



CITY OF UNALASKA COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

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 accordance with the City of Unalaska's Overall Emergency Response Plan. Iliuliuk Family and Health Services Clinic (IFHS) is providing clinical guidance 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 and care for those affected by COVID-19, and the de-escalation of this pandemic.

The document provides an overview of:

- Thresholds of Risk and Recommendations for Protective Measures
- Response Measures
- Social Resources
- Local Agency Collaboration

THRESHOLDS OF RISK AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTIVE MEASURES

City officials, with the support of the IFHS, have developed risk thresholds and corresponding guidance for protective measures to limit the spread of the virus in our community. On March 13, 2020, the original COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan was issued. These guidelines have been updated as of September 1, 2021 to reflect the current scientific understanding of the SARSCoV2 (COVID-19) virus and its effects in the human body as well as 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.

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 also strives to complement the State of Alaska's Health Advisories with protective measure as necessary.

Purpose: To identify the local risk factors associated with the COVID-19 virus and the impacts on daily life in Unalaska. Specifically, the purpose is to provide guidance to individuals for their personal decision making; to organizations as they make operational decisions; and to the City Council as they consider Community Wide Protective Measures.

Risk Levels and Protective Measures: The risk is the potential of overwhelming medical facilities in Unalaska or Anchorage with COVID-19 related cases. Included in this section are the

recommended interventions at each risk level. The measures associated with each level are in addition to the protective measures in the preceding risk levels. Once the risk level is elevated, it will remain for two weeks, at which point the level will be reassessed based on the active case count and other considerations listed below.

1. **LOW RISK.** Unalaska has few cases of COVID-19 with limited community transmission, causing limited risk to the community as a whole. This is generally defined as less than 10 active cases. Active Cases are defined as positive cases of COVID-19 within their isolation/infectious period. Cases in Unalaska are safely isolated from the community. Regardless of the active case count, the level may be increased with consideration to waste water surveillance indicators and the ability for local health care to be provided.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- a. Get vaccinated for COVID-19.
 - b. Practice good hand washing and hygiene techniques.
 - c. Avoid close contact with those that may be sick.
 - d. Stay home if you are sick.
 - e. Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.
 - f. Follow CDC and health care provider's guidance regarding isolation and close contact exposure.
 - g. Encourage coverings over the nose and mouth in public indoor spaces, especially for those with high risk medical conditions or if unvaccinated.
 - h. The City of Unalaska COVID-19 Response Hub dashboard will be updated three times per week to provide the community with information regarding the risk level and current case counts.
2. **MODERATE RISK.** Moderate levels of COVID-19 cases are present within the community. In general, this is defined as 10-19 active cases, which are community acquired, travel acquired, and/or household acquired, with consideration for the inclusion of industry-related cases that are a part of the community or who have traveled commercially and test positive upon arrival. Regardless of the active case count, the level may be increased with consideration to waste water surveillance indicators and the ability for local health care to be provided.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- a. Recommend that businesses and organizations open to the public provide modifications to encourage social distancing.
 - b. Encourage all to wear coverings over the nose and mouth in public indoor spaces.
 - c. Recommend limiting the size of social circles and maintaining safe social distancing.
 - d. The City of Unalaska COVID-19 Response Hub dashboard will be updated three times per week to provide the community with information regarding the risk level and current case counts.
3. **SUBSTANTIAL RISK.** Substantial levels of COVID-19 cases are present within the community. In general, this is defined as 20-29 active cases, which are community acquired, travel acquired, and/or household acquired, with consideration for the inclusion of industry-related cases that are a part of the community or who have traveled commercially and test positive upon arrival. Regardless of the active case count, the level may be increased with consideration to waste water surveillance indicators and the ability for local health care to be provided. Another consideration for adjusting the risk level is if hospitals in Alaska are reaching

capacity, with COVID-19 patients affecting the availability of all medical care for Unalaskans in Alaska hospitals.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- a. Recommend that businesses and organizations open to the public provide modifications to encourage social distancing, with services provided by appointment only, or outdoor/curbside service where applicable.
 - b. Require coverings over the nose and mouth in public indoor spaces.
 - c. Encourage limitations to the size of gatherings and building capacity.
 - d. City of Unalaska buildings normally open to the public will be open to the public by appointment only. Essential city facilities, including the airport and ports facilities, may follow other criteria.
 - e. Enact Unalaska Emergency Orders and Resolutions that may limit contact with others outside of the home.
 - f. The City of Unalaska COVID-19 Response Hub dashboard will be updated each weekday to provide the community with information regarding the risk level and current case counts
4. **HIGH RISK.** Widespread COVID-19 cases are present within the community. In general, this is defined as 30 or more cases, which are community acquired, travel acquired, and/or household acquired, with consideration for the inclusion of industry-related cases that are a part of the community or who have traveled commercially and test positive upon arrival. Other triggers for adjusting the risk level are if healthcare in Unalaska can no longer provide adequate services to all of the patients on island; and hospitals in Anchorage are diverting patient transfers to hospitals beyond Anchorage.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- a. Recommend that businesses and organizations open to the public provide services by appointment only, with outdoor/curbside service where applicable.
- b. Require limitations to the size of gatherings and building capacity.
- c. Require coverings over the nose and mouth in public indoor spaces.
- d. City staff may implement alternate work schedules to maintain safe working environments.
- e. Enact Unalaska Emergency Orders and Resolutions that may further limit contact with others outside of the home.
- f. The City of Unalaska COVID-19 Response Hub dashboard will be updated each weekday to provide the community with information regarding the risk level and current case counts

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 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. Because of the availability of Unalaska's COVID Data Hub, news releases will now be issued (1) when there is a change in our local risk factor; (2) when a new local mandate is adopted by City Council; or (3) when otherwise deemed necessary..
- 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 Fire Personnel are meeting incoming flights to provide information on quarantine orders, symptom-monitoring, access to medical care, social distancing and face covering requirements, and are collecting contact tracing forms
- Ports Personnel are providing similar information to arriving vessels.
- COVID-19 infographic signage placed on roadways and high traffic areas.
- Multilingual messaging has been distributed throughout our diverse community, including English, Spanish, Tagalog, Russian and Samoan.
- Created the City of Unalaska COVID-19 Response Hub Dashboard for readily accessible online information related to COVID-19 in Unalaska and our region: <https://covid19-response-unalaska.hub.arcgis.com/>.
- Use of Nixle Alerts when Risk Level changes or for special messaging.

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

The State has issued a variety of public health mandates, outbreak health orders and advisories ranging from travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, fishing industry-specific requirements, and business operations. The State of Alaska has issued Health advisories to aid in COVID-19 response and recovery: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.

The City considers and approves local resolutions (outlining both requirements and recommendations) and emergency orders addressing our local needs and circumstances. The goal of these actions has been to reduce the impact and spread of the virus. Any mandate violations that are seen can be reported to the Unalaska Department of Public Safety COVID Hotline at 907-359-1323 or via email to kwood@ci.unalaska.ak.us. Reports can also be made through the main Public Safety Line.

Businesses may also provide COVID-19 mitigation plans to the City of Unalaska through covid19plans@ci.unalaska.ak.us. City staff can then receive and review business plans to help businesses in the community and businesses traveling into the community.

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 when at high community alert levels to ensure the safety of our community, including utilizing telehealth and phone consultations for non-urgent visits, when appropriate, 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, vaccination, 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): Both the IFHS Clinic and Oonalaska Wellness Center have "point-of-care" testing for COVID-19 available to patients with qualifying symptoms. Tests provided by IFHS clinic are by appointment only. Patients should call IFHS at 581-1202 to set up a COVID test. The process for Oonalaska Wellness patients is similar, and patients should call 581-2742 for their appointment.

LOCAL COVID-19 VACCINATIONS (Status: Operational): Both the IFHS Clinic and Oonalaska Wellness Center have COVID vaccinations available. Patients should contact the clinics at the scheduling number listed above to set up their vaccine appointment. Vaccinations are provided either onsite at the respective clinics, or through mass vaccination clinics at the PCR.

WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE OF SARS-CoV-2 (Status: Operational): The City of Unalaska Division of Wastewater began testing raw sewage for the genetic signal of SARS-CoV-2 on a weekly basis starting in mid-July 2020. Between one and three locations are sampled each week and are composited over 24 hours during peak usage times. Wastewater surveillance complements existing COVID-19 surveillance systems and should not be interpreted alone to inform public health action. Wastewater surveillance can provide an early indicator of the presence of, or trends in, COVID-19 cases in a community. SARS-CoV-2 wastewater surveillance data can be used to inform clinical testing and community mitigation strategies, such as:

- Increased testing of individuals in the affected community.
- Increased public health communication about how individuals can protect themselves from COVID-19 and outreach in the affected community.
- Monitoring and impact evaluation of community mitigation strategies.

ISOLATION SITE (Amaknak Camp) (Status: Operational through December 31, 2021): An isolation site has been established under the direction of the Fire Department. 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.

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.

SUPPORT RESOURCES

EMERGENCY FOOD DELIVERY PROGRAM (Status: Stood down): 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.

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 worked 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.