



Representative

Rauscher's Report

House District 9 - Alaska at its Best!



Hello, neighbors! As you may be aware, we have recessed this session to prevent further spread COVID-19. As we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, I have put together some information that you might need.

April 2020

*Sutton / Valdez / Glennallen / Delta Junction / Ft. Greely / Whittier / Chickaloon / Paxton / Eureka / Big Delta / Farm Loop / Fishhook
Sheep Mountain / Glacier View*

Session Contact

State Capitol Room 426
Juneau AK, 99801
Phone: 907-465-4859

Interim Contact

600 E. Railroad Avenue
Wasilla AK, 99654
Phone: 907-373-6287

Toll-Free: 888-465-4859

Representative.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov

State & Local Resources:

<https://coronavirus-response-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/>

AK COVID-19 Update: Monday, April 6

The number of COVID-19 cases in Alaska is: 191.

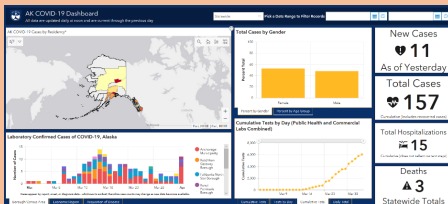
A total of 6 new cases reported on 4/6/2020.

6,883 COVID-19 tests have been tested in Alaska. (as of 4/6/2020)

The cumulative number of cases hospitalized as of 4/6/2020: 23

Cumulative number of deaths as of 4/6/2020: 6

The State of Alaska has launched the AK COVID-19 Dashboard (click on the picture).



PFD Filing Deadline Extended

The deadline to file for a 2020 PFD has been pushed back to April 30 (was March 31st). File online at <https://pfd.alaska.gov/>

HB 308 and Unemployment Problems

A lot of you may have lost your jobs due to the state mandates instituted because of COVID-19 and applied for Unemployment's benefits. And that means that a lot of you may have received letters from the Department of Labor and Unemployment stating: "Their old claim has run out of allotted funds", or "you need to wait two weeks, but they still need to do your work searches", or "we couldn't determine eligibility" or whatever.

The department has stated that most of those are due to the fact that their claim was put in before HB 308 was voted on and signed by the Governor. Now that the Governor has signed the bill last week, all those applicants should be getting another letter stating they are entitled to unemployment, no waiting period is needed and no job searches need to happen during a certain period of months determined by the length of the crises. An increased amount for spouse and dependents and the extra weekly amount from the feds will also be paid.

Please be patient as they change everything over to reflect the new regulations and re-contact you all that filed before the bill went into effect. You will need to use your MyAlaska login and password to complete the process if you have not filed yet: <http://www.labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/>

Help for Alaska Small Businesses

AIDEA's "[Sustaining Alaska's Future Economy Guaranty Program](#)" is up and running.

Businesses with existing loans or lines of credit with any lending institution in Alaska can apply for a loan increase up to \$1 million. The loans are guaranteed by the State of Alaska. Get more information [here](#).

St. Paul Restrictions

All non-essential travel into St. Paul Island has been banned through April 15. There is no doctor on the island and just one ventilator.

District 9 affected LIO Contact Info

Delta Junction

907-895-4236/ 855-895-4236 (toll free)
LIO.Deltajunction@akleg.gov
<http://deltajunction.akleg.gov/>

Glennallen

907-822-5588/ 855-895-5588 (toll free)
LIO.Glennallen@akleg.gov
<http://glennallen.akleg.gov/>

Valdez

907-835-2111/ 855-835-2111 (toll free)
LIO.Valdez@akleg.gov
<http://valdez.akleg.gov/>

COVID-19: What Is It?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Four types of coronaviruses cause 20% to 30% of 'common cold' infections each year in adults. Coronaviruses are common in animals and can be transmitted to humans. The 2019 Novel Coronavirus was identified in Wuhan City, China in December of 2019. It had not previously been identified in humans. The 1st case was linked to an animal market in China. The host of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus is thought to be bats. COVID-19 is the name of the illness in humans caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus. The incubation period is between 2 to 14 days. Each infected person infects an average of 2.5 other people. Risk Factors for COVID-19 severe illness.

- Age 65 and older
- People who reside in nursing homes or long-term care facilities
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions
- Chronic lung disease/asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immuno-compromise
- Severe obesity
- Diabetes
- Severe kidney disease
- Liver disease

How is COVID-10 Spread?

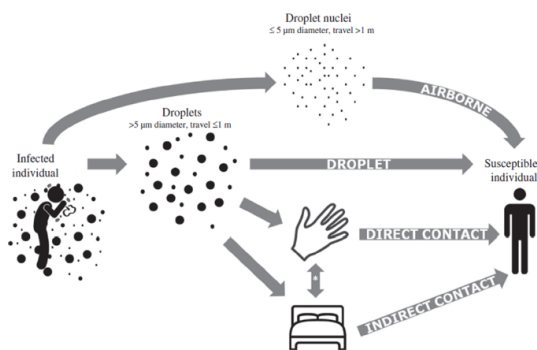


Figure 1. Transmission routes: droplet, airborne, direct contact, and indirect contact. (Indirect contact: routes involving a combination of hand and surface.) Definitions of 'droplet' and 'droplet nuclei' are from Atkinson et al.*

CDC's recommendation on prevention of the spread of COVID-19 found [here](#).

Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

The best way to prevent contracting this illness is by avoiding exposure to it:

Practice social distancing if possible – only leave the house for necessities and avoid gatherings of ten people or more.

Stay at least six feet away from others and avoid shaking hands.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

If you are sick:

Stay home as much as possible.

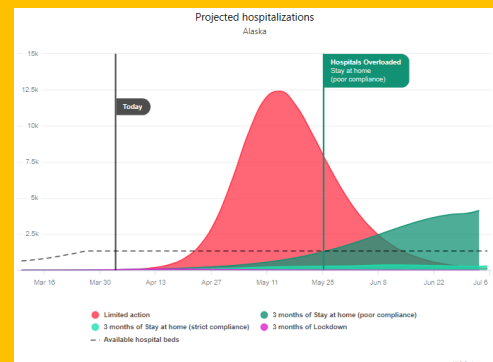
Sneeze and/or cough into your elbow or a tissue.

Wear a face mask when around other people or going to a medical office.

Coronavirus symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

If you have symptoms and seek testing, contact your physician or healthcare provider.

Click on the picture for projected cases and hospitalizations.



Paycheck Protection Program

Visit [SBA.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.sba.gov/coronavirus) for more information on the Paycheck Protection Program.

Community Contacts

Palmer

Edna DeVries, Mayor
907-761-1301
edeuries@palmerak.org
Sutton Community Council
Brian Largent, Director
907-754-0749
Suttoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Wasilla

Bert L Cottle, Mayor
907-373-9050
bcottle@ci.wasilla.ak.us

Chikaloon Community Council

James Ramsey, Chair
Coryandjames@mtaonline.net
Glacier View Community Council
Joseph Davis, President
907-250-5561
josephdavisak@mac.com
Delta Junction
JW Musgrove, Mayor
907-895-4568
Mat-Su Borough
Vern Halter, Mayor
907-861-8682
Vern.halter@matsugov.us

Copper Valley

Ahtna Intertribal Resource
Karen Linnell
907-822-4466-ahtnatribal.org
Chitina Native Corp
Linnie Lohse
907-823-2223
Chitinanative.com

Chitina Traditional Native Council

907-823-2215
Chitinatraditional.com
Cheesh'na Tribal Council
Pete Peschang
907-822-3503
www.cheeshna.com

Budget Numbers from Legislative Finance

The FY21 budget is based on a POMV draw of nearly \$3.1 billion. The FY21 budget is based on other revenue (primarily oil) of \$1.24 billion.

*Includes an adjustment of minus \$718 million to accommodate lower than expected oil prices. (\$35 per barrel)

The amount allocated for agency operations is \$3.97 billion. The budget includes \$123 million for capital projects.

The budget totals \$5.3 billion when the \$1,000 PFD and other items are included.

Revenue totals \$4.34 billion and the budget totals \$5.3 billion, resulting in a \$1 billion deficit.

The deficit is being filled by taking \$1 billion from Alaska's primary savings account, which is the Constitutional Budget Reserve.

The CRB will be left with \$411.6 million by the end of FY 21.

The ERA is expected to hold \$11 billion at the start of FY 21 and holds \$9.7 billion at the end of FY 21.

Alaska Railroad Delays Passenger Service

The Alaska Railroad is delaying passenger service from May 8 to sometime in July at the earliest. Railroad passenger service closely aligns with the start of the cruise ship season in Alaska. Freight operations between Anchorage and Fairbanks continue.

More Ferry Delays

Three state ferries are delayed in being brought back into service due to efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Ketchikan (Columbia, Kennicott, Tustumena).

The Alaska Marine Highway System has tentative plans to put the vessels back in service in mid-May (check [here](#) for updates).

The ferry system is reducing service levels for Angoon and Hoonah, which have issued travel restrictions.

AMHS is extending the waiver of cancellations fees until May 1. Call 1-800-642-0066.

Unprecedented Jump in Unemployment

13,774 Alaskans filed for unemployment for the week ending Saturday, March 21.

- 11,173 continued unemployment claims.
- The previous high was 4,901 claims in January 2010. (During the Great Recession)
- Alaska's shutdown began on Monday, March 16.

Over 6.65 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits for the week ending March 28.

- 3.3 million people applied for unemployment benefits the week before.
- 10 million layoffs in the past few weeks.
- 8.7 million jobs were lost during the Great Recession.
- Some economists are envisioning up to 20 million lost jobs by the end of April.

The federal stimulus package, the CARES Act, includes a 13-week extension in unemployment benefits.

- Unemployed Alaskans would receive an additional \$600 per week above the state unemployment rate for 4 months.
- Unemployed Alaskans could receive an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits on top of the state maximum of 26 weeks.
- The bill provides for 39 weeks of unemployment benefits for Alaskans not eligible for benefits. (Self-employed)
- Includes furloughed employees, gig workers, and freelancers.
- The State of Alaska has expanded unemployment benefits for Alaskans impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The normal 1 week waiting period and the requirement that those affected be ready and able to work has been waived.
- Cap on the number of dependents has been waived.
- The allowance for dependents has been increased from \$24 to \$75 per dependent per week.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is anticipating a continued increase in the number of people filing for unemployment benefits.

- Due to the anticipated increase in claims, the department is asking for people first to file a claim [online](#). Once on the homepage, click on "Unemployment Insurance Benefits."
- For assistance you can call toll-free 1-888-252-2557. In Anchorage call (907) 269-4700. In Fairbanks call (907) 451-2871. In Juneau call (907) 465-5552.
- Unemployment assistance is available for anyone who is "unemployed through no fault of their own."

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edevries@palmerak.org

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Take the Census Online

The U.S. Census is suspending its 2020 field operations for an additional 2 weeks until April 15. (Take the census online at [2020Census.gov](https://2020census.gov))

Travel Restrictions

All visitors to Alaska are required to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Travelers are required to sign a form with their contact information and the address where they will self-quarantine. Violators are subject to a \$25,000 fine or jail time. The order went into effect on Wednesday, March 25.

Schools Closed

Governor Dunleavy ordered all schools closed through May 1. The health mandate notes that students will receive instruction through distance delivery methods. All after school activities are suspended. It's estimated that 50 million students nationwide have been impacted by school closures. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development have launched a website with online learning resources. [Aklearns.org](https://aklearns.org)
The Alaska Statewide Virtual School project, a new distance learning program, is being rolled out. It was developed in cooperation with the Florida Virtual School, which was created in 1997. Florida Virtual School operates as a school district in Florida (1-year contract at \$525,000).

Feeding children

Currently there are 253 food distribution sites and meal delivery routes across Alaska. Five Head Start and afterschool programs have set up an additional 20 food distribution sites. Alaska is also participating in a USDA pilot project that allows meals to be mailed directly to families.

The People Mover Transportation in ANC

*Notice: Effective 4/8/20, In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, People Mover bus service will be suspended at midnight until further notice. Click [here](#) to learn more about essential transportation service still being offered.

Anchorage Response

Anchorage officials are asking for donations of protective equipment. Needed Equipment:

- Non-contact medical grade thermometers
- Nitrile exam gloves (NO LATEX GLOVES)
- N95 masks
- Surgical masks
- Medical gowns
- Face shields

Donations accepted at CrossFit Alaska, 9191 Old Seward Highway, Anchorage. Hours of donation: 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM 7 days a week.

The Alaska Airlines Center will be used as a medical alternate care site for COVID-19 patients if the hospitals get overwhelmed (150 beds). The temporary facility can house patients in stable condition who need observation and basic support. The overflow site is supported by Providence Alaska Medical Center, the Alaska Native Medical Center, and the Alaska Regional Hospital.

The Ben Boeke Ice Arenas has been turned into a temporary shelter for the homeless. (The shelter is being overseen by Bean's Café)



The emergency "hunker down" order has been extended through April 14th.

All municipal employees have been ordered to work from home if they can. The Downtown Transit Center lobby and customer service windows are closed to comply with the order limiting gathering to no more than 50 people. Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz says utility shutoffs will be suspended for Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility and Municipal Light and Power.

Alaska residents are advised to continue paying utility bills. Mayor Berkowitz signed an emergency order temporarily suspending enforcement of the paper bag fee of 10 cents. The Municipality of Anchorage has moved its COVID-19 emergency operations center to the 3rd floor of the Loussac Library. The move allows staff to follow social distancing guidelines. Visit www.muni.org/covid-19 for updated information about the Municipality's actions regarding COVID-19.

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RavnAir Filed Chapter 11

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, RavnAir Group has filed for Chapter 11 relief under the U.S. bankruptcy code. They have provided an update [here](#). RavnAir states: "Ravn has been in contact with the CEOs of other air carriers around the State since last Thursday, April 2nd to help them establish new or replacement air service wherever possible, and it will continue those efforts during this uncertain period of time before the company can resume its own operations."

Fees and Fines Suspended

On 3/31/2020, Governor Dunleavy signed an order suspending many fees and fines imposed by state government:

- Fees will be deferred through May 11
- Driver license renewal fees are suspended (click [here](#))
- Boat and vehicle registration fees are suspended
- Business license fees and professional license fees are deferred (click [here](#)).

Price Gouger Caught

On Wednesday, the Department of Law filed a price gouging complaint against an Anchorage man for buying up N95 masks from Alaska stores and reselling them online "for unconscionably high prices." SB 241 included language noting that price markups of over 10% is considered price gouging. (The bill has not yet been signed by Gov. Dunleavy) Alaska's Attorney General issued a press release on Tuesday urging Alaska's to be on the lookout for "potential scammers and price gougers trying to take advantage of the COVID-19 situation."

If you suspect something is a scam and/or an example of price gouging, contact Alaska's Consumer Protection Unit at (907) 269-5200 or toll-free at 1-888-576-2529; email consumerprotection@alaska.gov or the file it with the FBI at <https://tips.fbi.gov/>

Helpful Links

The CDC and Apple have launched a new [website](#) that includes a COVID-19 screening tool and other resources. (An app is available)

[CovidActNow.org](https://www.covidactnow.org/)

[CDC COVID-19 website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

[coronavirus.alaska.gov](https://www.coronavirus.alaska.gov)

[Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering \(CSSE\) at Johns Hopkins University \(JHU\)](https://www.csis.jhu.edu/coronavirus/)

[Politico's COVID-19 HQ](https://www.politico.com/coronavirus)

[COVID-19 Resources for State Leaders](https://www.governor.alaska.gov/covid-19-resources)

[Google COVID-19 Information & Resources](https://www.google.com/covid19/)

[COVID-19 Alaska Economic Stabilization Team](https://www.alaska.gov/economic-stabilization)

[NCSL COVID-19 Page](https://www.ncsl.org/covid-19)

[New York Times free COVID-19 coverage](https://www.nytimes.com/covid-19)

[Medium Coronavirus Blog](https://www.medium.com/coronavirus)

[Mat-Su Frontiersman Coronavirus Coverage](https://www.mat-su.com/coronavirus)

[Alaska Legal Services Corporation Resource Hub](https://www.alaska.gov/legal-services)

[National Council of Nonprofits – Coronavirus Hub](https://www.nationalcouncilofnonprofits.org/coronavirus)

<https://alaskalawhelp.org/>

COVID-19 in Prudhoe Bay

An oil worker on the North Slope has tested positive for COVID-19. The man is from Alaska and displayed symptoms within 2 days of arriving in Prudhoe Bay. The unnamed man has been isolated since March 27th and those he encountered have been quarantined. BP is reducing all non-essential activity on the North Slope.

State Workers Lose in Court

A Superior Court Judge has turned down a request to force the State of Alaska to allow state workers to work remotely. Superior Court Judge Thomas Matthews denied the request from the Alaska State Employees Association, which represents many state workers.



My office is your office.

I would love to hear from you! Please contact the office anytime:

Rep.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov