



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media Contact

Maegan Bosak, SEARHC Marketing Director, maeganb@searhc.org, 907.966.8942

Sara Peterson, CBS Municipal Clerk, sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org, 907.747.1811

Dave Miller, CBS Fire Chief, dave.miller@cityofsitka.org 907.747.3233

UNIFIED COMMAND RECOMMENDS CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

SITKA, April 17, 2020 – The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS), Sitka Fire Department, Sitka School District (SSD), and public health officials continue to meet regularly to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, there are no known cases of COVID-19 in Sitka.

The group discussed the recommendation for all Alaskans to use cloth face coverings, specifically in public settings. Masking may reduce the release of respiratory droplets into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including people who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms. Sitkans should ensure the face covering covers both the nose and mouth, and should avoid touching the front of the face covering (because it may be contaminated). Do not remove the face covering until returning home, and when removing, best practice is to grasp the ear loops, ties, or bands and immediately discard or place in a designated container for laundering. Wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Volunteers have been busy sewing masks, and there are stocks available in Sitka. If you need a mask, contact the Sitka EOC at pio@cityofsitka.org or at 747-1899.

The Command group urges residents to adhere to all local, state and federal mandates regarding travel, staying at home as much as possible and on the limited occasions when leaving home, to practice physical distancing of 6 feet from others. Continue to practice good hygiene – wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, remain at home when sick, and clean and disinfect objects and surfaces on a regular basis.

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those of the flu – fever, aching, cough, and shortness of breath. If you are concerned you might have contracted the coronavirus, don't panic, as the flu or another respiratory virus is still the most likely cause. Contact your healthcare provider for advice. If you choose to visit an emergency department, call ahead to alert staff of your coronavirus concerns and request a mask be brought out to you prior to entering to reduce the risk of exposure. For health questions or COVID concerns, please call the COVID hotline at 966.8799 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Outside of normal clinic hours, patients can contact the SEARHC 24/7 Nurse Advice Line at 1.800.613.0560 to be triaged by a registered nurse.

Thank you for your cooperation as our community works together to stop any spread of the COVID-19 virus.

###