



The FRAKES Files

20-14

Director Scott R. Frakes
July 24, 2020

Dear NDCS Teammates,

July threatens to be a dangerous turning point in our battle to contain COVID-19. At the current pace we will more than double the total number of positive staff cases this month. At the close of June, we had 20 cases. Yesterday, four staff members reported being positive, bringing the total to 37.

Transmission of the virus can occur through any number of ways, including interactions in the workplace. It requires hard work and diligence to avoid infection, and accidental exposure is always a risk. What we are currently experiencing are not accidental exposures. They are the result of complacency, and failure to follow the guidelines that keep us all safe.

I cannot direct or control your behavior outside of the workplace. I'm at a loss to understand why anyone would engage in high-risk behavior outside of work that would expose themselves to COVID-19, but I know it is occurring. What I can do is ensure everyone in NDCS understands the following expectations will be consistently adhered in all work locations:

- Wear your mask properly, and at any time you around other person. This includes riding in state vehicles – no exceptions
- Maintain social distance wherever possible. If you remove your mask to eat/drink, ensure you are at least 6 feet from any other person – no exceptions
- Utilize universal health precautions – wash your hands, control coughs, use hand sanitizer, disinfect surfaces, and correctly utilize proper PPE.
- 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 and without the benefit of both of you wearing the required PPE (in most cases, a face mask)
- If you are assigned to monitor a building entry point, do not allow anyone to enter the building if they have not passed all parts of the screening process – no exceptions

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We are at a point where disciplinary action may result for failure to follow these expectations at work. Please, do not take careless exposure risks outside of work. I understand that we all want our lives to go back to normal. With the creation of an effective vaccine, America will develop a new normal. Until that time, practicing all the strategies above will greatly reduce the risk of infecting yourself and your family and friends.

We have been very fortunate so far -- all of our staff members have recovered, or are on their way to recovery. Not all DOC agencies have fared as well. Sadly, Texas lost several staff members in the last few days. We seem to be embarking on what many characterize as the second wave of the coronavirus. We bore the first wave very well. I want every team member to come out on the other side of this healthy. Please adhere to the mandates established here at work and continue to use good judgement in the community. Thank you.

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