




**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

March 27, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Detention Wardens and Superintendents

THROUGH: Field Office Directors

FROM: Enrique M. Lucero   
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SUBJECT: Memorandum on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Action Plan, Revision 1

Background:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) continues to monitor the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and to work in conjunction with select U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Component leadership and the Acting Secretary to implement a mitigation strategy.

To ensure a unified and preventative response, the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), ICE Health Service Corps (IHSC), Custody Management Division, and Field Operations are providing the following guidance. The combination of a dense and highly transient detained population presents unique challenges for ICE efforts to mitigate the risk of infection and transmission. Consequently, these measures were developed to reduce exposure to COVID-19, protect the detained population, and optimize employee health and availability for duty.

This memorandum only applies to IHSC-staffed and non-IHSC-staffed, ICE-dedicated facilities. For intergovernmental partners and non-dedicated facilities, ICE defers to local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal public health policies and authorities, including adherence with state laws on communicable disease reporting, but recommends actions contained in this memorandum be considered as best practices. Questions and concerns related to the following Action Plan can be addressed to: [ICE\\_ERO\\_CMD@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:ICE_ERO_CMD@ice.dhs.gov).

Please see the recently-issued Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Interim Guidance: Managing COVID-19 in Correctional/Detention Facilities](#) for additional information.

Action Plan:

**STAFF HIRING:** Wardens and facility staff should continue to meet any personnel staffing plan and staffing criteria outlined in the Performance Work Statement (PWS) and terms and conditions of their negotiated contract or agreement for medical staff and guard services. Facilities are expected to be appropriately staffed to meet established work schedules, rest periods, and to ensure the delivery of detainee medical and mental health care as it relates to the continually evolving impact of COVID-19.

**LOGISTICS:** Wardens and Facility Administrators should assess their inventories of food, medicine, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), and facility operational practices, and consistently maintain services and supplies to assure the safety, security, health, and well-being of ICE detainees. Facilities should have updated pandemic plans and policies as well as established quarantine and/or isolation areas within their facilities in the event they are needed. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol should be available in visitor entrances, exits, and waiting areas. In addition, alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be made available to staff and detainees in the secure setting to the maximum extent possible.

**SOCIAL VISITATION/TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION:** As of March 13, 2020, social visits to/with ICE detainees at all detention facilities are suspended until further notice in order to mitigate the potential introduction of COVID-19 into the facilities. ICE recognizes the considerable impact of suspending personal visitation, and requests maximizing detainee use of teleconferencing, video visitation (e.g., Skype, FaceTime), email, and/or tablets, with extended hours where possible.

Detention facilities should make a timely effort to identify indigence in the detainee population. A detainee is considered "indigent" if he/she has less than \$15.00 in his/her account for ten days. These detainees must be afforded the same telephone access and related privileges as other detainees. Each facility must ensure all detainees are able to make calls to the ICE-provided list of free legal service providers and consulates at no charge to the detainee or the receiving party, and that indigent detainees may request a call to immediate family or others in personal or family emergencies or on an as-needed basis to maintain community ties.

**LEGAL VISITS:** Detainee access to legal representatives remains a paramount requirement and should be accommodated to the maximum extent practicable. Legal visitation must continue unless determined to pose a risk to the safety and security of the facility.

Non-contact legal visitation (e.g., Skype or teleconference) should be offered first to limit exposure to ICE detainees, but in person contact should be permitted if determined essential by the legal representative. Prior to the in-person visit, the legal representative must undergo the same screening required for staff entry into the facility. The ultimate legal visit approving authority lies with the Warden or Facility Administrator; however, the facility should notify its local Field Office Director as soon as possible of any denied legal visits.

**LEGAL RIGHTS GROUP PRESENTATIONS:** Government-sponsored Legal Orientation Programs (LOPs), carried out by the Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and authorized by congressional appropriations, currently operate at a limited

number of detention sites, and may continue to conduct detainee presentations. No more than four LOP presenters may be allowed in the facility at any time and must undergo the same screening required for staff entry into the facility. Non-LOP legal rights group presentations offered by volunteers are suspended until further notice.

**STAFF-DETAINEE COMMUNICATION VISITS:** Field Office Directors should remain aware that detainees may experience increased feelings of fear and confusion during this time. Regular communication with staff is particularly important. Detainees should have frequent opportunities for informal contact with facility managerial and supervisory staff and with ERO field office staff.

Field Office Directors should monitor both facility staff and ERO officers to ensure they continue to interact with detainees. ICE staff-detainee communication may be conducted in-person (with appropriate risk reduction protocols to protect ERO officers, detainees, and facility staff) or through non-contact visitation using videoconferencing, phone calls, e-mail, or other communication services.

**CONTRACTORS:** Contractors performing essential services or maintenance on essential systems in ICE detention facilities must continue to be provided facility access and must undergo the same screening required for staff entry into the facility. Examples of essential services include medical and mental health services, telephone access, cleaning, laundry, waste disposal, and critical infrastructure repairs.

Facility annual inspections by the ICE inspections contractor, The Nakamoto Group, are suspended for 30 days from the issuance date of this memorandum.

**VOLUNTEERS:** Volunteer visits to ICE detention facilities are suspended until further notice unless approved by the Assistant Directors for Field Operations and Custody Management. The only exception is the facility Chaplain, who may continue to offer availability for individual and group pastoral care but must undergo the same screening required for staff entry into the facility. Other volunteers, contractors, and community groups that augment and enhance the religious program are suspended until further notice to reduce the risk of possible transmission of COVID-19 to detainees.

**TOURS:** Facility tours are suspended until further notice, excluding Members of Congress, Congressional Member Delegations (CODELs), and Congressional Staff Delegations (STAFFDELS) who will not be prevented from accessing facilities for the purpose of conducting oversight. To safeguard visitors, detainees, ICE and facility staff, congressional visitors may be subject to special screening procedures congruent with staff facility entry screening. Congressional visitors should be advised of standard hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of disease (i.e., washing hands, avoiding close contact) and should be made aware of available hand washing stations within the facility.

**STAFF TRAINING:** All ERO in-person staff training related to the ICE detention standards or facility compliance is suspended until further notice, including conferences, Contracting Officer Representative (COR) training, and Field Office Compliance Training. Wardens and Facility Administrators will determine the training schedule for facility staff. All staff licenses and certifications shall be maintained.

**SCREENING OF FACILITY STAFF:** Enhanced health screening of both ICE and facility staff should be implemented by ICE detention facilities in geographic areas with “sustained community transmission.” These geographical areas are determined by the CDC and information is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>. Health screening includes self-reporting symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection and a temperature check.

Wardens and Facility Administrators in those geographical areas should collaborate with their Health Services Administrator to designate a trained staff member available on all shifts to conduct verbal screening and record temperature checks. It is not required that the trained staff member be medical personnel; however, the staff member must have documented training and protect the privacy of those being screened.

Verbal screening for symptoms of COVID-19 and contact with COVID-19 cases should include the following questions based on [Interim Guidance: Managing COVID-19 in Correctional/Detention Facilities](#):

- Today or in the past 24 hours, have you had any of the following symptoms?
  - Fever, felt feverish, or had chills?
  - Cough?
  - Difficulty breathing?
- In the past 14 days, have you had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 where you were not wearing the recommended proper personal protective equipment (PPE)?

The following is a protocol to safely check an individual’s temperature:

- Perform hand hygiene.
- Put on a face mask, eye protection (goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face), gowns/coveralls, and a single pair of disposable gloves.
- Check the individual’s temperature.
- If performing a temperature check on multiple individuals, ensure that a clean pair of gloves is used for each individual and that the thermometer has been thoroughly cleaned in between each check.
- If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used and the screener did not have physical contact with an individual, gloves do not need to be changed before the next check. If non-contact thermometers are used, they should be cleaned routinely as recommended by CDC for infection control.
- Remove and discard PPE.
- Perform hand hygiene.

Staff who do not clear the screening process, or refuse the enhanced health screening must be denied entry and advised to follow [CDC-recommended steps for persons who are sick with COVID-19 symptoms](#).

If PPE supply is limited, consider other PPE strategies based on [CDC Guidance | Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE](#).

If staff register a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees (Fahrenheit), they should be denied entry to the facility and placed on leave per the employer's administrative policies.

**DETAINEE SCREENING:** IHSC developed guidance for IHSC-staffed facilities to assist in the risk assessment and management of detained individuals with potential exposure to COVID-19, and guidance was disseminated to non IHSC-staffed ICE detention facilities for potential adoption of this guidance at their respective sites. This guidance addresses intake medical screenings, monitoring, encounters, laboratory testing, and public health actions. The CDC remains the authoritative source for information on how to protect individuals and reduce exposure to COVID-19. ICE continues to encourage facilities to follow CDC guidelines and those of their state and local health departments for non IHSC-staffed ICE detention facilities.

ICE requests that Wardens and Facility Administrators ensure ICE detainees are provided guidance and education in a language that they fully comprehend regarding basic hygiene and measures to maintain health. Links for detainee/patient education resources, in a variety of languages, are maintained in the IHSC guidance and information on the CDC website.

**MODIFIED OPERATIONS:** Wardens and Facility Administrators should implement modified operations to maximize social distancing in facilities, as much as practicable. For example, Wardens and Facility Administrators should consider staggered mealtimes and recreation times in order to limit congregate gatherings. All community service projects are suspended until further notice.

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETAINEE RELEASE:** Upon notification of a detainee's pending release, a qualified health care provider will conduct a temperature screening:

- Temperature checks will be completed no more than 12 hours prior to facility departure and documented in the detainee medical record and transfer summary.
- Temperature checks must be completed and documented prior to providing ICE with transfer summary documents.

When considering the release of detainees into the United States with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, the following must be addressed for detainees exposed to an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or detainees under monitoring for having epidemiologic risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- If the detainee will be released prior to completion of the recommended medical isolation, cohorting, or monitoring period, the state or local health department in the facility jurisdiction should be notified of the detainee's release:
  - The health department should be provided with the detainee's name, intended address, email address, and all available telephone numbers.
- Facilitate safe transport, continued shelter, and medical care, as part of release planning:
  - Provide information regarding any potential community resources to promote continuity of care.
  - Attempt to facilitate transportation coordination through a family or friend.

- Advise the detainee to avoid public transportation, commercial ride sharing (e.g., Uber, Lyft), and taxis.
- Provide the detainee the CDC's [\*What To Do if You Are Sick\*](#) fact sheet.

If this guidance creates any contractual issues, please contact your respective Contracting Officer Representative.