



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health
and Social Services

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Dear State of Alaska employees,

First and foremost, thank you for the important work you do to keep our state government running and to serve Alaskans. This is especially important during times of uncertainty or in the case of an emergency.

We understand that some of you may be concerned about the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak that originated in China and is now spreading to other countries and several states in the Lower 48. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to underscore that the immediate health risk to the U.S. public remains low at this time.

There are currently NO cases of 2019-nCoV in Alaska. We are closely monitoring this situation and coordinating with our federal, Tribal, and local partners. Together, we are actively engaged in ensuring that Alaskans remain safe and protected.

In the weeks and months to come, we can expect to see more cases of 2019-nCoV internationally and nationally, and we could see cases here in Alaska. Our goal is to detect any possible cases as quickly as possible to prevent the spread of this illness in Alaska while working to ensure Alaska State employees can continue to perform their duties without increasing their personal risk for exposure.

As state employees, the best things you can do include the following:

Follow this situation through credible sources. If a case is found in Alaska, we would promptly inform the public through the media. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/nCoV](https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV) and for Alaska-specific information [coronavirus.alaska.gov](https://www.coronavirus.alaska.gov).

Practice good hygiene. This protects against the transmission of many types of respiratory infections, including the flu:

- Wash hands frequently, ideally with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Clean surfaces with an EPA-registered low/intermediate level disinfectant; use gloves and wash hands after cleaning.
- If you are sick, cover your coughs/sneezes and stay home if you have a fever. Also keep sick children home from school according to school guidelines.

Take small steps to stay healthy. Eat well, stay hydrated, keep current on all vaccinations, get plenty of rest and physical activity and enjoy time with friends and loved ones. This is good advice anytime!

Keep in mind that risk to most Alaskans remains low. People who have traveled to China in the past 14 days or have had direct exposure to someone with novel coronavirus are those most at risk. If you are at risk and have a fever or respiratory symptoms, please call the DHSS Section of Epidemiology at (907) 269-8000 or after hours at (800) 478-0084 before visiting a health care provider. If you have any questions, please call (907) 269-8000 during business hours.

For those with recent travel to China, please refer to this CDC document to understand its guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>. This guidance became effective Feb. 3 and does not apply retrospectively to people who entered the United States prior to that date.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend that healthy people wear masks in public settings. If you have an underlying illness or a special health concern, consult your primary care provider for a more individualized recommendation.

Please be respectful and treat others with courtesy. We will also be fighting fear, stigma, and misinformation as this outbreak progresses. Please don't stigmatize anyone just because they are sneezing or because they have recently traveled to an area where there are cases of 2019-nCoV. Remember, there are screening protocols and safeguards in place and those are designed to keep us safe.

Fortunately, Alaskans are resilient and we know how to prepare. As state employees, every time we experience emergencies like floods, fires, earthquakes, and epidemics, our response systems improve.

While the immediate health risk to Alaskans remains low, this is a serious public health concern globally and we will continue to coordinate with health care providers and our many partners both nationally and in Alaska to protect the health of Alaskans.

Thank you,



Adam Crum
Commissioner, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services



Kelly Tshibaka
Commissioner, Alaska Department of Administration



Dr. Anne Zink
Chief Medical Officer, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services