

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
State of Louisiana
Secretary's Office

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



JAMES M. LE BLANC
SECRETARY

Date: February 28, 2020

To: All DPS&C Staff
All State Prison Offenders

From:  James M. Le Blanc, Secretary

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As you may know, the CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus (COVID-19), first detected in China and now identified in 50 locations internationally, including cases in the United States. DPS&C is taking precautions and reviewing our preparedness plans to begin now taking steps to prevent the possible spread and decrease exposure risks.

The first and most important action we can take is to be mindful of the importance of personal protective measures. According to the CDC, these include:

1. Voluntary Home Isolation: Stay home when you are sick with respiratory disease symptoms. At the present time, these symptoms are more likely due to influenza or other respiratory viruses than to COVID-19-related virus.
2. Respiratory Etiquette: Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can.
3. Hand Hygiene: Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
4. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
5. Environmental Health Action: Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and objects

We are working on implementing policies that will include procedures for inquiring with staff and all visitors about symptoms and recent travel. If an individual has symptoms (fever, persistent cough, shortness of breath) and recently traveled, we will determine if additional risk screening is necessary or if the person should be denied access to the prison until symptoms subside. **For our offender population, this could result in visits being denied and you are encouraged to share this information with your families/friends in advance.**

While at this time, we have no reason to believe that we are at risk of exposure to this virus, we are reviewing our emergency response plan to ensure we are prepared should our preventative measures not be enough to keep us from having a confirmed case. However, it is important that each of us take responsibility for our own personal protective measures, as noted above.