



The FRAKES Files

20-06

Director Scott R. Frakes
March 30, 2020

Dear NDCS Teammates,

In the course of U.S. history, Americans have lived through many periods of uncertainty. The enemy we confront today is unique in that it is largely invisible, many of its characteristics are still unknown and the rules of engagement, as well as the ultimate method of defeat, remain unclear. Despite the special challenges brought by the current pandemic, your decision to make a career in corrections has made you prepared, trained and ready to face whatever obstacles (or opportunities) may come our way.

The Q12 survey asks, “Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work every day?” Typically, we associate the question with material resources. But, the question also applies to the talents, skills and knowledge that will serve you and your teammates well, as we work together to address COVID-19. What are some of those characteristics?

Becoming a corrections professional has made you a trained observer. You have the ability to sense when things don't look right and don't feel right. You are able to identify dangers that others would walk into blindly. You have a heightened sense of vigilance.

You understand the importance of universal precautions, and how they can protect you and others. While those precautions are specific to handling blood and bodily fluids, the same concepts certainly apply to working around people who have viruses just like COVID-19.

You know the importance of good sanitation in prisons. NDCS is among those agencies which abides by standards set by the American Correctional Association (ACA). Dirty facilities don't pass audits. Sanitation, good order and security all go hand-in-hand. Speaking of hands -- wash, wash, wash for at least 20 seconds!

As part of your initial and on-going training, you've learned about emergency response training. You know how to identify, report, isolate and contain. That set of skills can help save your life in any emergency situation. Some of you who have prior military service or participate on special teams in NDCS, likely have even greater experience.

These are just some of the skills you have gained as a corrections professional. They serve you well – both on the job and in the community. They are the same skills that will allow you to confront the challenges posed by COVID-19. As actor Liam Neeson said when taking on a different type of unseen enemy, “What I do have are a very particular set of skills...”

You chose a career that makes you essential to public safety. Admittedly, we don't often get all the credit we deserve. But, you know and I know how important our work really is. It takes courage, tenacity, perseverance and some thick skin to serve in corrections. No matter what your job is, know that you have the skills to succeed, even in the face of adversity. The COVID-19 virus is a setback, and perhaps a setup, to further developing the skills, talents and resources that will serve NDCS even better in the years to come.

You are critical to the success of our agency and to the service of all Nebraskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Frakes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Scott R. Frakes