

Adam Crum
Commissioner

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**Department of Health
and Social Services**

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Testing option now provided as an alternative to Alaska's 14-day quarantine for visitors or Alaskans returning home from out-of-state travel

June 12, 2020 ANCHORAGE — Effective last Saturday, June 6, at 12:01 a.m., the State of Alaska began requiring travelers entering the state to adhere to new requirements under State of Alaska Health Mandate 10 (as revised on June 3, 2020). According to the revised mandate, travelers entering the state may enter Alaska without undergoing a 14-day quarantine if they:

- Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 72 hours of departure; tests taken up to five days from departure will be accepted but travelers need to take another test upon arrival; or
- Test upon arrival in Alaska, maintaining quarantine at their own expense until test results are known; or,
- Belong to the critical infrastructure workforce and follow their company's protective plan on file with the state; or
- Previously had COVID-19, are recovered and can provide evidence of both.

The mandate revisions are aimed at protecting the health of Alaskans and visitors while allowing travelers the option to travel into Alaska without having to quarantine.

The State of Alaska is currently providing COVID-19 testing for travelers into Alaska at seven hub airports but is strongly encouraging testing prior to departure. Travelers who test within 72 hours of departure do not have to quarantine in Alaska if they can show a negative result upon landing. If results are pending, travelers must quarantine until a negative test result can be shared with the state. Travelers who test within five days prior to departure also do not have to quarantine if they take another test at the airport when they land in Alaska.

"Testing before you travel – within five days prior of departure – is your best bet for a safe and enjoyable visit to Alaska. You will be able to enjoy your time in Alaska without quarantine," said Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Adam Crum. "We realize it's not easy in many places to get tested without having any symptoms, but we're asking travelers to try. This is the best option for travelers and will also help conserve our state's resources."

Beginning on Saturday, travelers arriving by air into Alaska were greeted at eight airports by screeners and asked to complete and sign the Alaska Travel Declaration Form and then follow protocols based on

their COVID-19 test status. (See the attached chart for details). Travelers are also given a testing voucher for a follow-up test to be taken 7-14 days after arrival in Alaska, if the traveler is staying that long in the state. The voucher offsets the costs of testing in Alaska after insurance is billed. The state is first rolling out these mandate revisions with air travelers but will soon be increasing engagement with travelers arriving into Alaska by land and sea.

The following Alaska airports currently have testing on site: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell and Gustavus. The Petersburg airport is receiving travel declaration forms but is not yet providing testing at the airport. A testing site there will be opening soon.

Travelers need to “watch the window”

In addition to testing, all travelers into Alaska are being asked to minimize interactions with others until the 14-day window of possible infection is over. Just like Alaska residents, travelers will need to keep at least 6 feet from others, wear a cloth face covering in public and wash hands often. They should also keep track of interactions with other people and the places they visit. Also, instead of dining inside a restaurant or going into a store, visitors are asked to use restaurant delivery and takeout options, visit outdoor venues and minimize time indoors around others. Local jurisdictions may have individual requirements and restrictions. It is the responsibility of every traveler to educate themselves ahead of time to understand local conditions.

“Traveling during a pandemic comes with risks and challenges,” said Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. “We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable trip, so please take precautions and prepare ahead. We recommend travelers purchase evacuation, medical and travel insurance and use online options to obtain fishing licenses or other needed items. Travelers should know that Alaska’s medical infrastructure is limited, so please come prepared.”

Cases are already being identified

As of Wednesday, two travelers tested so far at Alaska airports have turned up positive – one at the [Ketchikan](#) airport and a second in [Juneau](#). Both travelers are isolating themselves from others and are being monitored by public health officials. They must remain in isolation until cleared by public health officials.

“Increased testing of travelers is going to help us detect some cases sooner,” Zink added. “We need to continue to find ways to live with this virus and the faster we can detect cases, the better we can box in the virus by isolating sick individuals and tracing close contacts. As we work to provide more options that reopen Alaska, we’ll be following the data and if the numbers tell us we need to step back, we will.”

“While we are still working out details and improving systems, overall this is going well,” said Tessa Walker Linderman, DHSS Port of Entry Coordinator. “Travelers have been understanding of the need for these rules to protect the health of Alaskans while reopening our economy and have been compliant and understanding. Wait times at airports have been less than anticipated and about a quarter of all travelers have proof of their negative test with them when they arrived. Those with negative tests in hand are able to move through the airport screening very quickly.”

Starting this week, the state will be piloting an online application that allows travelers to complete the Alaska Travel Declaration Form via the app, as well as receive results for testing done at the airports. This is being tested at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport by Capstone Clinic with possible expansion statewide.

“Safe travel is essential to Alaska’s economy, and the Alaska way of life. We have a relatively low number of cases in Alaska, and we would like to keep it that way by encouraging safe and responsible travel within the state,” said DHSS Commissioner Adam Crum.

For more information on properly preparing for your travels to Alaska, please visit: covid19.alaska.gov/travelers.

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