



THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

*"Security, Custody, Control"*

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Bureau of Corrections Staff

FROM: Wynnie Testamark, Director 

RE: **Updated COVID-19 Protocols at All BOC Facilities**  
(based on updated CDC Interim Guidance of July 14, 2020)

DATE: July 20, 2020

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The Bureau of Corrections (“Bureau” or “BOC”) has been extremely fortunate in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, there has been no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection among any staff or offender at any Bureau facility since the pandemic began. For this we are exceedingly grateful. We have been vigilant, we have been proactive, and, thus far, we have been spared.

Nevertheless, the coronavirus pandemic continues unabated, with spikes and hotspots in several areas across the country. There has been a resurgence in COVID-19 infections in the Virgin Islands in recent weeks, particularly on St. Croix. At least one employee of a V.I. Government agency on St. Croix tested positive for COVID-19 on July 10, 2020. The rising number of positive cases in the Virgin Islands means an increased possibility of exposure to COVID-19 at Bureau facilities. The best way to protect staff and inmates is to prevent exposure.

What we know about the coronavirus and how best to prevent its introduction and spread in prisons and jails continues to evolve. On July 14, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) updated its *Interim Guidance on Management of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Correctional and Detention Facilities* (“Interim Guidance”) (found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/guidance-correctional-detention.html>). The Bureau must now update its own COVID-19 protocols to reflect the CDC’s updated *Interim Guidance*.

Accordingly, as a supplement to the Bureau’s COVID-19 protocols established on March 13, 2020, and amplified on April 6, 2020 (“What the BOC is Doing to Protect You from the

Coronavirus”), effective immediately, the Bureau adopts the following COVID-19 preventative measures:

1. All Bureau staff, contractors, guests, and inmates/detainees must wear a face covering within the John A. Bell Adult Correctional Facility (“John Bell”) and the Alexander A. Farrelly Criminal Justice Complex (“CJC”), unless mask wearing is contraindicated by a health care professional. Be advised that:
  - the Bureau has ordered reusable cloth face coverings for all staff in sufficient quantities to provide each employee with multiple, reusable, cloth face coverings;
  - in the interim, the Bureau has provided staff and inmates/detainees with free, disposable masks.
2. All new inmates/detainees **MUST** be provided a face covering at the sally port, **BEFORE** being allowed entry into John Bell or CJC. New inmates/detainees will continue to be temperature checked and screened by our medical staff before being granted entry into any Bureau facility.
3. ALL new inmates and detainees **MUST** be quarantined for **14 days** in a quarantine cluster or dorm after they have been screened, temperature tested, and issued a face covering by the health team. The quarantine dorm at John Bell is X dorm. The quarantine cluster at CJC is Cluster 3. **It is absolutely prohibited for any new inmate or detainee to be allowed into general population until he/she is cleared by the medical team AFTER first being quarantined for 14 consecutive days upon arrival at either facility.** Failure to comply with this mandate jeopardizes the health and wellbeing of staff and inmates and will result in immediate disciplinary action.
4. Because there has been no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in any Bureau facility, CDC guidelines **DO NOT** require mandatory COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic staff and inmates/detainees at John Bell or CJC. *See Interim Considerations for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Correctional and Detention Facilities* (updated July 7, 2020) (found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/testing.html>).
5. Nevertheless, the Bureau has collaborated with the V.I. Department of Health to offer free, **voluntary** COVID-19 testing to all BOC staff. The Bureau’s medical team will be notifying staff in the coming days with more information about when and how this voluntary testing will take place.

- The Department of Health may also test inmates/detainees who recently arrived at John Bell or CJC and who are housed in a quarantine area;
- Inmates/detainees in general population will only be tested for COVID-19 if they are exhibiting flu-like or coronavirus symptoms, as determined by the Bureau's health care staff.

Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. has also extended an offer for the COVID-19 testing of Virgin Islands public service providers, which includes the Bureau's St. Croix staff.

6. Any Bureau employee, contractor, or guest who has traveled to the Virgin Islands from a state with a positivity rate of greater than 10%, as listed by the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Research Site (found at <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/testing-positivity>) must either:
  - provide a positive COVID-19 antibody test taken within four (4) months of travel; or
  - provide a negative COVID-19 test taken within five (5) days of travel from a state with a positivity rate of greater than 10% (currently those states include ALABAMA, ARIZONA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, IDAHO, KANSAS, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, NEVADA, SOUTH CAROLINA, and TEXAS).

Any Bureau employee, contractor, or guest who has travelled to an affected state who does not provide test results **must go into a 14-day self-quarantine** before being allowed into any Bureau facility or administrative office.

7. Any Bureau employee, contractor, or guest who travels to the Virgin Islands from outside of the United States **must go into a 14-day self-quarantine** before being allowed into any Bureau facility or administrative office.
8. Any Bureau employee, contractor, or guest who has had close contact with any person who is in 14-day quarantine because they traveled to the Virgin Islands (a) from a state with a positivity rate of greater than 10% or (b) from outside of the United States **must also go into a 14-day self-quarantine** before being allowed into any Bureau facility or administrative office.
9. Any Bureau employee, contractor, or guest who feels sick **must stay at home**.

10. No person will be allowed into any Bureau facility without first undergoing 1) a temperature check, 2) a pulse oximeter check, and 3) verbal screening to determine i) whether they recently exhibited any COVID-19 symptoms or ii) whether they recently travelled outside of the United States or to a state with a positivity rate of 10%, or iii) whether they recently came into close contact with an infected or quarantined person. **No exceptions will be allowed!** The details of each screening must be recorded in a log.
11. If a Bureau employee, contractor, or guest develops a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 while at a Bureau facility or administrative office, they should immediately put on a face covering (if not already wearing one), inform a supervisor, leave the facility at once, and follow CDC-recommended steps for persons who are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (see [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsteps-when-sick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsteps-when-sick.html))
12. Security staff assigned to a new inmate/detainee quarantine area (i.e. X Dorm at John Bell; Cluster 3 at CJC) **MUST** wear a face covering at all times, even when outside the area. Security staff for whom a face covering is contraindicated by a health care professional **WILL NOT** be assigned to a quarantine area.
  - Inmates/detainees assigned to a quarantine area **MUST** wear a face covering whenever interacting with security staff or a member of the medical or mental health team. The Bureau's health care team will determine whether a greater level of PPE use is warranted based on their assessment of COVID-19 risks.
  - Any inmate/detainee who leaves a Bureau facility (e.g. to be treated at a clinic, dental office, or hospital or to make a court appearance) **MUST** be quarantined for 14 days in a quarantine area upon their return to the facility and must wear a face covering upon their return.
13. No detainees from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico will be allowed into any Bureau facility until further notice.
14. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures at all Bureau facilities and administrative offices **MUST** be intensified **IMMEDIATELY**. Inmates should be trained and responsible for cleaning common areas at Bureau facilities continuously throughout the day. The intensified cleaning and disinfecting procedures should be recorded in a log and should include the following:

- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially in common areas, must be cleaned and disinfected several times a day. Such surfaces may include objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops, tabletops, elevator controls and surfaces, toilets, toilet handles, showers, recreation equipment, kiosks, telephones, and computer equipment).
  - Staff should clean shared equipment (e.g. radios, keys, handcuffs, computer keyboards and mice) several times per day and when the use of the equipment has concluded.
15. Use of dining rooms, libraries, chapels, and recreation areas at Bureau facilities must be staggered to limit the size of group activities. Wherever possible, increase space between individuals during group activities. Whenever feasible, all inmates/detainees participating in these small group activities **MUST** wear a face covering.
16. All in-person visits, furloughs, work details, and work releases **REMAIN SUSPENDED** until further notice, in accordance with the Bureau's COVID-19 Protocols of March 13, 2020.

Public health officials now anticipate a protracted battle against the coronavirus that may last well into next year. It is critical that Bureau staff remain vigilant during what is expected to be a long struggle to keep COVID-19 out of our facilities. Now is not the time to lower our guard. Last week, I asked the Legislature and the V.I. Department of Health to collaborate with the Bureau to substantially increase the supply of personal protective equipment and sanitation supplies in our inventory (including masks, face shields/goggles, gloves, gowns, hand sanitizer anti-bacterial soap and wipes) to last us through this lengthy battle. I look forward to their favorable reply.

Thank you for all you've done to help keep Bureau facilities COVID-19 free thus far. We must continue to be vigilant and diligent to ensure that everyone who works and lives in our facilities remains safe and protected during these challenging times.

cc: Commissioner Justa Encarnacion, V.I. Department of Health  
Dr. Donna Christensen  
Dr. Taie Hunte, V.I. Department of Health – Territorial Infectious Disease Specialist  
All Unions Representing BOC Bargaining Unit Members