

**COVID -19 (Corona Virus) considerations for South
Carolina Detention Centers**

**Robert Benfield, ARM, AINS
Director of Risk Management Services
South Carolina Association of Counties
Rbenfield@scac.sc**

We are seeing daily media coverage of the recent spread of the virus identified as “COVID-19” (Coronavirus 2019). The South Carolina Association of Counties suggests that you remain abreast of the developments, information, and precaution recommendations because of your Department’s (and employees’) necessary and on-going contact with the public.

This situation should be handled just as any other known health or safety issue impacting a large group – **you should take all reasonable steps to limit the risk/impact on your department and those in your custody and you should immediately contact DHEC and seek medical treatment for any person (employee or detainee) who appears to be infected.** DHEC may direct you to take some steps to lockdown your facility (or part of it) or quarantine the individual.

It is recommended that you check all detainees for fever at intake and prior to release from your facility for transport to the SC Department of Corrections. If they are found to have fever, contact DHEC and the SC Department of Corrections immediately for instructions on how to proceed.

Below, you will find some basic information and some precautions you should consider. We are not medical professionals. We are simply passing on very basic information gained from the Centers for Disease Control. We recognize that some of the considerations below may be difficult, impractical, or impossible due to department or facility size or configuration or due to budget constraints. In such case, we encourage you to consider reasonable alternatives to the considerations below and to contact your medical personnel with questions. It is also recommended that you work with your local and state health departments regarding updated or additional protocols and guidelines and identification of new potential cases of COVID-19.

Basic Information:

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Observations of persons affected by the illness indicate that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. The symptoms have included: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.

It is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact via respiratory droplets (which are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes) which can be inhaled by persons within about 6 feet. Information also exists that the virus is likely able to remain on surfaces for extended periods of time – perhaps several days – especially on plastic or stainless steel. Standard disinfectant products (which includes those with bleach, those with at least 70% alcohol, or common EPA-registered disinfectants), should be effective. As of March 10, 2020, there was no reported case of a person getting infected with COVID-19 from a contaminated surface.

According to the CDC, people who are at higher risk of getting very sick from the virus are older adults (60 and above) and people who have serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

Precaution Considerations:

It is unknown how long COVID-19 will present a significant public health threat. You must continue to provide public services but should take reasonable precautions in the daily operation of your department and facilities. Reasonable and practical precautions will limit the spread of this virus, and other illnesses, and will help address the natural fears that can make it difficult to carry out your public safety role. Therefore, in light of the risk, restrictions that may not have been permissible before will likely be reasonable **as long as they are based upon legitimate efforts to limit the risk and the actual spread of the virus.** The duration of any of these restrictions/precautions undertaken because of COVID-19 will be determined by the duration of the public risk.

The goals of your precautions should be to limit risk by: encouraging good health and healthy habits, limiting close personal contacts, and cleaning and disinfecting facilities and work areas.

Encourage good health and healthy habits.

1. Educate employees to recognize symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days of their last possible exposure to the virus. At a minimum, employees should immediately notify their supervisor and the local health department if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Urge employees who are sick to stay home.
3. Check all detainees for fever at book-in and continue doing so regularly during detention if possible.
4. Immediately provide a surgical mask to any person (employee or detainee) detainee with respiratory symptoms (cough, fever) and contact medical staff for guidance as soon as possible.
5. Do not accept any person who is infected with COVID-19 without strict and specific **medical guidance** to do so. **Standard 1046 Admission of Severely Injured or Acutely Ill Detainees, from the *Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities in South Carolina*, mandates that:** “Any prisoner who appears to be either severely injured or acutely ill ...shall be examined by a qualified medical practitioner prior to acceptance or admission.”
6. If you identify an employee or detainee who is infected in your jail, you must notify DHEC Immediately.
7. Enhance screening questions at book-in to help identify people who may be infected or who would be considered “high-risk.” If not asked already, consider asking:
 - a) Have you been tested for COVID-19/Coronavirus 2019?
 - b) Have you had a fever in the last month?
 - c) Have you had a cold or the flu in the last month?
 - d) Have you been coughing or felt a shortness of breath in the last month?
 - e) Have you been in close contact with anyone who is known to have had COVID-19/Coronavirus 2019?

- f) Do you have a chronic medical condition? If so, what? Who is your treating physician?
- g) Have you traveled internationally in the last four weeks?
- h) Have you traveled by airplane in the last four weeks?
- i) Have you traveled by cruise in the last four weeks?
- j) In the last month, have you been around anyone who traveled to high-risk areas such as China, Iran, or Italy?

(If any detainee responds in the affirmative to any questions, you should ask follow up questions to determine additional information about any treatment they have received or where/when they have been sick/traveled.)

- 8. Require all employees to wash their hands before eating and after using the restroom.
- 9. Provide hand sanitizer and antibacterial soap for employees and encourage frequent hand washing throughout the work day.
- 10. Encourage respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes).
- 11. Consider and discuss re-assignment (away from contact with large groups of employees or detainees) of any employee who may be at high risk.
- 12. Provide antibacterial soap for detainees and encourage frequent hand washing throughout the day.
- 13. Require detainees to wash their hands before each meal.
- 14. Encourage detainees to wash their hands after they use the restroom.
- 15. Discourage employees and detainees from touching their face or eating directly from their hands.
- 16. Provide hand sanitizer, baby wipes, or other hand cleaner on the med cart and distribute to a detainee prior to dispensing their daily medication.
- 17. Review and revise your mutual aid agreements with other local detention centers in case you need to receive or move your inmates to/from another facility.
- 18. Contact your inmate medical provider to discuss emergency plans and additional coverage options.

II. Limit close personal contacts.

- 1. Encourage maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other persons if possible.
- 2. Avoid handshakes.
- 3. Discontinue in-person visitation except by attorneys and encourage use of kiosk/computer or telephone contact. (Per SC Governor's Executive Order No. 2020-08, all state correctional institutions and local detention facilities shall suspend visitation processes and procedures, as necessary, during this State of Emergency.)
- 4. Discontinue in-person church services, education programs, or other programs which bring other persons into the facility for contact with groups.
- 5. Limit movement of detainees as much as possible. Seek alternatives such as video court appearances or tele-med opportunities.
- 6. Temporarily discontinue haircuts and shaves except those with medical justification.
- 7. Increase personnel assigned to video surveillance and limit employee contact in housing areas of the detention center to regular jail checks and identified needs.
- 8. Provide gloves for employees to use anytime they will be in housing areas or areas where people gather.

III. Clean and disinfect facilities and work areas. (Cleaning requires the use soap and water to remove dirt and germs from surfaces. Disinfection requires the use chemicals to kill germs that remain on surfaces.)

1. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least once per day.
Examples: tables, chairs, keyboards, telephones, doorknobs, light switches, handles, toilets, mats, sinks and showers.
2. In case a person in the facility is found to be infected, have a supply of appropriate personal protective equipment (“PPE”) available for use by employees who must be in contact with that person. See attached CDC recommendation for a description of recommended PPE.
3. Frequently wash all clothing, bedding, and towels with soap and in as warm/hot water as possible.

IV. Additional links that you may find helpful.

2020Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

CDC Situation Summary (COVID-19)

<https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

What law enforcement personnel need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but cases have been identified in a growing number of other areas, including the United States.

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness.

- Data suggests that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Symptoms can include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.
- The virus causing COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2. It is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts. Respiratory droplets are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can land in the mouths or noses, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs, of people who are nearby.
 - Close contact increases your risk for COVID-19, including:
 - » Being within approximately 6 feet of an individual with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time.
 - » Having direct contact with body fluids (such as blood, phlegm, and respiratory droplets) from an individual with COVID-19.

To protect yourself from exposure

- **If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.**
- **Practice proper hand hygiene.** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available and illicit drugs are NOT suspected to be present, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone you think might have COVID-19 to a healthcare facility.
- Ensure only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) have contact with individuals who have or may have COVID-19.
- Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and participate in all-hands training on the use of PPE for respiratory protection, if available.



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Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Law enforcement who must make contact with individuals confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 should follow CDC's Interim Guidance for EMS. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>.

Different styles of PPE may be necessary to perform operational duties. These alternative styles (i.e., coveralls) must provide protection that is at least as great as that provided by the minimum amount of PPE recommended.

The minimum PPE recommended is:

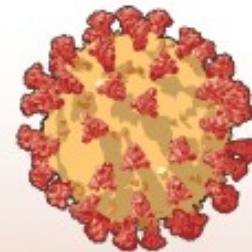
- A single pair of disposable examination gloves,
- Disposable isolation gown or single-use/disposable coveralls*,
- Any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator (i.e., N-95 or higher-level respirator), and
- Eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face).

*If unable to wear a disposable gown or coveralls because it limits access to duty belt and gear, ensure duty belt and gear are disinfected after contact with individual.

If close contact occurred during apprehension

- Clean and disinfect duty belt and gear prior to reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label.
- Follow standard operating procedures for the containment and disposal of used PPE.
- Follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes. Avoid shaking the clothes.

For law enforcement personnel performing daily routine activities, the immediate health risk is considered low. Law enforcement leadership and personnel should follow CDC's Interim General Business Guidance. Search "Interim Guidance for Businesses" on www.cdc.gov.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19