



CITY OF UNALASKA COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In an effort to provide a coordinated, multi-agency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a unified command Emergency Operations Center (EOC) structure has been established in Unalaska. Iliuliuk Family and Health Services (IFHS) Clinic is providing the clinical leadership and healthcare services during this public health emergency, while the City provides overall operational leadership community-wide. The response efforts also include collaboration with the Qawalangin Tribe, seafood industry, school district, and key social service agencies. This coordinated effort includes prevention activities, response/care for those affected by COVID-19, and the de-escalation of this pandemic.

The document provides an overview of:

- Thresholds of Risk and Plans for Social Distancing
- Response Measures
- Social Resources
- Local Agency Collaboration

--THRESHOLDS OF RISK AND PLANS FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING--

City officials with the support of the IFHS clinic have developed risk thresholds and corresponding plans for social distancing to limit the spread of the virus in our community. On March 13, 2020, the original threshold of risk and plan for social distancing was issued. These guidelines have been updated as of October 30, 2020 to reflect the current scientific understanding of the SARSCoV2 (COVID-19) virus and its effects in the human body as well its ability to spread. These guidelines establish a flexible framework to be applied within the community, though it's essential that thresholds are adaptable in this rapidly changing situation.

Unalaska as of October 30, 2020 has no confirmed community spread and very few COVID cases on island. The EOC will continue with a cautious approach to COVID-19. The guidelines laid out in this section will be used to determine the risk tolerance the EOC has for city and business functions within the community. Unalaska may follow the State of Alaska's reopening guidelines with more restrictive social distancing measures as laid out in Unalaska emergency orders.

Purpose: To identify the risk factors associated with the COVID-19 virus and the impacts it would have on daily life in Unalaska. Also, to set threshold limits for cancelling city sponsored events and closing non-essential facilities.

Risk Factors: Of overwhelming the medical facilities of Unalaska once COVID-19 reaches Unalaska.

1. Low risk
 - a. Low Regional Alert Level in Anchorage and limited or no community spread in regions of Alaska with direct links to Unalaska.

2. Medium risk
 - a. Confirmed community spread of COVID-19 in regions of the state directly linked to Unalaska.
 - b. Cases in Unalaska with definitive travel history and ability to safely isolate from the community.
 - c. Unalaska has isolated cases of unknown source with limited transmission, causing limited risk to the community as a whole.
 - d. IFHS ability to maintain standard of care for all patients.
 - e. Ability to isolate all suspected cases of COVID-19 is maintained.
3. High risk
 - a. Confirmed community spread or widespread exposure of COVID-19 in Unalaska.
 - b. Once there has been two weeks of no additional confirmed community spread cases in Unalaska, consideration will be given to step down to Medium Risk.

Social Distancing Measures: By risk factors outlined (*these measures will build upon one another as the risk factors increase*).

1. Low risk
 - a. Avoid contact closer than 6 feet of those that may be sick.
 - b. Practice good hand washing techniques.
 - c. Stay home if you are sick.
 - d. Family isolation should be considered for those members in close contact with sick family members.
 - e. Follow State and local protective measures including Alaska Mandates, Unalaska Emergency Orders, Resolutions, and Ordinances.
2. Medium Risk
 - a. High traffic public buildings will open with limited capacity and may require appointments while following CDC and Alaska DHSS recommended guidelines for social distancing.
 - b. Public buildings that are not natural gathering places may be open by appointment only. Those with appointments will follow all social distancing guidelines set in place by the CDC and State of Alaska and City.
 - c. Any city-sponsored travel will be approved by the City Manager on a limited basis.
 - d. Continue isolation of those in the highest risk categories as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and State of Alaska.
 - e. Follow Alaska State mandates regarding quarantine periods and gathering procedures, as well as Unalaska Emergency Orders and Resolutions.
 - f. City staff will maintain the ability to use alternate work schedules to maintain a safe working environment.
 - g. Adjust EOC staffing and functionality as necessary.
 - h. Recommendation from the City for limiting the size of social circles and maintaining safe social distancing.
 - i. City may contract a third-party custodial service to sanitize and disinfect the isolation site and City owned buildings.

3. High risk
 - a. All public buildings will be closed to the public.
 - b. Further implement remote work protocols to better ensure social distancing and limit contact between persons.
 - c. Recommendation from the City to suspend non-essential public facing businesses and activities.
 - d. Enact Unalaska Emergency Orders and Resolutions that may further limit contact outside of the home.

--RESPONSE MEASURES--

Education and Awareness (Operational and monitoring for expanded opportunities):

Raising community awareness regarding COVID-19 and how to keep our community safe has been a primary focus of our efforts. In addition to the distribution of the regular news releases and liaison officers interfacing with various segments of the community, the following measures have been taken to increase awareness.

- Developed City webpage dedicated to COVID-19 topics: www.ci.unalaska.ak.us/coronavirus
- Providing a consistent flow of News Releases which contain important information for community members.
- Created an email distribution list for local businesses in order to keep them informed of grant and loan assistance programs and opportunities, as well as News Releases
- Sharing COVID-19 messaging through the City and Clinic Facebook pages, City and Clinic websites, and KUCB.
- Presence of the Mayor, City Manager, and Clinic Providers and leadership on local radio programming, encouraging community questions.
- Unalaska Public Safety and Fire Personnel are meeting incoming flights to provide information on quarantine orders, symptom-monitoring, access to medical care, social distancing and face covering requirements.
- Ports Personnel are providing similar information to arriving vessels.
- COVID-19 infographic signage has been placed on roadways and high traffic areas.
- Multilingual messaging has been distributed throughout our diverse community, including English, Spanish, Tagalog, Russian and Samoan.

COVID-19 MANDATES (Status: Operational and monitoring for a change in circumstance):

The State has issued a variety of public health mandates ranging from travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, fishing industry-specific requirements, and business operations. Most recent mandates are related to business functions and required safety measures. Additionally, the City has approved local resolutions and emergency orders addressing our local needs and circumstances. This includes the requirement to wear face coverings when visiting open businesses, traveler quarantine for 14 days with limited exceptions, and the submittal of protective plans by certain essential businesses. The goal of these actions has been to reduce the impact and spread of the virus. COVID 19 related violations may be reported to the Unalaska Public Safety Hotline at 359-1323 or via email to kwood@ci.unalaska.ak.us.

CLINICAL CARE (Status: Operational): IFHS has continued to work towards their mission “to provide quality, integrated health care and to promote health and well-being” during these challenging times with adaptations to keep our community healthy. Priority areas of focus during this pandemic include:

- Priority #1: Ensure all community members have access to the necessary level of medical services including testing for COVID-19.
- Priority #2: Implement adaptations in our delivery model to enhance the safety of our staff and our community.
- Priority #3: Prepare for a high volume of patients with critical healthcare needs.

IFHS has continued to provide healthcare services with modifications in their delivery model to ensure the safety of our community, utilizing telehealth and phone consultations for non-urgent visits and continuing to provide face-to-face encounters with all patients that need urgent/emergent care or to address issues not addressable via telemedicine. IFHS has implemented COVID-19 screening, testing, treatment, monitoring, and coordination of care practices in alignment with national best practices and has organized clinic space and staffing to reduce the flow of aerosolized viral matter between respiratory and non-respiratory patient care areas. IFHS has implemented universal masking procedures for all patient care as well as N95 masks and full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) precautions during the care of patients with respiratory symptoms. IFHS and the Oonalaska Wellness Center are working together to provide COVID-19 care for tribal members.

IFHS is prepared for an insurgence of high acuity patients with respiratory needs. These preparations include staffing (both provider and support staff), medical supplies and medications used to support the care of critically ill patients, cleaning supplies, supplemental oxygen, and ventilators (3). It's important to note that while very ill patients are likely to present, the vast majority of cases are likely to be mild and will resolve with minimal medical support. Transport will be obtained for rapidly declining patients.

PUBLIC HEALTH (Status: Operational): Though the State of Alaska Public Health Department is responsible for overall surveillance activities including contact tracing for all confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in the state, IFHS providers are working closely with public health contacts to support those efforts.

LOCAL COVID-19 TESTING (Status: Operational and monitoring for expanded opportunities): Both the IFHS Clinic and Oonalaska Wellness Center have “point-of-care” testing for COVID-19 available to patients with qualifying symptoms. IFHS also offers Drive Thru COVID-19 testing daily in the clinic parking lot (near the gray tent). Tests provided by IFHS clinic are by appointment only. Patients should call IFHS at 581-1202 and ask for a telephone visit with a provider, which will include screening questions about symptoms. The process for Oonalaska Wellness patients is similar, and patients should call 581-2742 for their appointment. IFHS is also working with the State of Alaska Department of Health and Human Services to broaden access to testing in Unalaska, particularly for industry.

ISOLATION SITE (Amaknak Camp) (Status: Finalizing details): A residential isolation site has been established under the direction of the EOC Safety Officer. This site will be available only on referral from the IFHS clinic, to individuals who have been evaluated, need to isolate and have no other housing option. This is not a medical care facility, but rather a place to stay for individuals who are able to take care of themselves, who are only mildly ill, and do not have other suitable accommodations. The isolation site will be used for people in these categories:

- Person Under Monitoring (PUM): a person who has had close contact (closer than 6 feet) with a confirmed COVID-19 infected person

- COVID-19 Patients: those with a confirmed positive case, but exhibiting no or mild symptoms

People will be appropriately segregated within the building, and plans are in place for laundry, food delivery, safety, security, etc.

PATIENT GROUND TRANSPORTATION (Status: Operational): Unalaska Fire Department has put into place transport protocols with their medical director to ensure the safety of those responding and the patient being transported. The goal of the department's response is to assess patients with suspected COVID-19 and any non-life-threatening issues, be left in their residence to self-isolate. Any life-threatening condition will be transported to IFHS in a specially equipped ambulance to reduce the spread of aerosolized sputum droplets in the air. There will only be one medic in the back of the ambulance to care for the patient on the way to IFHS. Safe decontamination and sanitizing protocols have been put into place for the responders and ambulance after call completion.

PATIENT AIR TRANSPORTATION (Status: Operational): The United States Coast Guard and Alaska Air National Guard are available to help Unalaska and other remote Alaska communities with transport of patients to Anchorage during this pandemic, if called upon to do so. LifeMed and Guardian medevac services remain available, but capacity to transport patients is limited by the size of their aircraft, the length of the flight, time of day, crew time, etc. The IFHS Clinic is responsible for coordinating the transport of patients with a rapidly declining status or in need for a higher level of care.

MASS FATALITY SITE (Status: Operational): A refrigerated container has been placed adjacent to the DPS and Fire Building, should the number of deceased persons exceed the standard holding capacity.

--SUPPORT RESOURCES--

EMERGENCY FOOD DELIVERY PROGRAM (Status: Operational): The EOC has also developed an emergency food delivery program, which will be implemented if the need arises. The program is intended to provide a supply of basic food and other necessities for residents who, as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing or quarantine measures, are unable to obtain necessary supplies. It is important to note that this program is not a personal shopping service, but rather is intended to be a resource for those in need of basic supplies who might otherwise suffer undue hardship because they do not have family, friends or other resources to obtain groceries.

SOCIAL SERVICE SUPPORT (Status: Operational): The following local support is available to all community members.

- For local social services support (food, supplies and more) call Unalaskans Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence (USAFV) at 581-1500.
- USAFV Toll-Free 24-Hour Crisis Line (907) 478-7238 or 581-1500 and text line at 359-1500.
- Aleutian Pribilof Island Association (APIA) Behavioral Health Crisis Line (907) 359-2743.
- IFHS providers will also place Care Management referrals for patients with identified financial or social needs, which will be addressed through a coordinated social services team.

UTILITY ACCOUNT HARDSHIP RELIEF (Status: Operational): In conjunction with the recently enacted COVID-19 relief law, the City of Unalaska will not shut off utility service to eligible residential customers affected by the emergency, will waive late fees, and offer deferred payment plans. Residential customers experiencing financial hardship related to the COVID-19 public health emergency are eligible. Application is required (Sworn Statement of Financial Hardship). Business accounts are not eligible. This program will remain in effect until November 15, 2020 or until the Governor's emergency declaration ends, whichever is earlier.

EMERGENCY SHELTER (Status: Standby Phase): Plans are developed to help shelter for those individuals experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

--LOCAL AGENCY COLLABORATION--

This is truly a global emergency that has touched the lives of every community member. These response measures and support resources would not be possible if not for countless individuals and businesses in the community. Thank you to local vendors, businesses, agencies and industry for providing assistance, services, flexibility, materials and equipment in response to this pandemic.

Thank you to those agencies that are part of our EOC structure and for the support they are providing various response efforts. The Qawalangin Tribe has provided financial support for increased testing capabilities. Several individuals and agencies have also donated funds and supplies to support our community during this time. Recognizing that this public health crisis creates and magnifies the need for various support services, USAFV and APIA Behavioral Health Services are available for those that might be in need of a range of support services. Additionally, the EOC is working with Unalaska Christian Fellowship in seeing how their temporary emergency housing program may be expanded during this emergency. The Unalaska City School District has been actively involved in the EOC from the start and we have coordinated communications and facility access decisions together.

Because the seafood industry is an important part of our community, the EOC has been intentional about including industry leaders in our plans for Unalaska. Several members of our EOC team are participating in both local and industry-wide collaborative committees within the fishing industry. One such collaborative is the Alaska Fishing Industry Safety & Health Committee (AFISHC). The purpose of AFISHC is to bring together fishing industry companies, communities, medical advisors, and public health partners for the common goal of protecting the health and welfare of communities and seafood workers. Our EOC Safety Officer, Clinic Incident Commander, Ports Liaison, and Industry Liaison are participating in weekly AFISHC conference calls and sharing local updates with the industry-wide group. Several EOC team members also serve on the Unalaska Taskforce and subcommittees of AFISHC (External Communications, Employee Screening, Personal Protection Equipment and Decontamination Procedures for Healthcare).