



2023
Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
Infection Control Workplace Operating Plan

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Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

The following guidance shall be used by all Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DOF) staff. This document will be updated as needed and as new guidance and direction is given from the State Emergency Operations Center and Governor's Office.

Introduction

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 COVID-19, and other infectious pathogens that could impact the overall health of our workforce.

This manual is the DOF reference guide for memos, directives, and operational guidance related to health and safety of all employees regarding infectious diseases in the workplace. Updates will occur periodically and, where appropriate, will be incorporated into this manual.

Keeping the Workplace Safe

Review State of Alaska COVID-19 Response and Recovery Health Advisory 1: [02.14.21-Health-Advisory-1-Recommendations.pdf \(alaska.gov\)](#)

Review the CDC guidelines at: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#)

Review OSHA/COVID rules at: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/standards.html>.

Benefits of COVID Vaccination

Fully vaccinated means a person has received all recommended doses in their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine. Up to date means a person has received all recommended doses in their primary series COVID-19 vaccine, and a booster dose when eligible.

- Vaccination is a personal preference and is not currently mandated. It is recommended to become vaccinated if you choose.

Information regarding COVID -19 vaccines.

[Vaccines for COVID-19 | CDC](#)

Can a supervisor ask me if I have been vaccinated?

Yes, employees may be asked if they have been vaccinated, and the employee may voluntarily provide a response. Inquiring about vaccination status is not a disability related inquiry. However, the supervisor cannot ask why the employee has or has not received the vaccine. Regardless of the employee's vaccination status being known, or unknown it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure the health and safety of other employees in the workplace and practice mitigation and safety practices.

HIPAA

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))

Facilities Access

State offices are fully open for business and must be reasonably accessible to the public. For security reasons, office buildings, shops and maintenance stations may have limited access. If your workplace is locked, make sure there is appropriate signage with phone numbers (monitored) for the public to call for assistance.

Recommended General Actions based on CDC Guidance

- Isolating after encounter with someone who has tested positive with COVID-19 (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.

Recommended Administrative Actions based on CDC Guidance

- Managing staff working a combination of telecommuting agreements and personal leave.
- Facilitating staff telecommuting agreements.
- Developing and reviewing previous lessons learned from COVID-19 infection rates and mitigations factors that adhere to CDC guidance.
- Developing requirements for Emergency Contact lists, Continuing Operation Plans (COOP) and Employee Availability lists.
- Submitting required forms, timesheets, and documents online.

Sanitization & Disinfection Best Practices per CDC

The CDC states that the risk of virus spread from surface touch is low in most cases, and that the most reliable way to prevent infection spread from surface touch is through regular hand washing or sanitization. Normal routine cleaning with soap and water can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other illnesses. Disinfection using EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 can also help reduce risk if used after a known exposure in the workplace. When used, reference [EPA's List N, Disinfectants for Coronavirus](#), and [EPA's Six Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use](#). When EPA-approved disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (for example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfectant products together, this can create hazardous fumes. Bleach solutions for use outside of medical-grade facilities are effective for disinfection up to two weeks, then should be discarded. Proper PPE should be worn when using bleach and other disinfectants.

Best Practices

- Regularly clean all frequently touched surfaces in common areas and surfaces such as in vehicles or in personal or shared workspaces.
- If cleaning or disinfecting, give special attention to office, vehicle and heavy equipment electronics or other surfaces that may be damaged by these products. Avoid spraying any cleaning solution directly onto electronics or electronic controls.
- Keep common areas and office spaces clean and orderly. Do not leave trash in vehicles or any common area.

Face Coverings (Masks)

Masks will be provided for employees if requested. Masks are not required in state facilities, except as noted below:

- Masks are **Highly Encouraged** to be worn by DOF staff if they have been exposed to COVID, have COVID symptoms, or prefer to wear masks for their own protection.
- Masks are **Highly Encouraged** to be worn by DOF staff who enter state facilities that are designated high-risk environments by the Governor's Office.
- Cloth masks, or face coverings are not recommended and provide little to NO PROTECTION and should not be worn as the sole face covering.
- **Surgical masks (disposable masks) are not intended to be used more than once.** If the mask is damaged or soiled, or if the breathing through the mask becomes difficult it should be removed and discarded. To safely discard a used mask, be sure to throw the mask away in a trash receptacle and then have the trash removed from the facility.
- DOF staff must adhere to any applicable local mandates that may require mask use. Such requirements do not apply to state-owned buildings or facilities (with the exception of applicable state-owned airports as noted above)

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.

Travel

Staff should not travel if sick—even if illness is known not to be COVID-19.

- Staff traveling to communities in Alaska must adhere to local community requirements while in the community if indicated.
- Follow good health and hygiene practices, i.e., frequent handwashing.
- If an employee exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while in travel status, the site supervisor will isolate the employee immediately. If the employee is able to drive back to their residence on their own, have them return home as soon as possible.
- If air travel is required to transport the individual home, contact the DOF Safety Officer or Medical Programs Coordinator immediately for guidance.

If an Employee is Sick at Work

- If there are people in the workplace who are sick and/or exhibiting COVID-like symptoms - have them apply a facemask and go home to prevent additional contamination or infection in the office or workspace. Good social practices and behaviors are key to keeping everyone safe and engaged in the work environment.
- Have them contact their health provider if they feel it is necessary or appropriate.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Use appropriate materials to clean and sanitize the employee's workplace and any surfaces they may have had direct contact with including offices, common areas, restrooms, and shared equipment like touchscreens, remote controls, etc.

Employee Scenario Guide

Scenario #1

Testing positive for COVID -19, feel sick, or suspect you have the "Flu" (Influenza) and are **POSTIVE** with flu like symptoms regardless of vaccination status:

1. Quarantine for 5 days
2. May return to work on Day 6 if fever and symptoms have resolved.
 - a. Cannot have taken any form of fever reducing medications such as Tylenol or other commercial or prescribed medications.
3. Returning to work, you must take safety precautions not to transmit, or contaminate coworkers or other employees within the office / workspace.
 - a. You must wear a mask for at least 10 days. This must meet the minimum face covering requirement that has been outlined in this operating guide.
4. There is **NO need** to take another COVID-19 specimen test prior to returning to work.
 - a. CDC recommends being tested prior to returning to a public place, however your test result may indicate a false positive for up to 90 days post infection. If you continue to have COVID like symptoms after Day 6, do not return to work until you are symptom free.

Scenario #2

If you were exposed to COVID-19 and are **NOT** up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations and DO NOT have symptoms.

1. Make reasonable efforts to get tested.
 - a. Dave Calvert Medical Programs Coordinator can help facilitate COVID testing, or COVID testing supplies.
2. Refer to the Close Contact section within the document.
 - a. CDC recommends Quarantine for any form of exposure, however if you do not meet the close contact criteria, please take safety precautions and use a mask until you can confirm you are not positive.
3. COVID-19 testing should be done at least 5 Days post exposure to allow the incubation period to occur. You will not immediately show a positive result within a few hours, or a day post exposure.
4. If you develop COVID symptoms at any point you must quarantine immediately for 5 Days.
5. There is **NO need** to take another COVID-19 specimen test prior to returning to work.
 - a. CDC recommends being tested prior to returning to a public place, however your test result may indicate a false positive for up to 90 days post infection. If you continue to have COVID like symptoms after Day 6, do not return to work until you are symptom free.

Scenario #3

If you were exposed to COVID-19 and ARE up to date on current vaccination status including all boosters, and DO NOT have symptoms.

1. No Need to Quarantine / Unless you develop symptoms then you must Quarantine for 5 Days as outlined in this guide.
2. Get tested 5 Days after last close contact.
 - a. Refer to the close contact guidance within this document.
3. It is HIGHLY Recommended to wear a mask for 10 Days while working in close proximity of other until you can get tested to rule out infection.
4. If you develop COVID symptoms at any point you must quarantine immediately for 5 Days.
5. There is **NO need** to take another COVID-19 specimen test prior to returning to work.
 - a. CDC recommends being tested prior to returning to a public place, however your test result may indicate a false positive for up to 90 days post infection. If you continue to have COVID like symptoms after Day 6, do not return to work until you are symptom free.

Scenario # 4

Treat all illness that are symptomatic the same, if you feel sick, STAY HOME! Our goal is to keep the workforce healthy and engaged in operations.

1. If you feel sick, or have symptoms, notify your supervisor, and stay home.
2. Make reasonable efforts to obtain a COVID-19 or Influenza test.
3. Consult with your primary care provider and follow any directives or treatment recommendations that were outlined in your treatment plan.

Note: Because the sensitivity of all COVID-19 tests is <100%, a negative test result does not rule out infection. If the employee has any form of minor, moderate, or severe symptoms, the best practice is to quarantine the employee until COVID testing can be completed

Calculating Isolation

Day 0 is your first day of symptoms or a positive viral test. **Day 1** is the first full day after your symptoms developed or your test specimen was collected. If you have COVID-19 or have symptoms, isolate for at least 5 days.

Close Contact

Close contact is defined as someone who has been within **6 feet** of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for a cumulative total of **15 minutes or more** within a **24-hour period**. This requires quarantine unless:

- The individual exposed is fully vaccinated and remains asymptomatic.
 - ⇒ You do not need to stay home unless you develop symptoms.
 - ⇒ Avoid being around people who are at high risk.
 - ⇒ Refer to the scenario matrix for details.
- The individual exposed has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

Employee Screening

- **Symptom Monitoring:** Employees should monitor and assess symptoms prior to starting work.
- **Infectious Disease Symptoms** may include any of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, decreased appetite, diminished sense of taste or smell, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle/joint aches, nausea, rash, rigors, runny nose, sore throat, or sputum production. Also be aware minor symptoms may be present.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for **10 days** after last exposure.
- **Disinfect and Clean workspaces:** Disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and any shared equipment routinely. Good Housekeeping practices should be routinely incorporated into daily operations. This helps reduce infectious diseases from spreading.

Supervisors Authority

If the employee develops symptoms at any time, they should be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace must be cleaned and disinfected. When a supervisor reasonably believes, based on objective evidence, that an employee is experiencing infectious disease symptoms (according to the CDC: fever, cough, and shortness of breath), the supervisor can send the employee home. The Department of Administration recommends supervisors document their observations and reasons for sending an employee home.

Quarantine Requirements

When duties permit, employees will be allowed to telework from home during quarantine. The employee must coordinate with their supervisor to determine the appropriate paperwork, and requirements for telework.

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 alertson [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.

Online Resources

[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](#)
- [SOA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQ](#)
- [SOA Telecommuting Policy](#)

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. If you have questions regarding patient advocacy, compensation, or other related questions regarding quarantine, please contact the Medical Programs Coordinator to help assist you with questions or concerns.
- If a resource is sent to a local clinic, medical facility, or emergency room, it is the responsibility of incident and area to ensure there is a comp claim representative that will travel with or meet the resource at the facility. If a hospital liaison is needed, please reach out to the local area, or Medical Programs Coordinator to arrange a representative to meet the resource upon arrival at the medical facility.

Reporting Positive COVID Cases

Reporting Positive Cases:	Instructions how to report:
<p>Testing Situation #1</p> <p>If you received a COVID-19 antigen test while on an incident or operating your official DNR/DOF capacity and received a positive result</p>	<p>You must report the positive test results to the Medical Programs Coordinator David Calvert within 24 hours of results.</p> <p>A form will be sent to you that needs to be completed and faxed into the State of Alaska Epidemiology. The Medical Programs Coordinator can provide this form to you upon request.</p>
<p>Testing Situation #2</p> <p>If you were tested by a health care facility, doctor, clinic, or other health care representative not on the incident, or affiliated with DNR/DOF and received a positive result.</p>	<p>The testing administrator/ facility will make the mandatory reporting notifications on your behalf.</p>
<p>Testing Situation #3</p> <p>If you were tested regardless of who or where you were tested, and the results were NEGATIVE.</p>	<p>No requirement to report negative results.</p>

Points of contact

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