

Frequently Asked Questions: Emergency Order EO-02, Preservation of Personal Protective Equipment

Updated March 20, 2020

Why did we issue this emergency order?

Medical professionals around the country are experiencing critical supply shortages as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the national demand for PPE and Alaska's distance from suppliers, avoiding PPE shortages in Anchorage will require stretching existing supplies as long as possible. This public health measure was taken to preserve public safety and welfare of Anchorage residents against COVID-19, by expanding the capacity and supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) available to health care professionals in high-risk exposure situations.

What does this order do?

The order requires Anchorage businesses to preserve supplies of PPE, and if requested by a Mayoral order, make that equipment available to healthcare providers.

All dentists, veterinarians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists in the Municipality:

- must cancel or postpone all non-urgent or non-emergency procedures. Professional judgement should be exercised in determining a patient's need for urgent or emergency care.
- may use personal protective equipment (PPE) only for urgent or emergency procedures and must otherwise safeguard and not use PPE remaining in their stock.
- The requirement to safeguard PPE does not apply to items that are not transferable to another medical professional, such as prescription eye protection, etc.

All businesses in the Municipality, such as construction companies, funeral homes, hair and nail salons, janitorial companies, oil field services, power and energy companies, and universities:

- PPEs may only be used when absolutely necessary to protect employee safety and welfare in the performance of an essential function of their job.
- The requirement to safeguard and not use personal protective equipment does not apply to personal protective equipment that has no transferable use in the health care context such as hard hats, hearing protection, specialty boots, or welding shields.

Upon order from the Mayor or Incident Commander, businesses with PPE supplies shall make them available to health care professionals responding to COVID-19.

Who decides what constitutes urgent or emergency procedures?

These licensed professionals should use their professional judgment in determining a patient's need for urgent or emergency care. Dentists are encouraged to consult the guidelines of the American Dental Association at ada.org/virus.

Will businesses be reimbursed for PPE that they give to health care providers?

Yes.

Do businesses such as optometrists need to cancel appointments that do not require the use of PPE?

No, the intent of the order is to preserve PPE. Eye exams, and other appointments that do not require PPE can continue while this emergency order is in effect.

What does this order mean for other businesses like salons and tattoo parlors?

Anchorage is facing a critical shortage of PPE that threatens the lives and safety of community members. Since salons and tattoo parlors do not perform critical life/safety functions, any activity that requires PPE should be cancelled and rescheduled.

How long will this order be in effect?

This order went into effect at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 19 and will expire at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

Does this include Eagle River, Chugiak, Birchwood, and Girdwood?

Yes, this applies to the entire Municipality of Anchorage.

What is PPE?

PPE is personal protective equipment (clothing and equipment) worn to minimize exposure to viruses or bacteria that cause human disease. This includes latex or nitrile exam gloves, N95 masks, surgical masks, medical gowns, and face shields that protect eyes

Who does this Emergency Order apply to?

This applies to businesses with supplies of PPE that are applicable to the provision of healthcare, including:

- Dentists
- Optometrists
- Veterinarians
- Hair and nail salons
- Janitorial companies
- Oil field services
- Ophthalmologists
- Power and energy companies
- Construction companies
- Universities
- Funeral homes

How will the preserved PPE be collected and allocated?

Please take Personal Protective Equipment to:

CrossFit Alaska
9191 Old Seward Highway

PPE will be allocated to health care providers based on the greatest need.

I have questions and concerns. Who should I contact?

Please send an email to COVID-19@anchorageak.gov or call 343-4019.