

**June 2, 2020**

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**TRANSITION GUIDELINES - Field**

Operational Guidelines for transition back to normal operations from the Department’s COVID-19 Response will be updated frequently to incorporate the latest scientific, medical, and governmental recommendations. Please ensure you are using the most current document.

Due to different office geographical challenges, staffing levels, and site-specific needs, District Managers will need to individualize step-down plans to meet the specific needs of each District Office.

It is equally important that step-down is handled in a measured and consistent way to manage risk level in accordance with the latest medical and scientific data, most notable direction, and guidance from the Vermont Department of Health.

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**Definitions**

- a. **Close contact:** For the purpose of this protocol, close contact is defined as 6 feet or less from another person or in an area contaminated by their respirations.
  
- b. **Vulnerable** – Vulnerable will be used as defined by the CDC as at higher risk. The CDC currently lists as vulnerable: adults over the age of 65, pregnant women, and those with heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes. Please check the CDC link as these groups may change as new medical information becomes available. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html> Staff designated as vulnerable will not be used to work Isolation or Quarantine units, nor will they be assigned to transport inmates designated for Isolation. It is staff’s responsibility to notify their supervisors of

this information and, if requested, to provide documentation from their health care provider.

- c. **Mask** – Mask refers to a standard surgical mask. Masks issued to inmates must have the metal nose bridge removed.
- d. **N95 Mask** – An **N95 mask** (also called a respirator) is a **mask** that is worn over the face to prevent the inhalation of airborne particles. The **N95** designation means that the **mask** will filter at least 95% of particles 0.3 microns in size
- e. **Goggles** - goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face).
  - i. This does not include personal eyeglasses.
  - ii. If reusable eye protection is used it should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions.
- f. **Bleach Solution** – 5 (five) Tablespoons of bleach to 1 (one) gallon of water or 4 (four) teaspoons of bleach to 1 Quart (**Bleach Solution should be used within 24 hours of mixing.**)

## Section 1: General Precautions

### 1. General Precautions

Throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic the following general prevention measures should be implemented to interrupt viral infection transmission. See *Table 1* below.

**Table 1. General Prevention Measures**

- a. **Promote good health habits** among employees and offenders:
  - 1) Avoid close contact with persons who are sick.
  - 2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - 4) Cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue (or into a sleeve). Then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - 5) Greet without physical contact.
- b. **Conduct frequent environmental cleaning of “high touch” surfaces.**
- c. **Institute social distancing measures to prevent spread of germs** (e.g., minimize self-

serve foods and group activities).

**d. Employees should stay at home if they are sick.**

**e. Influenza (flu) vaccine is recommended for persons not previously vaccinated.**

## **1. Good Health Habits**

- a.** Good health habits should continue to be promoted in various ways (e.g., educational programs, posters, campaigns, assessing adherence with hand hygiene).
- b.** This CDC website has helpful educational posters (please see, for example, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>).
- c.** Each site should continue to ensure that adequate supplies and facilities are available for hand washing for both offenders and employees.
- d.** Provisions should continue to be made for employees, visitors, and offenders to wash their hands when they enter the site.

## **2. Environmental Cleaning**

- a.** The frequency of routine cleaning of surfaces that are frequently touched should remain increased. These areas can include doorknobs, keys, handrails, telephones, computer keyboards, elevator buttons, etc..
- b.** Each District Manager will continue to ensure their local cleaning schedule is reviewed, and cleaning frequency increased, for the duration of this pandemic.
- c.** Cleaning may be done using EPA-certified disinfecting wipes such as the “Red-capped PDI Sani Cloth Germicidal Wipes” or equivalent, as available.
- d.** The CDC also indicates that most common EPA-registered household disinfectants are effective for cleaning. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.
- e.** Bleach solution is a good alternative that is readily available (if used within 24 hours of mixing).
  - 1.** Bleach solution is 5 (five) tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water OR
  - 2.** 4 (four) teaspoons bleach per quart of water.

- f. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
- g. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

## 2. Travel Permits

1. Travel Permits may be issued to non-restricted areas and approved for the following reasons:
  - a. documented employment purposes,
  - b. medical appointments or procedures,
  - c. court proceedings or other confirmed legal matters, or
  - d. attendance at approved treatment programs.

Travel pursuant to the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) will remain unaffected.

## 3. Phase 1

### 1. Contact Standards for Level 4 & 5 Cases

- a. Weekly phone contact with offender which includes the follow questions:
  - I have some information for you regarding COVID-19 in your community. May I share with you?
  - Do you have cloth masks for you and your family? We would be happy to supply you with some. \*Is there a free mask distribution in your area?
  - If you need to be tested, please know it is free. There are testing centers available to you.
    - Site to access list of testing sites- <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/popups>
    - The District Manager can fill out the form on this site to be notified when testing sites pop up in their area.
    - Rides are available if you need a ride. The number to call is 833-387-7200. Please call 2 days before the ride is needed.
  - If you would like any additionally information on COVID-19 or if you need to be connected to a testing site or hospital, you can dial 211.
  - There is also food available through Vermont Give always <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/coronavirus-services-for-individuals/coronavirus-food-distributions>
- b. Two collateral contacts will be conducted each month with an emphasis on contacts with victims, partners, and law enforcement. These contacts will be by phone or in porch/outdoor areas where social distancing can be maintained.
- c. Two field checks will be conducted each month. Checks may be scheduled field appointments or unscheduled. See details below.

**2. Field checks will be defined as follows:**

- a. Field staff will work in pairs.
- b. Checks will be conducted in outdoor open-air areas such as driveways, porches, front yards, outdoor public areas, and outside work locations while maintaining social distancing guidelines.
- c. All staff performing field checks will wear a microfiber or cloth mask.
- d. Dispatch will remain closed. Staff will need to utilize local and state law enforcement when necessary to assist with arrest and safety concerns.
- e. Offenders deemed to be residing in areas believed to be unsafe for field staff, such as motels or homeless camps, should be staffed with the District Manager or designee to develop a plan to meet contact standards safely.
- f. No Alco-Sensors will be conducted.
- g. No Urinalysis testing will be done.

**3. Household Investigations**

- a. Staff will resume the practice of conducting household investigations.
- b. This will not include in-home checks, but will be restricted to interviews on porches or outdoor areas where social distancing can be maintained.
- c. DCF checks will be conducted.

**4. Response Supervision**

- a. Effective immediately all response supervision cases will be moved to the Telephone Response Supervision. The following cases are excluded from TRSP:
  - i. Sex Offenders, Listed Offenders and Domestic Violence Offenders
  - ii. Other than the above the District Manager has the discretion to add or remove offenders from TRSP
- b. All incoming response cases will be assigned to telephone reporting.

**5. Parole Board Process**

- a. All hearings will be held virtually using Skype.
- b. Each Field office will need to arrange a space and process for offenders to attend these meetings at local sites utilizing the standards in the Field Protocol for offender office visits.
- c. Information for attending individual hearings will be located on the final schedule for the hearing site and outlook meeting invitations will be sent to staff scheduled for hearings.
- d. Cleaning of equipment and space will be done in between each hearing according to cleaning protocols outlined in the most updated Field Protocol.

\*The Restitution Office is under limited capacity and may not reply with balances to include in parole summaries. If you do not have the restitution amount, please enter "amount pending" into that area on the summary. The Parole Board Office is still receiving statements from the Restitution Office prior to hearings.

Refer to all [COVID-19 Field Guidelines](#) for cleaning, transporting, and proper PPE.