



D.C. Department of Corrections



Office of the Director

Open Letter to All Employees From Director Quincy L. Booth

██████████ March 3, 2020

(Coronavirus Update)

Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Since its emergence in December 2019, COVID-19 has now been detected in 60 locations internationally, including in the United States.

For the safety of our workforce, we want to keep you updated on the steps the District Government and the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DC DOC) is taking to prepare for potential impacts related to the coronavirus. DC Health has confirmed there are no cases of coronavirus in Washington, DC.

On Friday, Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a [Mayor's Order](#) which named DC Health and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency responsible for coordinating the District's emergency response planning for any potential impacts from coronavirus. Since this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, DC Health is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information and education awareness on coronavirus as it becomes available.

Please note, this information is to make sure you are aware and are taking the necessary precautions to stay healthy and minimize the potential spread of the virus.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CORONAVIRUS AND PREVENTION

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

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- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not likely the main way the virus spreads.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Staying home from work until you are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours and without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicants.
- Seeking medical attention – if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to coronavirus or influenza. Call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of Coronavirus to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

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- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

If you have had close contact with someone infected with coronavirus, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure to a patient with COVID-19. If you are impacted by COVID-19 or seasonal influenza, promptly contact your immediate supervisor to request to be placed on sick or annual leave, leave without pay, or other earned leave (for example, restored leave or compensatory time).

Additionally, we recommend you and your household are prepared for the possible impact COVID-19 may have in our community:

- Have an adequate supply of nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand – pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Check on your regular prescription drugs to make sure you have an adequate supply, refill your prescriptions as needed.
- Have a thermometer, tissues, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Have extra non-perishable food items at home.

Considering our responsibility to continue to provide high-quality, equitable service to our residents, this week, the District will begin sharing public messaging to stop stigma associated with coronavirus:

- **Coronavirus doesn't recognize race, nationality, or ethnicity.** Coronavirus (COVID-19) started in geographically in Wuhan, China. Having Chinese ancestry — or any other ancestry— does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.
- **Wearing a mask does not mean a person is ill.** People wear masks for a variety of reasons, including to avoid pollen and air pollution and for cultural and social reasons. We should not judge someone for wearing a mask or assume they are sick.
- **Speak up if you hear, see, or read discriminatory comments.** Correct false information and remind the person that prejudiced language and actions make us all less safe. If discrimination occurs, report it to DC's Office of Human Rights at [REDACTED].
- **Show compassion and support for those most closely impacted.** Listen to, acknowledge and, with permission, share the stories of people experiencing stigma, along with a message that bigotry is not acceptable in our community.

*****All inmates at DOC including those who come through CCB or IRC are screened for symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath) and if found to have positive symptoms will be tested using the rapid flu test and will be treated with**

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medication as needed. They will be isolated. Individual packets of Clorox wipes will soon be available at the CCB, Staff entrances and the IRC. ***

For more information about COVID-19, visit:

- dchealth.dc.gov/coronavirus
- cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/

**PLEASE READ AT ALL ROLL CALLS FOR SEVEN (7) CONSECUTIVE DAYS
AND POST ON ALL APPROPRIATE BULLETIN BOARDS**

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