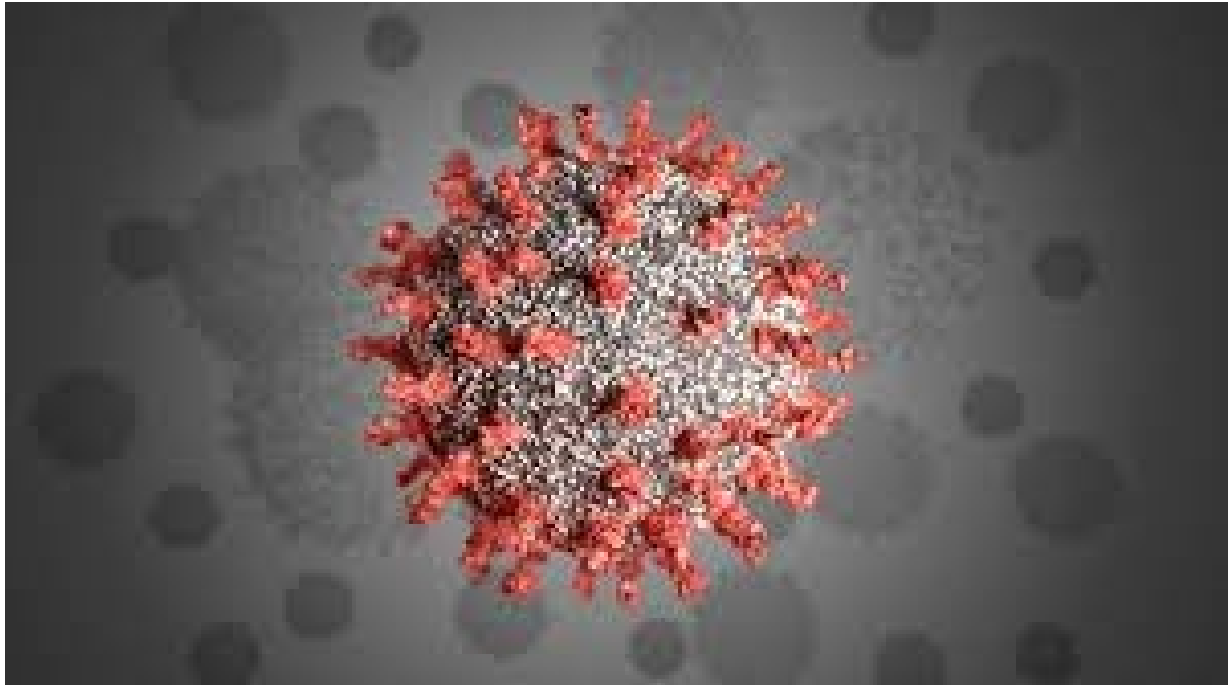


COVID-19 Guidance

Washington Department of Corrections
December 19, 2022



100-GU005

Purpose

The main purpose of this document is to create a cohesive resource to assist in operational guidance and management. As we transition the department’s response to implement strategies that manage COVID-19 as a “new normal”, it is important to balance the wellbeing of our patients and staff with the need to mitigate risk of severe disease. The goal is to provide a thoughtful and informed approach to guide employees and instruct employee interactions while maximizing the safety. These safeguarding procedures are based on recommendations and guidance from [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Washington Department of Health](#), and [Washington Department of Labor and Industries](#), as well as information from Washington DOC Executive Leadership.

This plan is a listing of current authorized response strategies and actions guiding the Washington State Department of Corrections public health strategies.

Employees while on duty, are required to follow the COVID-19 protocols in place as applicable in the workplace. Staff should use caution and consult a supervisor when unsure of the guidance for mitigating COVID-19 risk. These guidelines will be in place until additional authorized guidance supersedes them.

Contents

Purpose	2
Contents	2
Section 1 – General Workplace Guidance	3
Masking	3
Staff Events.....	3
Signage	3
Travel.....	4
Training.....	4
Section 2 – Clinical Guidance	4
Infection Control	4
Screening.....	6
Testing	7
Testing Outcomes.....	8
Vaccinations	9
Section 3 – Cluster & Outbreak Response	9

Section 1 – General Workplace Guidance

This section is intended to give general workplace guidance to all employees who may perform the tasks listed under this section. This guidance applies to all DOC employees in addition to any applicable division specific guidance.

Masking

Masking Guidance for everyone

- Masks must be worn in compliance with the [PPE Matrix](#) & [Routine Masking Guidance](#).
- If not required, masks will still be available to employees in the worksite if they choose to wear them.
- Masking is still encouraged for individuals who are high risk for severe COVID-19.
- Voluntary N95 use is still authorized for staff and incarcerated.

Masking Resources

- [WA State DOC Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Matrix](#)
- [WA State DOC Routine Masking Guidance](#)

Staff Events

Staff interactions during breaks, meetings, conferences, and events should be conducted with physical distancing in mind.

Events

When the facility is in Facility Wide Cluster, Limited Area Outbreak, or Facility Wide Outbreak:

- Meals should be boxed in a grab and go fashion.
- If seating for meal consumption at an event, physical distancing is encouraged.
- Serve food in rotations or shifts.
- Maximize the use of outdoor opportunities for events, as appropriate.

Signage

Signage is important for communicating health and safety information and serves to educate and remind. Create visual cues and install signage to support physical distancing in common use areas. Signage should be consistent throughout all department offices and facilities.

- Masking signage
- Proper hygiene signage

Sign & Poster Resources

- Hand washing signs are available at [Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) in English and Spanish, and at the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) in many languages.
- The Department of Health [provides signs](#) to direct movement, entering/exiting, and more.
- [CDC Handwashing and Hand Hygiene](#)
- [Symptoms of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Travel

Travel

- Staff who are traveling from their official duty station to a congregate facility/reentry center:
 - From a county where the COVID-19 Community Level is YELLOW (medium) or RED (high) **OR** from a facility/site that is on Facility Wide Cluster or any outbreak status, are required to have been tested within the last 7 days **OR** be tested at the facility upon arrival.
 - From a county where the COVID-19 Community Level is GREEN (low), further testing of traveling staff at the receiving facility is not necessary, regardless of the Community Level in that county.
 - If the traveling staff remains at the host facility/Reentry Center for 7 days or more **AND** serial testing is being required of staff at that facility, they will also be required to submit to weekly serial tests until their departure.
- To confirm community levels, visit [CDC COVID-19 Tracker](#).
- If staff travelling for official business are required by a receiving entity (conference, other state, etc.) to have a PCR test pursuant to that event, they can seek PCR testing in the community prior to departure, obtain a receipt for that test, and claim that expense on their TEMS reimbursement request.

Training

In-Person Training

- Department requirements for [masking](#) apply per the [Routine Masking Guidance](#).
- Academies or training held on DOC facility grounds are subject to guidelines/limitations of that facility.

Section 2 – Clinical Guidance

Corrections remains committed to ensuring the health and safety of staff, incarcerated, visitors and volunteers.

[WA State COVID-19 Screening, Testing & Infection Control Guideline](#) outlines strategies that manage COVID-19 as a “new normal”, balancing the wellbeing of our patients and staff with the appropriate need to mitigate risk of severe disease. The guidance document covers screening, assessment, testing and infection control of patients housed in Washington DOC facilities. Staff should carefully review the guidance to ensure the current COVID-19 requirements are being followed.

If you have any questions regarding specific work-site requirements, consult with your direct supervisor.

Infection Control

Hand Hygiene

Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Practicing hand hygiene, which includes the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or handwashing, is an effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens and infections in healthcare settings.

- Employees must frequently and adequately wash hands.
- The agency will provide hand sanitizer stations, wipes or towelettes, or clean water and soap in portable containers to facilitate more frequent handwashing after handling objects touched by others. This includes providing hand cleaning supplies in vehicles.

Hand Hygiene Supporting Documentation:

- [When and How to Wash Your Hands](#) (CDC)
- [Handwashing Steps](#) (CDC)
- [Handwashing Posters](#) (CDC)

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting

[Cleaning and disinfecting our work environment](#) are essential in limiting the survival of COVID-19 in our working environment. Best practices for cleanliness and sanitation of common work areas and vehicles include:

- Wear proper personal protective equipment according to the [PPE Matrix](#) & [Routine Masking Guidance](#).
- Wash and rinse visible dirt and debris from equipment, tools, and other items before disinfecting.
- If the area has a positive COVID-19 test or someone is sick within the previous 24 hours, it should be cleaned and disinfected.
- A supply of cleaning products, cloths and PPE should be at all locations of exchange.

Medical Isolation and Quarantine Areas

- Wait as long as possible before you clean and disinfect an area vacated by someone with suspected or known COVID-19.
- Increase the frequency of routine cleaning in these areas.
- Should not be vacuumed due to the potential for the virus to become aerosolized unless the vacuum is equipped with a HEPA filter and bag. Regular vacuuming can restart once the area has been off medical isolation/quarantine for 7 days.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Supporting Documentation

- [All Staff Memo: EPA Approved COVID-19 Cleaning & Sanitizing Products](#) (3/27/2020)
- [WA State COVID-19 Screening, Testing and Infection Control Guideline](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) (CDC)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. PPE is necessary when interacting with people who have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or are at higher risk of developing COVID-19 than the general public.

Infection Control Resources

- [WA State COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Infection Control Guideline](#)
- [WA State DOC Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Matrix](#)
- [CDC Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities – Infection Control](#)
- [Standard Precautions for All Patient Care](#) (CDC)
- [Transmission-Based Precautions](#) (CDC)

Screening

Screening is a critical part of minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and exists to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. It is important to remember employees are expected to contribute to a healthy workplace by complying with all safety and health practices the employer establishes. This includes not knowingly exposing co-workers and the public to conditions that would jeopardize their health or the health of others.

Staff are to utilize the current version of [COVID-19 Screening Questions](#) to perform a self-screening prior to entering the workplace.

- The current COVID-19 screening questions will be posted at the entrance to all facilities/offices.
- If staff are feeling unwell, they should call in to work and screen out via telephone.
- A thermometer(s) or J-Pay thermostat kiosk will be available at entrances for staff use if they are not able to take their temp at home.
- If a staff person can answer 'NO' to all screening questions, they may enter the facility/office.
- If a staff person can answer 'YES' to any screening questions they will not enter the facility/office and will instead report they have screened out by following the established process (see below).
- The department no longer requires the use of a logbook to document attestation.

Staff members who report answering YES to ANY of the screening questions OR have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above are expected to:

- If on facility grounds, exit the building immediately and notify their supervisor. Supervisors can assist with the following steps if necessary:
 - Complete the [Workplace Denial](#) form, provided at the screening location.
 - Supervisor is responsible to submit the Workplace Denial form via email to the respective Secondary List to Screen (SL2S) distribution list (on the bottom of the Workplace Denial form) for entry into Department Outbreak Tracing System (DOTS).

There are no changes to the secondary screening process, when an employee/contract staff is screened out the following still applies:

- A return-to-work date will be calculated by facility/office staff based upon the [Return to Work](#) guidance.
- If telework options are available and the employee/contract staff can perform those duties, they should telework until they are cleared to return to the worksite. Employees are encouraged to work directly with their supervisor to determine if telework is an option.
- Employees with an exposure to someone with COVID-19 are not required to quarantine provided they have not had symptoms since current COVID-19 exposure. Symptoms should still be monitored for 10 days after the exposure. They should also continue to mask for 10-days (from symptom onset) per DOH and CDC guidance, consider physical distancing, and keep their social circles small.
- Employees with close contact to someone with COVID-19 should follow the established Return to Work guidance.
- Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and have recovered do not have to quarantine as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- Screening exceptions are made for employees/contract staff who:
 - Self-disclose that their symptoms are related to a health condition **other than COVID-19**, such as allergies or asthma, and do not feel sick,
AND
 - Have not had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Active Screening will still be conducted on all visitors, professional visitors, volunteers and non-yellow badge contractors entering the facility/office.

Please refer to [Phase 3 - Return to Work](#) guidance for current return-to-work protocols.

Screening Resources

- [WA State COVID-19 Screening, Testing & Infection Control Guideline](#)
- [Active/Passive Screening Questionnaire \(English\)](#)
- [03-110 COVID-19 Screening Workplace Denial Form](#)

Testing

The department has implemented COVID-19 testing as a strategy to mitigate transmission and to reduce the impact on employees, those under the department's jurisdiction, and department operations.

The department established testing protocols to allow employees to receive testing during work time when testing is requested for various scenarios including serial testing, return to work, symptomatic, close contacts, traveling staff and cluster/outbreak status. Each facility has a testing team and a designee that coordinates test scheduling and provides the results. Although "at home" tests are acceptable for initial diagnostic isolation purposes, return-to-work testing must be conducted on-site, by trained staff.

When indicated, testing will occur PRIOR to entry into the worksite. When testing is indicated per protocols, facilities should not allow persons to begin work, a volunteer shift, or a visit before taking a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). Staff may proceed to their assigned post after submitting a RAT, then would be called back if test is positive for further guidance.

DOC's COVID-19 Medical Duty Officer and Employee Occupational Health Medical Director will work with worksites, the COVID-19 Reentry Center Medical Consultant, and ONCs on declaring Cluster and Outbreak status based on positive COVID-19 cases among staff and incarcerated individuals/residents. Please refer to the appropriate checklists for definitions and specific response and testing directives.

For staff travelling to another facility or office, see [Travel section](#)

For Staff/Contractors

RAT testing protocols currently in place include:

- **Staff serial testing** (for congregate setting areas when indicated), including:
 - The COVID-19 Community Level IS YELLOW (medium) or RED (high) in the county where the facility/reentry center is located, per [CDC COVID-19 Tracker](#)
 - Facility-wide testing when the facility/office is under Facility Wide Cluster, Limited Area Outbreak, Facility Wide Outbreak, or Building Wide Cluster
 - Staff working in Limited Area Cluster areas
 - Staff serial testing is once per week while in above status
- **Return to work from isolation for COVID-19 positive cases:** Refer to the [Return to Work](#) guidance for current protocols. Upon return from isolation – return to work with a negative RAT test.
- If RAT is **negative**, it is appreciated (but not required) to send the [Washington State COVID-19 Point of Care Test Result Report Form](#) to the Occupational Health and Wellness Unit (OHWU)

Additionally, if positive:

- Staff no longer need to serial test after they are cleared to return to work for 30 days after a positive COVID-19 test, *unless they have symptoms and are screened out*.
- Staff restart serial testing (if facility is serial testing) by weekly RAT beginning 31 days post positive test.
- **Close contact exposure** testing per [Phase 3 Return-to-Work](#)
- **Symptomatic staff** testing per [Phase 3 Return to Work](#)

Volunteers: All volunteers must take a RAT upon every entry to the facility or office.

Professional visitors (e.g., attorneys, law enforcement, etc.) are required to complete the active screening process. Due to the infrequent and limited nature of the visit, professional visitors are required, regardless of vaccination status, to take an on-site RAT prior to the visit commencing. Professional visitors can work with the local facility contact for more information.

Personal Visitors: All visitors to incarcerated individuals must submit to a RAT, regardless of vaccination status. All personal visitors are given the flyer, [COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Information for Visitors](#). For those participating in Extended Family Visit (EFV), they must submit an on-site RAT prior to the visit starting and prior to departing the EFV Unit before the incarcerated individual returns to their unit.

Testing Outcomes

This section provides guidance for specific scenarios when Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are positive, or other situations when additional guidance may be needed.

- For staff/contractor, volunteer, professional visitor, and personal visitor RAT **positive** results, the testing team must fill out the [Washington State COVID-19 Point of Care Test Result Report Form \(POC Form\)](#).
- RAT results are firm. Re-tests will NOT be performed.
- If a staff/contractor becomes COVID-19 symptomatic at any point, they must immediately notify their supervisor, complete the [Workplace Denial](#) form, follow all protocols as instructed, and leave the workplace.
- RAT tests may be scheduled to be completed **curbside** with the facility by following their facility/office testing procedures or contact their healthcare provider for follow up.
- Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be exempt from serial testing for 30 days. Beginning on day 31, staff would be subject to serial testing, if their workplace meets serial testing guidelines.
- For staff/contractor results, reporting of RAT positives will be sent exclusively to the Occupational Health and Wellness Unit (OHWU) and to the Department of Health via the POC Form. Staff who test positive will be provided with [Return to Work](#) guidance and follow the indicated process.

Vaccinations

On August 9, 2021, Governor Inslee issued [Proclamation 21-14, COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement](#). The proclamation sets out the requirements for state agencies to include state employees, onsite contractors, agency volunteers, and other people who are connected to agency worksites and business.

On August 20, 2021, the Governor issued [Proclamation 21-14.1](#), which expanded the vaccination requirement to other settings. Vaccination is a proven tool to fight the pandemic and these requirements will take positive, science-based steps for safer environments for employees and others to conduct state business.

In addition, [Proclamation 21-08.1, Safe Workers](#), was released to provide further protections from adverse actions to workers related to vaccination and other safety precautions related to COVID-19.

Section 3 – Cluster & Outbreak Response

The links below are intended to provide staff with helpful job aids that will assist them in the management of facilities and offices during the response to COVID-19 Clusters and Outbreaks. Additional resource will continue to be available on the [COVID-19 Resource](#) page that supports the management of COVID-19 as a “new normal”,

[Prisons Division Cluster & Outbreak Checklist](#)

[Reentry Division Cluster & Outbreak Checklist](#)

[Community Corrections Division Cluster Checklist](#)

Additional COVID-19 job aids, guidance and protocols can be found on the [COVID-19 Resource](#) page.