

COVID-19 Update 3/16/2020

Hi all-

As of 1600 hours today, March 16, 2020, I have assumed the responsibility Incident Commander for the next operational period. I want to thank Chad Page, who's been at the helm since we stood up ICS last week and has, along with the full ICS team, been working hard all weekend to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and the people in our care and custody. A ton of work has been going on behind the scenes and I want to give a shout out to everyone involved on the awesome teamwork!

We've made a number of decisions today aimed at preventing the spread of illness that I want to share. These will remain in place until April 1st, at which time we'll reevaluate the situation.

Visitation/Volunteer Services: Visitation and volunteer services will be suspended until 4/1. We will revisit the decision as we get closer to that date. To help facilitate ongoing communication between our population in custody and their friends and family, our telephone provider, CenturyLink, will be providing two free 15-minute phone calls to our population each week. I'll be sending a message to our incarcerated population letting them know about the closures and the new phone call options. We're also working with other vendors on similar ways to facilitate maintaining important connections.

Medical screenings: will continue for every person (staff, incarcerated person, delivery person) that enters an IDOC facility or office. People only need to be screened one time per day.

Meetings/trainings: We are asking staff to postpone any large meetings/trainings that are set to occur between now and 4/1. A number of trainings such as Courageous Leadership, Leadership 200, Cell Extractions, and South CNT will need to be rescheduled. NEO, which is set to begin on 3/23, will be delivered via video conferencing and shortened. The current PPO POST Academy will wrap-up this week and current participants will be screened daily for medical illness.

Staff travel: We are going to limit all staff travel. If you feel travel is essential, please review it with a division chief for approval. If you've recently been on vacation in a country that's considered a [Level 2 or 3](#) risk according to the CDC, please let your supervisor know so accommodations can be made.

Telecommuting: Because this situation is evolving so quickly, we still are finalizing guidance for telecommuting options for our staff. We expect to have a policy we can communicate to you tomorrow.

Thanks again for everyone's efforts. In addition to taking care of yourself, please take care of each other!

Thanks-
Josh