

COVID-19



Information for Pools / Spas

What is COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)?

The Anchorage Health Department (AHD) is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus named COVID-19. This virus was first detected in China in December 2019; it spreads from person-to-person and has the potential to cause severe illness and death. Four well-known strains of coronaviruses regularly circulate in human populations globally and are a frequent cause of upper respiratory infections; COVID-19 is new so it's called the novel coronavirus.

What is occurring in Alaska?

AHD is working with local, state, and federal healthcare partners in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Anchorage Health Department is coordinating with schools, hospitals, local healthcare partners and the emergency medical system to ensure a uniform and swift response.

How does COVID-19 spread?

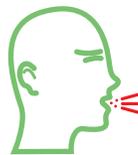
COVID-19 can spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing and sneezing, close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, by touching an object or surface with the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, nose, or possibly eyes.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. Symptoms include fever ($>100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$), cough and shortness of breath and may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.



Fever $>100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$



Cough



Shortness of Breath

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What if an employee or patron is sick or is having symptoms of COVID-19?

Many businesses and employees within the Municipality of Anchorage are concerned about the current outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus. If an employee or patron is reporting symptoms of fever (>100.4), cough and shortness of breath (or any symptoms of acute respiratory illness), it is important that the employee stay home from work until they are symptom free. If the employee or patron has these symptoms **and** has traveled to areas of active outbreak activity, or were in close contact with someone with COVID-19, a health evaluation and assessment should be conducted. It is important for businesses to create a plan for extended employee absences and allow time-off of work for employees to stay at home when sick. General COVID-19 questions can be answered by calling Alaska 2-1-1.

Do business events need to be cancelled because of COVID-19?

The COVID-19 situation in the U.S. is rapidly evolving. It's possible that modifications of work and social interaction might be appropriate if we have local COVID-19 transmission in Anchorage. Remind and support employees that part of good health hygiene is staying home from business-related events and other social events when they are ill.

How can I keep customers and employees safe from COVID-19?

Employees can help to keep customers safe by following regular municipal code and health guidelines that are recommended at all times:

- Actively encourage employees to stay at home if they feel sick, and be sure that food workers are aware of the [Employee Health Policy](#).
- Practice ample hand hygiene (wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, and use gloves when appropriate).
- Provide the correct facilities such as hand washing sinks to employees and customers.
- Regularly wipe down hard surfaces and common areas with an approved EPA disinfectant registered for influenza and hard surfaces.

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For Pool / Spa operators:

Continued adherence to all aquatic facility regulations is important for COVID-19 prevention. Maintaining the recommended levels of free available chlorine, bromine and pH will help to control risk of waterborne illnesses, including COVID-19. There is much that remains unknown about the transmission of COVID-19, but there is a possible risk of transmission through the oral-fecal route. Please note that the minimum recommended amounts of free chlorine depends on the type of pool or chlorination chemical used - refer to the relevant guidelines for details.

Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed the following guidance (dated 03/10/2020):

There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. This guidance and other water-related guidance can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>.

Further Guidance for Pool / Spas:

- Remind pool/spa users to take a cleansing shower with soap and warm water prior to entering the pool/spa. Hang posters at your facility demonstrating the importance of showering prior to swimming in order to maintain a clean pool.
- Make patrons aware that they should avoid swimming and/or entering the pool/spa if they had (within 2 weeks) or have diarrhea, infections or illness to reduce the likelihood of transmission of disease to others.
- Parents should ensure children use the restroom before going swimming and that they take regular bathroom breaks.
- Diapers should be changed frequently in a bathroom - not to be changed pool-side.
- Pool/spa operators should develop and practice a contaminate response plan, and maintain effective levels of disinfection.
- Pool water should not be swallowed.

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What else can be done at my facility about COVID-19?

- Stay informed through credible sources, listen to public health messages, and implement effective public health practices to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.
- Maintain regular cleaning and disinfection routines at your facility by using EPA safer disinfectants registered for influenza and hard surfaces.
- Avoid stigmatizing people who have recently traveled to China or other areas of active outbreak activity.
- Contact The Anchorage Health Department (907) 343-6718 or call Alaska 2-1-1 (toll free 1-800-478-2221) if you have questions about exclusion of employees who have traveled and have symptoms, or if someone self-reports travel or illness.

What you should NOT do:

- Do not travel to regions that are listed as "high risk" for transmission of COVID-19 as per the CDC website (check for updates).
- Do not use facemasks unless advised by your healthcare provider. CDC does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Do not show prejudice to people because of fear of COVID-19.

References:

2020, Anchorage Health Department, Novel Coronavirus:

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/health/pages/coronavirus.aspx>

2020, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) 2019 Novel Coronavirus:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

2020, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Human Coronaviruses:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/Human-Coronavirus.aspx>

2020, Ireland Health Service Executive, Coronavirus Guidance:

Advice note to EHS on Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Swimming Pools_V3.pdf

2012, Pool & Spa Operator Handbook, National Swimming Pool Foundation