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NDOC COVID-19 UPDATES

The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) is working closely with local and state public health officials to prepare for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), with the top priority being the health of staff and offenders at our facilities. The plan of our ongoing public health response is to detect and rapidly contain introductions of this virus with the goal of delaying and ultimately preventing sustained spread of COVID-19.

In February 2020, NDOC added COVID-19 to *Medical Directive 231: Communicable Diseases*, along with guidance to custody and medical staff for proper procedures for the housing, transportation, and release due to expiration of sentence or parole of NDOC offenders with communicable diseases. NDOC has also continuously reviewed *Medical Directive 211: Notification of Inmates with Infectious Diseases* as new information about COVID-19 is released by the U.S. Center for Disease Control.

In response to COVID-19, NDOC has implemented the following protocols:

1.

The suspension of visitation to all NDOC facilities starting on March 7, 2020, which was taken as a precautionary measure to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Nevada. Suspended visitation will be in-place until corrections and medical experts at NDOC, working alongside local and state government agencies, determine that the health and safety of staff and offenders are no longer threatened by COVID-19.

2.

Each morning, all employees and contractors are screened for symptoms of the virus, including having their temperature taken. Anyone found with 1 of 3 cardinal symptoms (fever of 100.4 or greater, shortness of breath and/or dry cough) are sent home where they must obtain medical clearance or test negative for COVID-19 before returning to work.

3.

The dissemination of emailed information on precautions, symptoms, and the latest CDC guidance for staff.

4.

The dissemination of the Center for Disease Control's [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) poster, in highly visible areas, for staff and offenders.

5.

Surface Sanitation Teams, using a 10% bleach concentration, are making the rounds at gate houses, visiting rooms, and intake areas to thoroughly clean surfaces.

6.

[Screening](#) of incoming staff and contractors at shift changes, and offenders during train-in/out, for symptoms of the virus that include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

7.

Hand soap is readily available at every facility, both in cells and in common areas. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, NDOC has encouraged staff and offenders to frequently wash their hands using warm soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

8.

N95 mask fittings for medical professionals, and increased access to clinical face masks and non-latex gloves (as appropriate).

9.

Prison Industries is manufacturing hand sanitizer, medical gowns, and protective masks to ensure NDOC staff have access to these critical supplies.

10.

If an offender is suspected of having an illness, or if they self-report feeling ill, NDOC medical staff immediately assess the offender and place them in that facility's infirmary or medically observes them in their cell. Medical staff utilize the appropriate test kits, some of which are provided by the State of Nevada, which are then tested by the State Epidemiologist, to determine a diagnosis and treatment. NDOC also alerts Culinary so meals are delivered to the offender while they're in the infirmary or their cell.

In Response to COVID-19, NDOC has instituted the following:

Eligible offenders can receive [two free phone calls](#) to mitigate the impact of its March 7, 2020 suspension of visitation and stay connected with families and friends. Starting April 7, 2020, eligible offenders are receiving a discounted rate for sending secure instant messaging, not to include photos.

Commissary teams are actively working with their staff and respective institutions to ensure delivery of goods.

NDOC leadership, including Director Charles Daniels and the deputy directors of industries, operations, programs, and support services are hosting offender townhalls to provide accurate and current information. Wardens are hosting similar townhalls at their facilities.

As a reminder, NDOC does not have statutory authority to early release offenders.

COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China and has gradually spread among humans since December 2019. The virus primarily spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes releasing droplets. Another person can become infected if these droplets enter their mouth, nose, or eyes directly or through their contaminated hands. An infected person who coughs or sneezes into their hands and touches surfaces such as phones, tables, door handles, or toys can contaminate them. Coronaviruses usually causes mild respiratory illnesses, such as the common cold. COVID-19 causes more severe illness, and in 2%-3% of cases, death.

To inform Nevadans, the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Governor's Office have created a [COVID-19 website](#) to share information and resources as it pertains to the current status of the coronavirus and its impact within the State of Nevada. DHHS has also launched a daily report of the # of positive cases at facilities throughout Nevada, including NDOC facilities. [Please view this report](#), which is updated daily, to track the number of positive cases at NDOC.

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