




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

August 11, 2021

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Sean Murphy, Deputy Secretary 

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Limited Area Cluster and Facility Wide Cluster Definitions

Since March 2020, the Washington State Department of Corrections has continuously evaluated and updated its protocols and response to COVID-19. The health and safety of our staff, those in our custody and the community continues to be our priority.

Earlier this month, DOC announced the updated [Safe Start Corrections Plan](#), effective August 15, 2021 and the [return to contact visitation and the scheduling of Extended Family Visiting \(EFV\)](#).

The department recognizes that the threat of COVID-19 remains very real, and as a result is further enhancing its approach to identifying and containing the spread of COVID-19. DOC's Health Services has implemented a way to track groups of confirmed cases of COVID-19 that only involve staff and/or volunteers, these instances are called either a Limited Area Cluster or a Facility Wide Cluster.

Headquarters Clinical Leadership and Prisons Operations Leadership will make determinations regarding Cluster status on a case-by-case basis, to make an informed decision with the safety of all involved as the priority.

When a Limited Area Cluster or Facility Wide Cluster is identified, further structured testing will occur, to identify the impact to the facility.

The definitions for Limited Area Cluster** and Facility Wide Cluster* will be updated in the next version of the department's COVID-19 protocols.

The Department values the health and safety of those in its custody and its staff and will continue to update its protocols based on guidance from the Washington State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

**Corrections defines a Limited Area Cluster in a prison or work release facility as:

- Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in staff or volunteers occurring within 14 days who work in the same living or work area

*Corrections defines a Facility Wide Cluster in a prison or work release facility as:

- 20 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a main facility or 6 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a camp (free-standing or co-located minimum security unit) within 14 days among staff and/or volunteers across a facility regardless of their position or post OR
- 12 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a main facility or 4 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a camp (free-standing or co-located minimum security unit) within 14 days among staff and/or volunteers within a facility *that have direct contact with the incarcerated population.*
- 2 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a work release facility within in 14 days among staff, and without clear epidemiologic link to a community case.

“Working Together for SAFER Communities”