



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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June 10, 2020

TO: All DOC Staff

FROM: Stephen Sinclair, Secretary

SUBJECT: Safe Start Corrections

On May 4, 2020, Governor Inslee announced [Safe Start Washington](#), his four-phased approach for resuming recreation, social and business activities in counties. As a state agency with locations spread throughout the state, Corrections has developed a step-by-step plan to begin safely reopening our operations. We are committed to safe operations, therefore our reopening will be done systematically.

The [Safe Start Corrections](#) plan is based upon these guiding principles:

- The safety of employees, incarcerated/supervised individuals, and stakeholders comes first;
- Utilization of sound public health and safety practices; and,
- Timely and equitable public service.

To apply these principles, we must implement statewide requirements and consistent guidelines that can meet the needs of our diverse work locations in a safe and responsible manner while mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

Safe Start Corrections is a policy-level framework providing a four (4) step approach to the return to a new normal level of operations as COVID-19 protocols are gradually and appropriately reduced. Progression through the steps will be determined at an agency-wide level. The approach will be comprehensive and conservative due to the complexity of our operations. Specific implementation and operational activities and timelines will be developed by our agency's organizational divisions.

You will see local businesses and other organizations in your county reopen at a faster pace than our correctional facilities and office locations. Please understand that we must ensure every appropriate precautionary step is taken to safely return employees, and incarcerated and supervised individuals back to worksites and programs. Safe Start Corrections will:

- Align movement to each step approximately two (2) weeks after the state moves to the corresponding phase; and,

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- Consider potential need to revert to previous step based upon an increase in positive cases.

The Health Services Division will continue to update the [COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Infection Control Guidelines](#) to address changes in health-related protocols. These guidelines may exceed the protocols called for by the current Safe Start Corrections step. Health Services will continue to provide sound and relevant public health and medical directives based upon the operational changes resultant from progressing from one step to the next. Situational awareness in the form of accurate and up-to-date data is crucial to making these sound operational decisions. The following five key areas of focus will remain in effect through each step:

- Social distancing
- Frequent and adequate hand washing
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high-touch surfaces
- Procedures to assist sick employees
- Continued education and communication about mitigating the spread of COVID-19

Additionally, the agency will continue to adhere to the established guidelines identified in the [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Matrix](#), to include the use of mandatory face coverings. Enhanced screening, secondary screening and staff contact mapping will also continue.

Currently, more than 1,000 correctional employees are working from home or on alternate work assignments. It is our agency's intent to continue these practices at current levels through at least Step 3. Additional information and guidelines regarding returning from remote work or alternate assignments will be provided in the future.

The Safe Start Corrections plan encompasses all agency operational areas through the minimum of Step 3. As we progress through each step, we expect there will be updates to the plan as we learn how to operationalize our new normal. We will communicate our progression through the steps as well any changes to the plan. Questions can be submitted to DOCCOVID19@doc.wa.gov.

We are committed to safely resuming operations and adapting to a new normal. We're all in this together.

Attachment