



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

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: COVID-19 | EOC UPDATES

Date: March 30, 2020; 6:00 p.m.
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For Immediate Release

This brief responds to media questions and provides an update on information from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and its partner agencies.

COVID-19 Case Count Update

The number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Ketchikan is thirteen (13). Of these cases, two (2) individuals had a recent history of travel, eleven (11) individuals were identified as having been in close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.

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	
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	
13	3/28/2020		Y	
Total by category		2	11	0
Total # of Cases:				13

COVID-19 Testing Update

As of March 29, 2020, 102 tests have been conducted for COVID-19 in Ketchikan, with the following results:

Tests Conducted	Positive Results	Negative Results	Pending Results
102	13	54	35

Donations Accepted for Medical Supplies

We have received many inquiries from the public about donations of medical supplies. We appreciate the support of the community. The EOC would welcome donations of the following:

- Masks,
- Medical gowns, and
- Safety glasses.

Donations can be dropped off at the Saxman Community Center at 2706 South Tongass Highway.

FAQs regarding Compliance with Governor's Mandates

The EOC has received many questions regarding the two new State of Alaska Health Mandates: Mandate 11: Social Distancing, and Mandate 12: Intrastate Travel – Limiting travel between communities to critical infrastructure or critical personal needs. Many business owners and potential travelers have questions on applying the definition of essential services to their functions. To assist with some of these questions, the State published a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that includes responses to the questions, such as:

- Do I need a permit to move around?
- Does this mandate apply to persons experiencing homelessness?
- Can I go grocery shopping?
- What is considered a non-essential business?
- Is commercial fishing considered an essential service, and can fishing vessels sail port to port?
- Are Airports still open?

The list of FAQs and the responses can be found at:

http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2020/FAQs_03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-011-012.pdf

Public Beaches, Parks and Fields Closures and Limitations

Due to the need to practice social distancing to stop the spread of COVID-19, the following Ketchikan public spaces are CLOSED to the public:

- All school playgrounds including Houghtaling Elementary, Valley Park, Point Higgins Elementary, and Fawn Mountain Elementary.
- Public playgrounds including Grant Street Park, Monroe Street Tot Lot, Lund Street Tot Lot, and Triangle Park.
- Rotary Beach.
- South Point Higgins Beach.
- Skate Park located on Schoenbar Avenue.
- Saxman Totem Park.
- Raven Park.

The following public fields remain open to users following the State of Alaska social distancing guidance. Team sports and pickup games are prohibited. Groups of less than ten may only gather if those in the group are immediate family members.

- All school fields including Houghtaling Elementary, Valley Park, Point Higgins Elementary, and Fawn Mountain Esther Shea Field.
- Dudley Fields.
- Walker Fields.
- Weiss Fields.

Masks and Gloves: What You Need to Know

There is a Nationwide shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), needed by healthcare workers and first responders. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, the Ketchikan EOC does not recommend that the general public wear masks and gloves unless directed to do so by their healthcare provider. The best protection from Coronavirus is to hunker down, and stay home.

If you need to go out, practice social distancing as required by Governor Dunleavy's State of Alaska Health Mandate #11. If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected COVID-19 infection.

Why handwashing is better than wearing gloves:

- Wearing gloves can provide a false sense of security.
- If they are not removed properly, gloves can spread germs.
- If there are virus germs on the outside of the gloves, and if you touch your face with the glove, or touch it with your hand to take it off, you would have contact with the virus.

To be clear, hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the advised method.

World Health Organization recommendations:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Centers of Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

State of Alaska Health Mandates:

<https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

Why It's Important to Maintain Social Distancing

We have received questions about whether it is now safe to be more relaxed about social distancing. The answer is NO. Social distancing is working to slow the spread and to #flattenthecurve. It is more important than ever **to hunker down, shelter in place, and stay home, in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.**

It is too soon to relax our measures to follow safe social distancing. If our citizens gather together now, we can be certain that the COVID-19 virus will continue to spread.

COVID-19 is highly contagious and easily transmitted. It is no respecter of persons and can have a different effect on different individuals. No one is immune to COVID-19.

While people are most infectious after the onset of symptoms, it is very possible for people to transmit COVID-19 while exhibiting no symptoms. That is why it is so important to adhere to social distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, and avoiding touching your face.

As a reminder, please follow these guidelines to **STOP THE SPREAD:**

- 1. Hunker down and shelter in place.**
- 2. Stay home and work from home as much as possible.**
- 3. Conduct business via telephonic or electronic means as much as possible.**
- 4. No gatherings of any number of people outside of your immediate family may take place.**
- 5. If you are healthy and need to go to the grocery store, practice social distancing by staying 6 feet apart from others.**
- 6. Follow all health mandates issued by Governor Dunleavy, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).**

If you are sick or suspect that you may be infected with the COVID-19 virus, take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms,

such as cough or difficulty breathing, **call your healthcare provider for medical advice.**

EOC Information

Additional current information on COVID-19 is available through the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) at www.coronavirus.alaska.gov. EOC information and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Ketchikan is updated daily on the COVID-19 Response page at <https://www.kgbak.us/913/COVID-19-Response>.

#ketchikanstayhealthy #staystrongketchikan #stepsforahealthycommunity
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