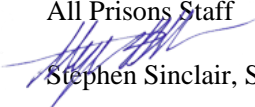




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

November 25, 2020

TO: All Prisons Staff
FROM:  Stephen Sinclair, Secretary
SUBJECT: Required COVID-19 Safety Practices

On November 6, 2020, a memo entitled *Mandatory Use of Surgical Masks* was sent informing you of the required use of surgical masks by all departmental staff, contract staff and any persons entering any department location, through at least January 15, 2021. All department locations are required to have surgical masks onsite and to provide them for usage for all individuals entering the facility. This memo also reminds staff of the importance of maintaining a social distance of six (6) feet or more from others whenever possible. Research continues to show that covering your mouth and nose appropriately, in coordination with maintaining a safe distance of six feet, helps reduce the risk for acquiring or spreading the COVID-19 virus.

It is critical that staff understand and follow this directive. As you know, COVID-19 cases in the community continue to rise. People in our communities, and sadly our facilities, are passing away. Your safety, and the safety of those we have responsibility to care for, has been, and without question will continue to be, our main priority for this Department.

I cannot express to you the depth of my appreciation to your work and commitment during these unprecedented times. The majority of you have taken these precautions seriously and follow the direction that has been given to protect yourselves and others. However, we do still continue to hear concerns about staff who remove their surgical masks while at work, during instances when it is not appropriate to do so, or who are not socially distancing as they should. Several messages have been sent to all staff for the past seven months reiterating the importance of wearing appropriate Personal Protection Equipment, using good hand-washing hygiene, and socially distancing. The most up-to-date directives must be followed or appropriate steps will be taken up to and including disciplinary action if needed.

It is my hope that you understand that these directives are important to keep you, your families, and those we serve as safe as possible. We cannot do this work without each and every one of you.

Again, I thank you for your continued dedication to the department and its vision – to improve public safety. Your patience and commitment to wearing your surgical mask appropriately at work and continuing to socially distance is of utmost importance. I appreciate your willingness and commitment to keeping our staff and incarcerated individuals safe and healthy during this unprecedented pandemic.

SS:jmc

Cc: Robert Herzog, Assistant Secretary, Prisons Division
Daniel Johnson, Assistant Secretary, Health Services Division
Michael Obenland, Prisons Deputy Director, Command A
Jeneva Cotton, Prisons Deputy Director, Command B
Tomas Fithian, Prisons Deputy Director, Command C
Scott Russell, Health Services Deputy Director
All Superintendents
Prisons/Health Services Unified Command

“Working Together for SAFER Communities”