



The FRAKES Files

20-04

Director Scott R. Frakes
March 17, 2020

Dear NDCS Teammates,

Some of the information being shared nationally seems to indicate that we could be in a months-long process of dealing with the coronavirus. If a vaccine is implemented, that may help to curtail that timeframe. In the meantime, we know that extended school and daycare cancellations will pose challenging situations for many of our staff as well as managing those who become ill.

If you are sick and are presenting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or the flu, let your supervisor know and stay at home. If you think you may be susceptible to COVID-19 through contact with others, or you have been around other people who have tested positive, let your supervisor know and tell them as well if you are being tested for the illness.

If you need to stay home to care for yourself, ill child or another family member who is ill, you can utilize sick, vacation, or comp time. If needed, I can approve the advancement of leave. If you have a child at home due to a school/daycare cancellation, you should utilize comp time or vacation. Requests for FMLA will be handled by NDCS Human Resources.

Ours is a unique business. Much of our work involves hands-on management of other people and does not provide the opportunity to perform work from home. Any requests to work from home will need to be made, in advance, to your supervisor and must be approved by me. Teammates cannot self-select to work from home. You must have prior permission.

Many things have evolved since my last communication to you with regard to instructions for managing COVID-19. In response, please note the following updates:

- Inmate visitation is now closed. Information has been posted on the agency's website. You can direct people there for updates.
- Most volunteers are also prohibited right now, although we will continue to facilitate access with our contract organizations for as long as possible. Deputy Director Smith will provide Wardens with further information on who is authorized access.
- Facilities have been directed to cancel, postpone or otherwise modify staff meetings that involve 10 or more people.
- Inmates in our community facilities will be permitted to continue going to their outside jobs as long as their employers have work for them.
- Agency leadership is meeting daily by phone with facility wardens. Wardens will work with their staff members to implement changes with regard to feeding inmates, programming and housing, as those issues arise.

Finding the right communication balance during major incidents is tough. Send out too much, and it doesn't get read. Don't send out enough, and misinformation starts to spread. There is also the challenge of "who gets told first?" Whenever possible, it is my practice to share

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information with staff before sending it to the inmate population. But there will be times where you see the information sent to inmates before you find what I sent to you, and sometimes I'll make mistakes. Either way, please know that we are working hard to keep you, our other stakeholders, and the inmate population informed.

Keep washing your hands, practicing social distancing, and taking care of each other. Your commitment to public safety has never been more critical to our country. Thank you for being a part of NDCS, and for all you do every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Frakes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Scott R. Frakes