



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
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TO: All Work Release Staff

FROM: *Melinda Kupers*  
Melinda Kupers, Incident Commander Reentry/CCD Unified Command

**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update**

On [December 12, 2020](#), all work release residents were required to wear a surgical mask in all areas of the facility. Effective immediately, work release residents do not need wear surgical masks while in their bedroom. Residents must still wear surgical masks when they are in other areas of the facility, including outside.

All employees, including contract staff, as well as another other authorized persons entering a work release facility are required to [wear a surgical mask](#).

On [December 14, 2020](#), the Reentry Division announced the implementation of serial COVID-19 testing of all work release staff. While we have seen some positive cases, the numbers have been impressively low. This tells us that you are all doing the right things in order to mitigate the spread of the virus.

It is important that we continue to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through continued adherence to social distancing of six (6) feet, properly wearing masks, and practicing proper hand hygiene.

Social distancing within a work release facility can be difficult, but we must do our best to maintain a six (6) foot distance between people in the facility anytime residents are outside their room.

- To maintain proper social distance, abide by the postings around the facility indicating where you should stand/sit, this is especially important in areas such as the dining and TV rooms.
- Communal areas are also limited to a specified number of people at any one time based on available space.
- Movement within the facility is done by assigned groups (cohorts) to ensure social distancing and limit exposure.

Hand hygiene is another important way to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Hand sanitizer will be used whenever you enter and leave the facility. Hand washing with soap and water or

hand sanitizer is also important before and after eating, and before and after touching your mask or face.

Active screening also helps to mitigate the spread COVID-19. All persons entering the facility are screened daily, including residents. Active screening includes a temperature check and answering the [Active Screening Questions](#).

Serial testing helps to identify COVID-19 positive staff and residents. All positive cases are mapped to identify close contacts.

If a resident shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, they are placed on medical isolation. Rooms used for medical isolation will be identified on the outside of the door as Isolation. Residents on medical isolation may be transferred to an Isolation/Quarantine facility to be monitored by medical personnel.

If a resident is identified as a close contact to someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, they will be placed on quarantine. Rooms used for quarantine will be identified on the outside of the door as Quarantine.

Residents who are on medical isolation or quarantine:

- Are restricted to their room, except to use the bathroom or for emergencies,
- Must wear a surgical mask, anytime they open the door or leave the room,
- Will need to sanitize the bathroom after each use, before returning to their room,
- Will have meals brought to them and left on a table or chair outside their door,
- Will be issued a cell phone to communicate their needs to staff, including when they are done eating,
- Will place their laundry in a rice bag and then a yellow bag which will be collected by staff to be washed.

Taking steps to prevent COVID-19 are particularly important during flu and cold season. It is also important to get your [flu vaccine](#), if you haven't already.