



Issue Brief

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

COVID-19 at Snake River Correctional Institution

Current Numbers

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) COVID-19 website has updated information on employee and adult in custody (AIC) test results. This information can be accessed through the DOC homepage at www.oregon.gov/doc.

Three Foundational Strategies

At the core of DOC being prepared for COVID-19, are three strategies: testing and contact tracing, capacity and planning.

Testing and Contact Tracing

- DOC is screening and testing all symptomatic AICs.
- Contact tracing is done for all COVID-19 positive cases either staff or AICs.

Capacity

- DOC has enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect employees.
- DOC has identified enough beds for medical isolation capacity should they see a surge in positive cases.

Planning

- DOC educates both staff and AICs regarding protocols on social distancing and face coverings
- DOC will monitor conditions and immediately take steps to limit and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks by restarting a phase or returning to an earlier phase depending on the severity
- Release Plans will be in place to ensure coordinated communication between Health Services, Community Corrections, and Local Public Health.

Positive COVID-19 Cases at SRCI

DOC received the first positive SRCI employee test result June 23. The first positive AIC test for COVID-19 was confirmed on July 1. DOC is following the recommendations of its medical doctors, who are working closely with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and following the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) guidelines for when testing should occur. After AICs display symptoms of COVID-19, they are evaluated by medical staff and isolated from others. The Agency Operations Center (AOC) is in consultation with DOC's Chief of Medicine and DOC's Infectious Disease Specialist to determine the best medical care for adults in Oregon DOC custody.

All AICs who test positive or are awaiting test results, will be housed in medical services rooms or Special Housing Units (which have been repurposed for medical isolation) and are separate from the general population units at the institution.

Testing of Employees

It is not possible for DOC to know how many employees have been tested for COVID-19 as that information is not always shared with the agency and is protected health information. DOC reports the self-disclosed confirmed employee cases of COVID-19 on the DOC website's tracking page.

Testing and Housing of AICs

AIC screening Protocol:

All AICs participating in work opportunities in institution kitchens, dining halls, physical plants, and correctional industries are screened for symptoms prior to reporting to their assignment. AICs who are showing symptoms will be directed to Health Services for additional assessment.

AICs with symptoms:

AICs with symptoms of COVID-19 are screened by DOC's healthcare providers. Testing is determined by designated healthcare providers for each DOC institution, in accordance with guidance from DOC's Chief of Medicine and Infectious Disease Specialist, consistent with CDC and OHA clinical guidelines.

AICs positive for COVID-19:

When an AIC tests positive for the virus at SRCI, DOC isolates the patient with others who have tested positive.

Medical Isolation

Medical isolation refers to confining a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case. Ideally, to a single cell with solid walls and a solid door that closes, to prevent contact with others and to reduce the risk of transmission. Medical isolation ends when the individual meets pre-established clinical and/or testing criteria for release from isolation, in consultation with clinical providers and public health officials.

In this context, isolation does NOT refer to punitive isolation for behavioral infractions within the custodial setting.

Quarantine

Quarantine refers to confining individuals who have had close contact with a COVID-19 case to determine whether they develop symptoms of the disease. Quarantine for COVID-19 lasts for a period of 14 days. Ideally, each quarantined individual would be quarantined in a single cell with solid walls and a solid door that closes. If symptoms develop during the 14-day period, the AIC will be placed under medical isolation and evaluated for COVID-19. If symptoms do not develop, movement restrictions can be lifted, and the individual can return to their previous residency status within the facility.

Wearing Masks inside DOC's Institutions

DOC requires employees and AICs to wear masks if they cannot maintain six feet of social distancing. Wearing masks is mandatory in health services areas, some work areas, and in food services areas for all AICs.

Oregon Corrections Enterprises has manufactured utility masks for use by DOC employees and AICs. These masks have been distributed at all 14 of DOC's facilities. These masks are designed to reduce the amount of droplets expelled from a person's cough or sneeze. Every AIC has been offered two masks and employees offered one.

Employee Screening Protocol

Upon entering the institution, a control point staff member takes the employee temperatures and will ask employees questions around symptoms. These include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.

If any employee answers no to all questions and does not have a temperature above 100 degrees, the employee will be allowed to enter the facility. If an employee responds yes to one or more questions, and/or records an initial temperature above 100 degrees, the manager(s) will direct and employee to a designated waiting area and will administer the secondary screening protocol.

The secondary screening protocol administered by the designated manager(s) is conducted no less than five minutes after the initial screening.

Social Distancing

Below is a list of social distancing measures enacted at SRCI, before the institution was placed on Tier 4 status.

- All DOC prisons are closed to visitors, volunteers, and the majority of contract employees.
- Modified line movements to limit the number of AICs in common areas.
- Chapel seating is measured to maintain social distancing and attendance limited.
- AICs are staying together by unit.
- Markings have been placed on the ground six feet apart, indicating where people should stand in line.
- Group activities in the yards have been restricted.

AIC Communication

Communication:

DOC is engaging in frequent communications with the AICs in the form of multiple letters, printed and hand delivered to every AIC, letters from health services, posters, and video messages. The Office of Communications posts updates which includes current case numbers and helpful information on AIC tablets. DOC has added information to the phone system and AIC television channels as well. DOC has distributed and placed many signs regarding symptoms of COVID-19, hand-washing, and social distancing within DOC facilities.

AIC Mail and Library Books:

All incoming and outgoing mail is quarantined for a minimum of 24 hours before processing. Library books used on housing unit book shelves will not be returned to the bookshelf by the AICs, but returned to a mail tub and quarantined for 24 hours before being placed back into circulation.

Tier Status

The tiered prevention plan and protocol was created by the AOC in conjunction with Health Services. SRCI is at Tier 4 status.

- Tier 1 – Institutions without known COVID-19.
- Tier 2 – Institutions with confirmed COVID-19 (AIC and/or employee) originating from the institution.
- Tier 3 – Institutions with confirmed COVID-19 and expanded testing of those with direct contact and all symptomatic AICs.
- Tier 4 – Entire institution quarantined for 14 days. Only AIC transfers for life saving measures, behavioral moves related to custody level changes, and those identified as vulnerable.
- Tier 5 – Consider multiple institutions quarantined for 14 days – All AIC transfers coordinated through AOC.

**The mission of the
Oregon Department of Corrections
is to promote public safety by
holding offenders accountable for their
actions and reducing the risk of future
criminal behavior.**



**Colette S. Peters, Director
(503) 945-0927**

**Heidi Steward, Deputy Director
(503) 945-0927**

**Oregon Department of Corrections
2575 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-4667
www.oregon.gov/doc**

DOC/OC: 5/22/20