



The FRAKES Files

20-13

Director Scott R. Frakes
July 7, 2020

Dear NDCS Teammates,

There is a saying that, 'everything old is new again.' It is also the title of a song from the 1970's by Peter Allen, in case you were wondering. When you read this Frakes File, it is going to sound like the same message you have heard before. What I hope is that you view it in a new way and take it to heart with new meaning and purpose.

As restrictions in the community have loosened and NDCS moves forward with COVID-19 recovery plans, more now than ever, we need to remain vigilant about the strategies we have adopted to slow the spread of the virus. The success we have had thus far has been nothing short of remarkable. We certainly do not want to lose momentum now.

It is a good time to review some of the basics:

- Wear your mask, not just because it is required, but because it protects those around you.
- Maintain social distancing. I understand the desire to stay connected to co-workers, but congregating in small office spaces during lunch or otherwise is not a good move.
- Keep utilizing universal health precautions – washing of hands, controlling coughs, using hand sanitizer, disinfecting of surfaces, wearing the appropriate PPE, etc. These are still the tried and true proven methods for keeping the virus at bay.

Beyond the basics, we need to continue doing the following as well:

- Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Primary symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. Additional symptoms may include chills, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea
- If you are sick or believe you might be sick, stay home
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, go to [TestNebraska.com](https://www.testnebraska.com) and schedule a test or contact your personal health care provider for guidance
- If you are waiting for results from a COVID-19 test, stay home until you receive the results
- If you have been identified as a close contact of a positive case, stay self-quarantined for 14 days. That is true even if you subsequently test negative. You must stay quarantined. As a reminder, close contact is:
 - Being within six feet of another individual for 10 minutes or more
 - Without the benefit of wearing the required PPE (in most cases, a face mask)

We have had a couple of incidents in which people have eaten lunch together. They were (obviously) not wearing their masks and were in close proximity to each other for the time it took to eat. This is the kind of situation we want to avoid, at all costs.

Do not take unnecessary exposure risks – at work or at home. Fortunately, we are eligible to receive up to 80 hours of COVID-19 administrative leave if necessary, but, once an individual uses this leave, future COVID-19 absences (whether self-imposed or agency-directed) will require the use of other earned leave in order to remain in paid status. This would require the use of earned vacation or sick time.

If you look at the number of new cases reported daily across the U.S. there has been quite an uptick in the last week. As an agency that is responsible for the care of other people, we need to do everything within our power to keep this virus out. It requires the collective work of all.

I am very appreciative of the fact that people embraced our preventative measures early on. But as the saying goes, "everything old is new again," and we must renew our efforts as we monitor the progression of COVID-19 in the coming months.

Please be vigilant and stay healthy. Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Frakes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott R. Frakes