



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH, CITY OF KETCHIKAN, AND CITY OF SAXMAN

Questions and Answers
Facebook Live Session with IC Hoage
Friday, March 27, 2020 5:30 p.m.

The following are questions submitted prior to the Facebook Live session, and the responses from the Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center and its Incident Commander Abner Hoage.

Operations/Logistics Questions

- 1. Can underwater breathing apparatus be used as an emergency respirator for critical cases if the local resources for ventilators are eventually exhausted?*

We are not aware of the ability to use underwater breathing apparatus as a ventilator. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has taken action and provided guidance on repurposing some types of ventilators and other respiratory equipment to vices to support patients with respiratory failure or difficulty breathing during the Covid-19 pandemic; and we are exploring all options to increase our capacity to treat patients infected with COVID-19.

- 2. If the community currently has 25 available hospital beds, in general how many are in use on a normal day? In other words how many other patients would we need to displace if we had 25 virus patients needing hospitalization?*

We are in the process of establishing additional surge capacity which we hope to have in place next week. We are coordinating with Peace Health and the State to establish a list of resources by late next week. Peace Health has surge capacity planning in place. With a current capacity for 9 moderate COVID-19 ill patients in an isolation unit, with ability to expand to approximately 50 additional beds for moderate COVID-19 patients. Additional plans exist to repurpose other areas of the hospital in order to add up the additional 35-41 beds.

- 3. We hear in the national media a lot of talk about "respirators" being the major component. How is the local supply of respirators?*

There are 16 respirators for respiratory therapy use as PeaceHealth. We have seven ventilators and have requested 10 additional ventilators. We currently have 40 N95 masks, in addition to the inventory of the providers, and we have ordered 6,000 additional N95 masks.

- 4. Any thought to using the Ted Ferry Civic Center or KRYF buildings as places that could hold homeless and would allow more social distancing than either of the shelters?*

Our EOC has established a homeless shelter branch, and we are implementing plans for 24-hour services for both PATH and the day shelter/warming shelter. The shelters will be moving to the

Gateway Recreation Center as soon as the final arrangements are in place. In addition, there are three facilities identified that have individual rooms available for quarantine and isolation areas. Those locations are the Landing, My Place, and the Inn at Creek Street.

- 5. Is Ketchikan considering housing people who have tested positive in a central facility like a hotel that is supervised by nurses rather than continuing to allow people to self-quarantine at home? I think that doing that while maintaining strict travel restrictions and also central housing quarantined travelers once we get our numbers under control might be a way to open things up a bit for most people.*

We have looked into the option of a controlled quarantine facility. There would be issues with expenses with congregate housing vs. non-congregate housing. A controlled non-congregate housing unit would have to be directed by Public Health. As an alternative, three hotels have offered rooms available to house people who either need to self-quarantine (identified as having a close-contact to someone who tested positive) or self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19. One hotel – the Inn at Creek Street – has offered special rates for anyone who needs a place to stay rather than going to their home.

Transportation/Airport Questions

- 6. Is the airport set up to have voluntary screening for COVID-19? Why not?*

The airport is not currently set up for voluntary screening. We were in the process of developing a location and staff for a voluntary screening similar to what Juneau had implemented. When Governor Dunleavy issued the travel mandate requiring all travelers arriving from out-of-state to self-quarantine for 14 days, the voluntary screening was no longer needed. The purpose of voluntary screening is to identify who needs to self-quarantine, which is now accomplished through the Governor's mandate.

- 7. Continuation of barge service. I believe that some people are conflating the Seattle "cruise port" closure with the "barge ports" and rumoring about supply shortages.*

We have spoken with the local barge companies and they are all continuing service. Supply chains for normal commodities are working the way they should be, and are continuing. The shortages of commodities that some may be experiencing are likely due to people "panic buying" or "hoarding" certain products. Families are requested to continue normal shopping, while practicing social distancing, but are asked not to purchase more than is needed.

The rumors may stem from confusion related to recent announcements from the cruise line industry. While the cruise ships will not be coming to Ketchikan for the foreseeable future, there is no expected change in the barge lines. There is a difference between the Jones Act and the Passenger Vessel Services Act (PVSA). The PVSA addresses the transport of passengers and affects the cruise ships. The Jones Act addresses cargo and is not being impacted by the recent decisions of the cruise line industry.

- 8. AK Air flight crews are still overnighing in Ketchikan hotels. What protocols does AK Air have in place about crew health these days?*

The following information was received by the EOC from an Alaska Airlines spokesperson:

“Consistent with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and our own health experts, Alaska Airlines have implemented a number of precautions intended to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in connection with our operations, including the examples that follow.

- We have enhanced cleaning on all our airplanes.
- We have changed our onboard service to limit contact and create more space between guests and crew.
- We have temporarily stopped recycling onboard to limit contact with materials.
- Flight attendants are allowed to wear masks if they wish.
- Follow all CDC guidance for social distancing, personal hygiene, and use of hand sanitizers available in all crew break rooms and on the plane.
- Pay attention to their health at all times. Refrain from coming to work if sick.

We comply with the health guidance issued by the FAA in its Safety Alert for Operators 20003 dated March 12, 2020 (SAFO). As recommended by FAA in the SAFO, we direct our crews who are in layovers to:

While on a layover:

- Travel as a group in transportation provided by Alaska Airlines when traveling between the airport and hotel.
- Minimize contact with ground personnel and time in public areas while moving between the aircraft and the private transport.
- Stay in their hotel rooms to the extent possible.
- Minimize going out into the general population and use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) whenever out in public. Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people.”

Federal/State/Local Governance

9. If the President chooses to declare the crisis "over" in early April, can local government continue to suggest a local shelter in place?

Yes, we can. We have the ability to recommend longer actions and are likely to recommend longer shelter in place actions in Ketchikan. We expect actions this evening from the Governor on extensions of the travel mandate and social distancing.

***Note, at the time of the Facebook Live presentation, it was not yet known about Governor Dunleavy’s Health Mandates 11 and 12, issued this evening. Health Mandate 11 does the following:**

“Effective 8:00 am March 28, 2020:

All in-state travel between communities, whether resident, worker, or visitor, is prohibited unless travel is to support critical infrastructure, or for critical personal needs. Certain Small

Alaskan communities may implement further travel restriction pursuant to “Alaska Small Community Emergency Travel Order – Attachment B.”

Personal travel is prohibited except as necessary to meet critical personal needs or work in critical infrastructure jobs. Critical personal needs include buying, selling, or delivering groceries and home goods; obtaining fuel for vehicles or residential needs; transporting family members for out-of-home care, essential health needs, or for purposes of child custody exchanges; receiving essential health care; providing essential health care to a family member; obtaining other important goods; and engaging in subsistence activities. “

Health Mandate 011 – Social Distancing

Effective 5:00 pm March 28, 2020:

All persons in Alaska, except for those engaged in essential health care services, public government services, and essential business activities, are mandated to remain at their place of residence and practice social distancing. For the purpose of this mandate, social distancing is defined as maintaining a distance of six feet or greater from any individuals with whom you do not currently reside. Read the “**Mandate 11 & 12 FAQ’s**” for more details, which can be found here: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>

Critical infrastructure includes those items listed in “Alaska’s Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure” (formerly Attachment A) <https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010-Attachment-A.pdf>

10. Since larger businesses have decided to remain open, has the EOC considered restricting the number of people who can be in those businesses at any given time?

With the Governor’s social distancing mandate, no more than nine people can be gathered. Our Liaison Officer has been reaching out to local businesses and encouraging them to take actions to implement social distancing protocols. Our PIO team has created posters which are hung at local grocery stores providing the safeguards for practicing social distancing while shopping. Business owners have the ability to apply restrictions on the number of customers that are allowed in a building. We are trying to encourage a collaborative effort to slow and stop the spread. We continue to work with businesses to give them guidance on how to operate safely if they feel it is necessary to do so.

11. In regards to the local population, is there anything in current law that allows local government to consider mandatory confinement if individuals - who test positive - refuse to go into isolation?

Confinement or isolation would have to be instituted by State Public Health officials. If that were to occur, law enforcement and safety officers could enforce any violations.

Testing Questions

12. What is the criteria for who actually gets tested and who doesn’t? I have an acquaintance who spoke with their medical provider about symptoms their spouse had.

The medical provider said something to the effect that the spouse likely has Covid-19 but because the symptoms are mild and the amount of tests is limited, they would not be tested. The communique from the medical provider greatly concerns me for these reasons:

- a. It appears that we really have no idea how many people actually have Covid-19 in our community or anywhere else.*
- b. The family I am referring to has 2 children under age 5 with another on the way. How can this be providing quality medical care for this family?*

The Testing Criteria is as follows, which is provided by the CDC and DHSS:

Symptomatic and one of the following: Hospitalized, Long term care resident, healthcare worker or first responder, known contact with a confirmed case, travel in the last 14 days to a location where community transmission is occurring. Outpatient who is at increased risk for serious illness (>60, immunocompromised), or at the provider’s discretion.

For most of the population a COVID19 illness is going to be mild and will not need medical care. It is important if you have respiratory symptoms to stay home and adhere to social distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, and avoiding touching your face. There is no treatment for COVID19 only comfort care and in most cases can be managed at home. Are there more cases out in the community? probably but if everyone follows the "hunker down, shelter in place, and stay home" order we would stop the spread.

We currently have 99 test kits in Ketchikan. We have ordered 700 test kits, and are expecting 100 next week, 200 the following week, and then the remainder. We have also requested an additional 5,000 test kits through the State EOC from the Strategic National Stockpile.

As of March 25th, there were 58 Tests issued in Ketchikan as follows:

PeaceHealth –	47
Creekside -	8
Northway -	3
TOTAL	58

Testing is not a cure, it only identifies who has it in order to do more targeted isolations.

There is a nationwide shortage of testing resources and capability. This is why many communities, including ours, have issued “shelter in place” orders and recommendations. If everyone complies with the hunker down rule, the virus will have time to die and we can stop the spread. If people to not respect the urging to shelter in place, the virus will continue to spread. Our residents must reduce moving around and interacting with each other in order to

stop the spread. Practice good social distancing. If everyone would self-quarantine today, the spread would stop immediately.

Testing Hotline 247-TEST

Effective tomorrow, we have established a Community Coronavirus Screening Hotline testing hotline number: 247-TEST (247-8378). This number can be utilized for medical information regarding the ongoing spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and corresponding symptoms, the criteria and guidelines for COVID-19 testing, screening for eligibility and referrals of potential testing, as well as questions or concerns regarding any possible symptoms or exposure. The hotline is staffed Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm. If you call the hotline, and are unable to reach a staff member directly, please leave a voicemail and calls will be returned as soon as possible in the order they are received. In the case of a medical emergency associated with any severe symptoms of COVID-19, such as trouble breathing, please call 911 immediately.

**See Case Count Table at endⁱ

13. After hearing an "On Point" KRBD radio show about a small town in Italy that eradicated the virus in their town when they tested every resident and found 45% of positives showed no symptoms, I did more research and found the following supporting article: "In one Italian town, we showed mass testing could eradicate the coronavirus | Andrea Crisanti and Antonio Cassone | Opinion | The Guardian" <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/20/eradicated-coronavirus-mass-testing-covid-19-italy-vo> Then I read the following in Ketchikan Daily News Wednesday edition, pg 5 "Cruise Risks" article continuation: "On the Diamond Princess, which had 712 passengers and crew test positive, 331 - or 46.5% were asymptomatic when they were tested."

In light of this, I think all family and known contacts of the current residents testing positive should also be tested. Please see that this information is put out as a public service announcement, so people don't think they can't be spreading it if they don't have symptoms.

Asymptomatic people can pass the virus. Until we have mass testing, we need to limit movement to absolutely critical functions only. We are keeping the supply chains open for the essential well-being of our community. We must limit social distancing when going out to the store. This means that only one family member goes to the store. Again, we have a limited number of tests and are urging sheltering in place. Testing is issued based on priorities. Health care professionals identify the highest risk cases, especially those in critical infrastructure positions such as health care workers and first responders.

14. How many of the 8 positive cases were associated with first two positive folks?

11 of the positive cases were all related. The additional 1 was travel related. So the 9 related to the first 2 positives were all under investigation and received daily monitoring/tracking by Public Health before they tested positive.

15. Was Public Health aware of and tracking before they tested positive?

Yes, see # 14.

News from the Chamber of Commerce:

Economic Impact and Support

"The Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce is available to assist local businesses during this time. The offices are closed but employees are available by email. The Business Advisor, Shelly Hill, can be reached at shelly.hill@aksbdc.org, and is available to assist with SBA economic disaster and bridge loans. You can also contact the Executive Director, Carrie Starkey, at info@ketchikanchamber.com. The Chamber has developed a website, www.ketchikanchamber.com/covid-19-resources that is being continually updated with resources for both business owners and employees, and adds new information to their Facebook page as items become available. A survey for economic impact in Ketchikan is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ketchikanc19>

We encourage all local businesses needing assistance and resources to reach out to the Chamber at this time. They are currently working with the Borough Planning Department to continue to provide local resources and solutions. Please consider completing the survey to better assist us all in knowing how this is affecting your business."

i

Ketchikan COVID-19 Case Count				
Case #	Date	Travel-Related	Close Contact to Positive Case	Travel/Contact Under Investigation
1	3/17/2020	Y		
2	3/19/2020	Y	Y	
3	3/20/2020		Y	
4	3/21/2020		Y	
5	3/21/2020		Y	
6	3/21/2020		Y	
7	3/24/2020		Y	
8	3/24/2020		Y	
9	3/24/2020	Y		
10	3/25/2020		Y	
11	3/25/2020		Y	
12	3/26/2020		Y	
Total by category		3	10	0
Total # of Cases:				12
Persons Under Investigation:				70
Persons Under Monitoring:				1