

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH AND CITY OF KETCHIKAN

MEDIA RELEASE: COMMUNITY PLANS FOR CORONAVIRUS CONTINGENCIES

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For Immediate Release

City and Borough representatives are working closely with State and local health care agencies to prepare for the evolving Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) threat. At this time, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ketchikan.

City Mayor Bob Sivertsen says "local entities are monitoring this threat closely and adjusting as new State and Federal guidelines are released."

Emergency response agencies have implemented updated 9-1-1 dispatch protocols based on Centers for Disease Control guidance, which means calls are now screened for potential Coronavirus.

PeaceHealth Medical Center has reviewed its procedures, trained staff and is screening patients for COVID-19.

Facilities with high public use, such as the Library, Transit, the Ketchikan International Airport and the Gateway Recreation and Aquatic Center, and Museum are reviewing and updating cleaning protocols to prevent the spread of germs.

In light of the Novel Coronavirus threat, local officials are working closely with Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska and Federal agencies in preparation for the upcoming tourist season.

Borough Mayor Rodney Dial is urging residents to make plans for Coronavirus.

"You should do your part to prepare your household for a disruptive event, which will in turn allow government to focus on the needs of the vulnerable populations that have a diminished ability to prepare," he said. "Ultimately the only thing I am sure of is that Ketchikan will face any future difficulties together and will be just fine."

Actions one may take to prepare and avoid illness include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes and mouth
- Stay home and keep children home when sick until you and/or your child have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of the tissue appropriately
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow if no tissue is available
- Avoid other individuals who show signs of illness, including coughing or sneezing
- Routinely clean frequently touched objects
- If you think you have Coronavirus, call your doctor before seeking medical treatment
- Ensure you have enough medicine and food for at least two weeks
- Plan for a possibility of school closures and get to know your neighbors
- Identify a room in your home to separate ill individuals from healthy
- If you do fall ill and live alone, keep in touch with family and friends by phone

Businesses are encouraged to have sick employees to stay home and to prepare for high levels of absenteeism. Businesses can help curb the spread of illness by routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces and keeping soap and hand sanitizer on hand.

Additional resources on preventing the spread of COVID-19 can be found at the following Centers for Disease Control website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

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