

The Department of Corrections has been monitoring developments related to COVID-19 for several weeks to ensure our staff, incarcerated population, and those under supervision are safe. We are closely involved with the coordinated statewide response led by the Minnesota Department of Health. We are working to ensure the safety of our staff, the safety of those in the facilities, and the ongoing delivery of essential services including food, water, and health services in the worst case scenario of an outbreak in any facility.

Under the direction of Commissioner Paul Schnell, the DOC pandemic response team has been meeting regularly since early February to ensure the existing pandemic response and continuity of operations plans are up-to-date and sufficient to cover the response to COVID-19. Planning for any possible development is a priority and various segments of the agency are meeting daily to implement the response.

COVID-19 has not been detected in any facility. We are actively working to prevent that from happening while simultaneously preparing for the possibility that it will. Our planning includes several considerations to ensure safety for staff, inmates, and offenders under supervision.

Staff:

- Educating and regularly communicating with employees about safety precautions including appropriate personal hygiene practices and sanitizing throughout the facilities.
- Developing remote working capacity and guidance.
- Understanding facility-specific security needs should COVID-19 impact a facility.
- Contingencies for facility staffing should staffing levels be impacted.
- Engaging staff at every level to ensure each staff member understands his/her role in the agency's response.
- Developing plans for potential daily screening of staff prior to beginning work.

Inmates:

- Educating and regularly communicating with inmates through various channels about safety precautions including appropriate personal hygiene practices and cleaning their cells.
- Ensuring inmates understand what steps to take should they develop symptoms.
- Identifying alternative housing locations should we need to quarantine or otherwise isolate inmates.
- Social distancing protocols.
- Developing plans to ensure continuing food delivery including facility-specific needs, potential off-site storage locations, and sources of emergency food preparation equipment and supplies.
- Ensuring particularly-vulnerable inmates are identified and given appropriate prevention considerations.
- Ensuring appropriate stockpiles of medical and cleaning supplies.

- Providing safety guidance to facility visitors and determining when facility visitation should be limited or shut down.
- Planning for continuing supervision of offenders in the community to ensure safety of staff and community.