-time alerts and advisories directly from your local police department and other local agencies.

Employee Wellness Resources

Behavioral Health and Wellness During Epidemic and Pandemic Events

- It is human nature and is normal to feel scared, confused, sad, angry and/or stressed during extreme events such as epidemics and pandemics.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contact by email or phone. Talk with trusted coworkers, family, and friends.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, including the misuse of prescribed medications, to deal with emotions.
- Get the facts and utilize credible sources of information such as local, state, and federal public health agencies. Gather information that assists in the accurate determination of the risks and provides reasonable directives and advice.
- Limit unnecessary worry and agitation by lessening exposure to social media and news coverage that is upsetting or inaccurate.
- Utilize personal skills used in the past that helped manage life's adversities and use those skills to help manage emotions (e.g., meditation or other grounding techniques).
- Family members, especially children, respond to stress differently than public safety professionals. Extra time and attention will be needed for families.
- If overwhelmed:
 - Alaska Care Members (ACOA, APEA, AVTECTA, CEA, IBU, MEBA, TEAME, and Exempt Employees) can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to talk to a professional counselor: 1-855-417-2493
 - ASEA Health Trust Members (GGU and PSEA Employees) can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to talk to a professional counselor: 1-877-234-5151

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 do not 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 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 Employee Assistance Program is online at <https://www.aseahealth.org/your-benefits/employee-assistance-program-eap>

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

VIII. Online Resources

Division of Forestry: An online resource link for employees can be accessed by buttons on the [DOF home page](#) called “COVID-19 Response Tools.”

[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](#)
- [CDC FAQ for wildland fire fighters](#)

State of Alaska (SOA):

- [Health Mandate 010: International and Interstate Travel – Order for Self-Quarantine](#)
- [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](#)

IX. Definitions

Close Contact: Being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

Confirmed Exposure: Being coughed on, sneezed on, or hugged, or being within 6 feet of someone for at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period who has tested positive for COVID.

Critical Infrastructure: includes businesses providing any services or performing any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of public works, such as the Port of Alaska, public works construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, oil production, mining, logging, roads and highways, public transportation, and solid waste collection and removal.”

Essential Governmental Functions: includes all services needed to ensure the continuing operation of government agencies including to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Fully-vaccinated: more than two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or more than two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

Isolation: ISOLATION separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. For more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html

Quarantine: QUARANTINE separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. For more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html

Recommended: Advised or suggested course of action.

Required: Deemed essential and/or instructed or expected course of action by an official authority. (Such as a Director, Commissioner, Governor, or President)

Self-Isolation: Employee has symptoms and is voluntarily isolated from others.

Self-Monitor: Employee monitors them self for symptoms; including taking a temperature twice a day, using social distancing, and other infection preventative and control measures.

Strict social distancing is [defined by DHSS](#) as:

2. You may be in an outdoor public place, but stay six feet away from anyone not in your immediate household and wear a face covering.
3. You may arrange curbside shopping or have food delivery.
4. Please do not enter restaurants, bars, gyms, community centers, sporting facilities (i.e., ice rinks, gymnasiums, sports domes), office buildings, school or daycare facilities.
5. Do not participate in any group activities, including sporting events and practices, weddings, funerals, or other gatherings.

Work Restriction: Employee not at work, quarantined, and must self-monitor for symptoms. Length of work restriction determined by CDC, DHSS, AHD, or DOF guidance.

Appendix A.

Transport of Personnel with COVID-19 Exposure Precautions

Transportation for Urgent or Non-Urgent Medevacs from incidents or within DOF facilities will follow the standard process for medevacs using the Medical Incident Report and requesting the appropriate transport based on the nature of the emergency. For on-incident patient transport with a Fire Medic present, consult the Interagency COVID-19 Fire Medic Program Handbook (FMP) (Link on [DOF COVID webpage](#))

When planning medevac patient transport, consider the following options:

- Medical transport with pre-established contracts with the Division of Forestry, currently Beacon Health.
- Fire Department or ambulance services within their designated service areas.
- On-site transportation or with supplemental DOF transportation.
- If no safe transportation options are available, quarantine or shelter in place for cases of suspected COVID-19 exposure or flu-like symptoms.

Categories of Transportation:

1. Incident or within-Area medevac categorized by Medical Incident Report as Urgent (Red or Yellow) or Non-Urgent (Green).
2. Suspected contagious (flu-like symptoms) or confirmed COVID-19 exposure.
3. Post-treatment transportation from a care facility.

Risk Mitigation Associated with all Medevacs:

- All patients will be assessed and treated as if they are a potential risk for Covid-19 exposure to allow for risk mitigation strategy.
- Confirmed positive or negative in the field or lack of testing must NOT delay treatment or transport for any medevac patient.
- With proper PPE in place and effective risk mitigation, the risk for exposure remains low.

Professional Services access and precautions:

- A dedicated transportation plan for Medevacs should be in place. Consider a medical service helicopter, ambulance (if roadside), agency fire medics, and/or transport vehicle (SUV or Van) pre-established for medical transport.
- Transportation plans should utilize professional services with training and engineering controls, examples below:
 - Covid-19 training: specific to transmission, infection, and decontamination protocols
 - PPE training: appropriate use, donning/doffing and re-use
 - Transport vehicle with necessary safety measures, ex. plexiglass/plastic sheeting dividing patient compartment from driver/pilot if the safety of operation is not compromised.

Personnel assisting with Medevacs:

- Keep at least six feet from the patient unless you are directly involved with patient care.
- Everyone that cannot keep a six-foot distance or will be in close quarters with the patient should wear a cloth face covering or disposable facemask, gloves, and eyewear.
- Patient should also be wearing a face mask if tolerated (but not an N95 mask, because that makes breathing difficult).
- Those traveling within an enclosed patient compartment of a high-risk patient should consider wearing an N95 respirator.
- Be aggressive to avoid cross-contamination: avoid touching your face, clothing, patient, and other surfaces.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer immediately following the transport.
- Follow decontamination after transport protocols, using contractual obligations for rental vehicles or [CDC guidelines for disinfecting vehicles](#) as soon as feasible. Shower and change clothing if possible.

Post-Treatment Transportation

When personnel must be transported to/from a health care facility, mob center, airport, hotel, duty station or home after treatment, consider implementing the following safety measures.

- If possible, have a dedicated patient transport vehicle assigned for this task or consider a vehicle for the individual to drive.
- Consider all personnel Covid-19 positive unless a test was performed to rule out possible exposure.
- Appropriate PPE (face masks, eye protection and gloves) should be worn by drivers. However, do not jeopardize the safety of the driver by requiring PPE use that might interfere with their ability to communicate or safely operate.
- The patient should be wearing a cloth face covering/disposable face mask if possible during the transport.
- Have patient sit in rear of vehicle if possible, with cross ventilation, and do not re-circulate air.

Following patient transport:

- Remove gloves, perform hand hygiene.
- Follow decontamination after transport protocols, using contractual obligations for rental vehicles or [CDC guidelines for disinfecting vehicles](#) as soon as feasible.
- Shower and change clothing if possible.
- Remove any contaminated waste and dispose of appropriately. PPE should be worn during the disinfection process.

Patient Advocacy

Employees being demobilized and in need of quarantine and/or isolation outside of the home unit will need logistical support for lodging, and meals during their quarantine and/or isolation. The Area will communicate with the home unit about how to compensate costs and ensure that support will be provided. Daily contact should be maintained to determine patient status and needs.

Appendix B

EMPLOYEE/VISITOR/CONTRACTOR COVID-19 SCREENING TOOL

1. Have you.....	
Yes / No	a. Traveled from or through, locations identified by the CDC as increasing epidemiologic risk for COVID-19 within the last 14 days? https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html
Yes / No	b. Had close contact with anyone diagnosed with the COVID-19 illness within the last 14 days?
2. Do you currently have a	
Yes / No	a. fever (>100.4F) or chills
Yes / No	b. cough or shortness of breath
Yes / No	c. Any two of the following: body aches, fatigue, headache, runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, rash or any abnormal changes/ loss of taste or smell.
3. Perform a temperature check _____°F Method: oral / forehead (temporal) / tympanic (ear)	
*Staff, see instructions on reverse for screening form.	

* Employees to complete spreadsheet with information daily.

Purpose of Visit (Circle one):

Visitor/ Contractor

Social (visiting an employee) – Employee name and number _____

Other _____

Visitor/Contractor Name (Last, First): _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

Employee/Visitor/CONTRACTOR COVID-19 SCREENING TOOL

Instructions for staff:

The designated entry to DOF facilities will have an employee available that will provide the COVID-19 Screening Tool to all persons entering the area (employees, visitors, contractors, etc.), ask each person to complete questions and the temperature check.

Negative Screening: If answers to all the questions are No, and there are no obvious signs of respiratory infection, e.g. frequent coughing, and temperature is $< 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$, follow usual procedures.

Positive Screening: If answers to any of the questions are YES, or if the person has a temperature $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ (oral), or if the person has obvious signs of a respiratory illness, ask them to wait in a separate area (6 feet from others or outside), and contact the FMO or other Leadership, for further direction.

For regular employees who report for duty daily - avoid filling out the same form daily and adding to the paperwork burden, instead each area can create their own excel spread sheet with employee names, daily screening results and temp (kept confidentially and not on display).