



HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update on Local Testing and EOC Operations

Haines, Alaska March 18 2020 – The Haines Borough Emergency Operations Center (EOC) would like to outline a few details about our local response as it stands today. In this press release we will address:

- Testing protocol as it stands currently at the SEARHC Haines Health Center
- The structure and goals of the local EOC
- Current guidelines and recommendations
- How information is disseminated to the community

Testing protocol as it stands currently at the SEARHC Haines Health Center:

The SEARHC clinic has staff stationed at the clinic entrance to screen visitors in accordance with Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Those that fit the specific testing criteria from the CDC will be tested.

The SEARHC clinic has protocols in place to keep staff healthy and safe. Be aware that Influenza B is circulating in the community at this time.

The Clinic is working closely with the Haines Borough Volunteer Fire Department and EMS staff and have established protocol for ambulance calls.

If a positive COVID-19 test is detected in a Haines patient the SEARHC health system and local EOC, will put out a joint statement to the community as soon as possible. SEARHC protocol for responding to a confirmed case of COVID-19 is as follows:

- If that patient has underlying health conditions that require ongoing medical support, that patient will be medivaced to a hospital.
- If the patient does not need medical support, they will be directed to self-quarantine at home.

The structure and goals of the local EOC

The EOC was activated on Monday, March 16 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EOC is built from community resources; it is not a political body. It is structured around five objectives:

- Ensuring physical life and safety of residents
- Containing the spread of the virus and steps of mitigation

- Supporting first responders
- Supporting medical staff and the local clinic
- Keeping the public updated with timely and accurate information

In this structure, the Haines Borough Manager Debra Schnable is the EOC commander who is responsible for the overall management of the group. Carolann Wooten is deputy commander. The following EOC Command Staff is:

- Liaison Officer: Alekka Fullerton
- Safety Officer: Scott Bradford
- Information Officer: Margaret Friedenauer
- Official Spokesperson: Haines Borough Mayor Jan Hill

Additionally, there are leaders coordinating Operations, Planning, Logistic and Finance sections. Some of these section chiefs are borough employees; others are community volunteers with expertise in their areas.

The EOC meets – using CDC recommended guidelines for social distancing – each day at 9 am and 1 pm with the goal of releasing an updated press release by 3 pm each day.

Current guidelines and recommendations

The EOC has made one change to the guidelines and recommendations from yesterday. That change is mentioned below. The recommendations stand as follows:

On Tuesday, March 17, Haines Borough Mayor Jan Hill declared an emergency in the Haines Borough as allowed under HBC 2.16.010 and AS 26.23.140

- If you are aware of people planning to visit Haines in the next two weeks, please let them know the Borough recommends they postpone their travel to our community. This does not apply to people whose primary, year-round residence is Haines.
- When returning to Haines **FROM ANYWHERE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY** we ask that you self-quarantine yourself for 14 days.
- Please cancel all non-essential meetings or gatherings or hold them via teleconference until further notice.
- Practice social distancing at all times and in all public and private venues.
- Follow all [existing CDC protocols](#) and the COVID-19 Health Mandate from the State of Alaska at <https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03172020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-004.pdf>

Additionally, as of 5 pm on March 18, Alaska Gov. Michael Dunleavy ordered all bars, breweries, restaurants, food and beverage kiosks or trucks and other establishment serving food or beverages within the state shall be closed to the public dine-in service. All buffets and salad bars are closed to self-service. All entertainment facilities shall be closed to the public, including theaters, gyms and fitness center, bowling alleys and bingo halls. Find the complete announcement from the state at <https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03172020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-003.pdf>

How information is disseminated to the community

The EOC has started a special Facebook page titled “Haines Borough COVID 19 Information Page” at www.facebook.com/hainescovid19 to act as the central location for all official information. Updates will be posted there as they are generated; they will also be posted on the borough website and posted on the Nixel notification system. Haines Borough Mayor Jan Hill

will be recording a message each day recapping any updates to air on KHNS-FM. That message will play each evening and the next morning.

General updates will become available by 3 pm each weekday. The EOC will release important or urgent information at different times if it becomes necessary, including weekends. Media is encouraged to contact EOC PIO Officer Margaret Friedenauer for any questions related to the community's response.

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