



Fellow State Employees,

Thank you for your hard work and service over the past 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic. The heightened level of collaboration across departments in the response effort has been tremendous. COVID-19 is here with us, but we know how continue to safely work together, keep our offices open and provide services to Alaskans. We want to take this opportunity to remind you of a few COVID-related topics in our workplace.

The good news is that the same basic prevention strategies we've been using all along still help – wash your hands frequently, keep your social circles small when possible, consider wearing a mask if the situation calls for it, maintain safe distance from others when possible, socialize outdoors whenever possible, and be aware of your total health status. Implementing multiple strategies provides you with better protection than just one strategy alone.

The best tool we have against this virus is **vaccination**. This is also true for people who have already recovered from COVID-19. With vaccines widely available, all Alaskans aged 12 years and older have the opportunity to get vaccinated and to protect themselves. Vaccination offers considerable protection against COVID-19 and dramatically lowers the chance of being hospitalized or dying should you contract it..

Close Contacts:

If a person is exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 (i.e., they spent at least 15 minutes within six feet of the infected person) and they are identified as a close contact, their vaccine status will determine the next steps:

- Someone who is **unvaccinated** should quarantine for seven days and receive a negative COVID test.
- Someone who is **fully vaccinated** (i.e., two weeks past their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or single dose of J&J vaccine) does **NOT** need to quarantine. The employee **SHOULD** monitor for symptoms. It is highly recommended the employees wear a mask around others and monitor symptoms for 14 days after exposure or until receipt of a negative test at least 3 days after exposure.

Positive COVID-19 Test Result:

- Anyone exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should get a test, regardless of their vaccination status.
- If a person tests positive for COVID-19, they need to isolate from others. One can discontinue isolation ten days after their symptoms first appeared, so long as they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving.

Leave:

Employees who are sick with any illness including COVID-19, need to use their available personal leave for the time they are away from work.

Telework:

Telework may be an option for those employees whose health status may require absence from the office. Temporary telework situations should be documented via email, so details of expectations, duration, and scheduling are recorded and mutually agreed upon. Employees who need to stay home due to a COVID-caused lack of childcare (e.g., their childcare provider is closed because of a positive test) must use leave. This is a return to the State's long-standing policies and procedures. If you have any questions on leave or telework agreements, please work with your department's human resource team. For more information you can find the State of Alaska Return to Work Policy here:

[doa.alaska.gov/dop/fileadmin/DirectorsOffice/COVID19messages/Return to Worksite Policy.pdf](https://doa.alaska.gov/dop/fileadmin/DirectorsOffice/COVID19messages/Return_to_Worksite_Policy.pdf).

Guidance:


The Division of Public Health is willing and available to hold a videoconference with your team to answer questions about COVID-19 and the vaccines. Please feel free to request a meeting or presentation by filling out this form:

hipaa.jotform.com/210517978488067

Sincerely,



Adam Crum
Commissioner



Dr. Anne Zink
Chief Medical Officer

Kate Sheehan

Kate Sheehan
Director of Personnel and Labor Relations