

# 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

---



### MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Gary Stevens, Chair  
Legislative Council

FROM: Jessica Geary   
Executive Director

DATE: October 26, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

The following enumerated powers collectively give Legislative Council the authority to adopt a COVID-19 mitigation plan in preparation for convening the 32nd Alaska State Legislature. Legislative Council has the power to provide "administrative services required for the operation of the legislative branch" (AS 24.20.060(4)); "exercise control and direction over all legislative space" (AS 24.20.060(5)); and "take appropriate action for the pre-convening ... work of each legislative session" (AS 24.20.060(7)).

The following Legislative Council Policies (attached) should be adopted as part of a comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation plan:

- **Legislative Council COVID-19 Mask Policy** – adopt new policy that 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. This also protects those who work at or visit outlying LIOs.
- **Capitol COVID-19 Screening Process Policy** – adopt new policy that provides for required daily screenings for legislators, legislative staff, and credentialed media personnel to enter the Capitol. The Capitol will remain 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.
- **Legislative Council Pandemic Code of Conduct Policy** – adopt new policy that applies to all legislators and staff to ensure a safe environment for all members of our legislative community. This policy requires adhering to certain general public health recommendations while working or being present in the Capitol Complex.

Coupled with new Legislative Council Policies, amending the travel guidelines and hiring a mitigation contractor will assist in accomplishing our goals.

- **House and Senate and Allowance Account Travel Guidelines** – amend Guidelines for Travel and Allowance Account to strongly discourage travel during session. Legislative travel funded by the Speaker and Senate President already requires authorization, this amendment would add Presiding Officer authorization for travel using Allowance Account funds. Excused absence for personally funded travel may only be given at the discretion of the body.
- **Retain a mitigation contractor** – approve the issuance of an RFP to contract with a third-party to provide COVID-19 screening, testing, quarantine, and mitigation services in the Capitol.

The last piece of the overall COVID-19 mitigation package is the recommendation for the incoming legislature to adopt legislative procedural changes to help reduce the length of session and time spent on the floor so the legislature can safely get its work done and adjourn. These changes would also allow for the legislature to meet remotely in the event it is unsafe or impractical to travel to Juneau.

Please see the memorandum from Legal Services Director Megan Wallace under separate cover for explanation of the Uniform Rule changes for consideration by the incoming legislature.



# Legislative Council COVID-19 Mask Policy DRAFT

## 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.

## 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.*

### **III. Enforcement**

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person who violates the face covering requirement may be removed from legislative property. 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.

### **IV. Effective Date**

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

DRAFT

## Capitol COVID-19 Screening Process

Daily screenings are required for legislators, legislative staff, and credentialed media personnel to enter 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
- Non-partisan Staff: direct supervisor and Agency Director
- **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 Pandemic Code of Conduct Policy DRAFT

## I. Applicability

The Legislative Council Pandemic Code of Conduct Policy applies to all legislators and legislative staff to ensure a safe environment for all members of our legislative community. This policy is mandatory and without exceptions.

## II. Policy

Under this policy, and as a condition of working or being present in the Capitol Complex and all other legislative spaces, legislators and legislative staff shall:

- **Provide** your local address and emergency contact information to the Personnel Office and update each as needed.
- Make every effort to **quarantine in place** for 14 days before your intended arrival in Juneau.
- Arrive in Juneau with a negative COVID-19 test; or test upon arrival and isolate pending results.
- Be **tested** frequently as offered by the Legislative Affairs Agency (or contractor).
- **Isolate** in the event of a COVID-19 positive test result as directed by health authorities and cooperate with contact tracing and quarantine efforts.
- **Take responsibility** for your own health, the health of your staff, and the health of others in the community by adhering to guidance from [LAA](#), [City and Borough of Juneau](#) and [State of Alaska](#) health officials, as well as the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#).
- Complete and record a **daily health screening (answer a series of questions and perform temperature check)**.
- Practice physical distancing and good hygiene, including:
  - **remain at least 6 feet from others** whenever possible,
  - **wear a face covering** as required by the Legislative Council COVID-19 Mask Policy,
  - **wash your hands** frequently, apply hand sanitizer throughout the day, and frequently sanitize your immediate areas, and
  - **stay home** if you are sick and **request an evaluation** from the COVID-19 Screening Hotline (586-6000) (or contractor) if you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Socialize only in small groups and comply with enhanced social event management policies for groups and organizations.
- Avoid all **non-essential trips out of the Capital City**.

## III. Virus Screening and Health Services

A robust virus screening program will be critical to controlling the spread of COVID-19. All legislators and employees will be expected to participate in our testing program. There will be no charge to the employee.

The exact testing frequency has not yet been determined, but details will be shared with you as soon as it is known. Frequency may change over the course of the session depending on what we learn about viral transmission within the Capitol Complex and City and Borough of Juneau.

## IV. Effective Date

This policy is effective immediately and may be updated or rescinded by the Legislative Council Chair, 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](#).

## V. Enforcement

Enforcement as applied to legislative staff will be at the discretion of the supervisor and/or appointing authority. 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.

**Alaska 31<sup>ST</sup> State Legislature**  
**Amendment to House and Senate Travel Guidelines**  
**Applicable to Legislative Travel During a Regular or Special Session Funded by**  
**House and Senate, Allowance Account, and Personal\***

In an effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the Legislature is able to perform its constitutional duties, travel during the regular legislative session is strongly discouraged.

Legislative travel funded by the Speaker and Senate President already requires authorization. Additionally, travel using Allowance Account funds will now require Presiding Officer authorization.

\*While a member does not need authorization for personally funded travel, Uniform Rule 15, Absence of Members, states that any member who will be absent at any time during a legislative session must have “leave of the house”; to that end, any request to be excused for the purpose of traveling outside the capital city may only be given at the discretion of the body.

---

Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

---

Senator Cathy Giessel  
President of the Senate

Highlighted language to insert into page 8 of the [Accountable Allowance Account Guidelines](#) :

*Travel Expenses*

*Most importantly, for Division of Risk Management purposes a pre-travel authorization must be on file with the Accounting Office prior to making travel arrangements. This includes travel for which there is a stipend and/or no actual expense(s) incurred. The State of Alaska is self-insured, and a pre-travel authorization is the required documentation to denote an employee is in work travel status and therefore covered by Risk Management.*

*Travelers should follow the general rules set forth in the Legislative Council Travel and Per Diem Policy and use the annual Presiding Officer Guidelines as an example.*

**NOTE: Per an amendment to the Presiding Officer Guidelines, travel funded by the allowance account must be **pre-approved** by the appropriate Presiding Officer. Approval should not be assumed.**