

# Alaska State Legislature

## Legislative Affairs Agency

Office of the Executive Director

Terry Miller Legislative Office Building, Room 217

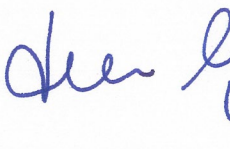
Mailing Address: State Capitol, Rm. 3 Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182 Phone (907) 465-3800 Fax (907) 465-3234

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Gary Stevens, Chair  
Legislative Council

FROM: Jessica Geary  
Executive Director 

DATE: January 12, 2021

SUBJECT: Changes to COVID-19 Safety Policies

Attached for your consideration are recommended changes by the Governor's office to the COVID-19 Mask Policy and the Screening Policy. They are minor changes adding direction for Executive Branch Personnel.

The second proposed change is to the Safe Session Floor Policy to allow for one member of the press to be present in the gallery at a time.

I am happy to answer any questions about the proposed changes.

Attachments: COVID-19 Mask Policy  
Capitol COVID-19 Screening Process  
Safe Session Floor Policy

## **Safe Floor Session Policy**

Adopted December 28, 2020, Amended January 18, 2021

Until the election of a permanent presiding officer, the following safe session procedures will be carried out by the sergeant-at-arms.

Members will be temporarily assigned the same desk they occupied on the last day of the 31st Legislature; new members will occupy the desk of the previous member from that district. The presiding officer desks at the dais will remain open and the seats occupied by the presiding officers of the 31st Legislature will move into the vacant desk on the floor.

Members must request permission before approaching the dais and shall not congregate.

Plexiglass dividers will be sanitized on a regular basis.

A brief at-ease will be routinely called for electrostatic disinfection.

Floor staff will not refill water glasses for members; water will be available for self-service.

A member who stands to be recognized must sit before making remarks.

Members must remain seated when giving floor remarks and testimony.

Other than when speaking or voting, a member who wishes to increase social distancing may relocate within their respective chamber.

~~Press may not enter the chambers or galleries.~~ Floor sessions will be broadcast live throughout the Capitol. One member of the press at a time will be permitted to sit in a gallery designated by the Sergeant-at-Arms. The Press Corps is responsible for determining which member is to be seated. It is strongly recommended that the Presiding Officers of the 32nd Legislature hold a press availability after each floor session to allow for full media access as a measure to ensure a fully informed public process.

This policy remains in effect during the First Session of the 32nd Legislature until a permanent presiding officer is elected in both houses.

# Capitol COVID-19 Screening Process

Approved by Legislative Council October 29, 2020

Daily screenings are required for legislators, legislative staff, executive branch employees, and credentialed media personnel ~~to enter~~ing the Capitol. The Capitol is otherwise closed to the public. Capitol entrances will be limited to those with a screening station; the proposed screening station location is the Ground Floor Lobby. Individuals who may experience a disability will be accommodated.

## Symptom Screening:

- No-contact temperature check and a short series of questions regarding travel, close contact, and range of symptoms.
- Individuals waiting to be screened must maintain six-foot social distancing.
- Screening will occur once per person per day and those screened will receive a daily screening indicator.

Individuals who have a fever or other symptoms listed by the CDC will be escorted to a private area for rapid testing. If the individual tests COVID-19 positive, they will be immediately isolated and quarantined. Notification will occur as follows:

- Legislator: appropriate Presiding Officer
- Partisan Staff: legislator and appropriate Presiding Officer and Rules Chair
- Non-partisan Staff: direct supervisor and Agency Director
- Executive branch employees: Governor's Chief of Staff
- **PPE:** Consistent with the Legislative Council COVID-19 Mask Policy, masks or facial covering must be worn and will be provided upon request.
- **Social Distancing:** Maintain at least six-foot distance at all times.

## Changes to Screening Process:

The screening process described in this document may be updated, without the need for additional Legislative Council action, in accordance with guidance from [Legislative Affairs Agency](#), [City and Borough of Juneau](#) and [State of Alaska](#) health officials, as well as the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#).



## **Legislative Council COVID-19 Mask Policy Adopted October 29, 2020**

### **I. Purpose**

On March 11, 2020, Governor Mike Dunleavy declared a disaster emergency in Alaska due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world is a public health disaster emergency that significantly impacts the life and health of our people, the economy of Alaska, property, and the public peace. To allow the Legislature the greatest opportunity to conduct the people's business, comply with constitutional mandates, and conduct all business in an orderly and timely manner, all individuals in the Capitol Complex and all other legislative buildings must wear a mask or cloth face covering\* over their nose and mouth at all times during the COVID-19 pandemic.

\* Face coverings must be made from a cloth or other barrier material that prevents the discharge and release of respiratory droplets from a person's nose or mouth. Acceptable face coverings are: clean medical or surgical mask, approved face shield, or clean cloth mask made of tightly woven material of multiple layers (minimum two layers). Unacceptable face coverings are: bandanas, gaiters, or masks with a valve (such as N95 masks).

### **II. Guidelines**

Both State and Municipal governments require the wearing of masks. The Governor has ordered that masks be worn in all State facilities where it is not possible to maintain six-foot social distance. Public health guidance from the Municipality requires a mask or cloth face covering be worn over the nose and mouth when indoors in public settings or communal spaces outside the home.

This policy directs all individuals in the Capitol Complex and all other legislative spaces to wear a mask or cloth face covering over their nose and mouth at all times. Brief removal of a face covering, such as is necessary to eat or drink, does not constitute a violation of this policy (although hand washing/sanitizing is recommended before and after such activities).

Masks will be provided upon request.

This policy is subject to the following exceptions:

1. Any individual for whom wearing a mask or cloth face covering would be contrary to health or safety because of a medical condition or mental health condition, and any individual unable to tolerate a mask due to a physical or mental disability;
2. Individuals who are speech impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing, or individuals communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, where facial or mouth movements are an integral part of communication;
3. Any individual who has trouble breathing or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
4. Any child under the age of 2 years. These very young children should not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation;

5. Any child under the age of 12 years, unless a parent or caregiver supervises the use of face coverings by the child to avoid misuse;
6. Any child in a child care or day camp setting, although such settings may provide their own requirement for use for children age 2 years old or older.

*If a person declines to wear a mask or face covering because of a medical condition or disability as described above, this policy does not require them to produce medical documentation.*

### **Enforcement**

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person who violates the face covering requirement may be removed from legislative property. Enforcement of this policy as it applies to executive branch employees will be left to the Governor's Chief of Staff. Enforcement as applied to legislators will be left to the members (art. II, secs. 6 and 12, Constitution of the State of Alaska) and legislative leadership.

### **III. Effective Date**

This policy is effective immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded by Legislative Council.