Washington State Department of Health - Office of Drinking Water

The [Department of Health](#) (DOH) is working to keep you as informed as possible about continuing developments surrounding COVID-19, as well as guidance and resources you can share with employees, clients, or customers. For you as a drinking water professional, we compiled a list of useful resources on COVID-19 at the top of our main [Drinking Water webpage](#).

Tip!—Plan ahead. Review your mutual aid agreements and contracts for service in case you or someone with whom you work becomes sick or is quarantined. If you don't have a mutual aid agreement in place, **now** would be a good time to develop one. You may need to work with neighboring water systems to maintain continuity of service. In case you aren't already a member of [WAWARN](#) (Washington Water/Wastewater Area Response Network), now would be a good time to join. It's free to do so!

As shared on Friday, there is no current evidence that coronaviruses are transmitted through contaminated drinking water. The COVID-19 virus has a fragile outer membrane, which makes it vulnerable in the environment and very susceptible to oxidants like chlorine.

Please feel free to forward this message and let me know at [Elizabeth.Hyde@doh.wa.gov](#) if you or someone else would like to be added to our email list for water systems and operators.

The information below includes more general messages from the Department of Health.

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We hope you had a relaxing weekend. Stress and anxiety can make it harder for your body to fight off infectious diseases like COVID-19. Try to incorporate healthy ways to reduce stress into your life. Get plenty of sleep. Exercise. Please be kind to yourself, friends, and family.

Have you been following [Public Health Connection](#), DOH's blog? Follow us there and never miss a COVID-19 post.

Responses to Some Frequently Asked Questions

- **If I get sick, what should I do?** We have guidance on our website for [what you would need to do](#) if you think you may have COVID-19. You would need to stay home except to get medical care and stay away from people as much as possible. You would need to stay home for 7 days OR until 72 hours after your fever is gone and the symptoms get better, whichever is longer.
- **I feel awful. Should I go to the Emergency Room?** Probably not. If you have a cough and low-grade fever and feel like you need medical care, start by contacting your regular health care provider. Do not go to the Emergency Room unless you have severe symptoms like high fever, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing. We need to save our Emergency Department resources for people with the most critical needs.
- **I saw on social media that there's a vaccine**. Don't believe everything you see on the internet. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19. Anyone who tells you otherwise is trying to scam you.
- **Don't more people die of the flu than COVID-19?** So far, yes. That said, washing your hands, disinfecting commonly touched surfaces, covering your cough, and staying at home when you are sick helps prevent spread of the flu and other respiratory illnesses, too.

Numbers. The latest numbers are on [our COVID-19 webpage](#), which we update daily. As of Sunday, March 8 at 4:00 pm, 136 people in Washington tested positive for COVID-19, and 18 died of the disease. There are now 7 counties in the state that reported cases of COVID-19.

Our ability to test for COVID-19 has ramped up. So far we have tested 1,246 people. Of those, 1,110 were negative and 136 were positive for COVID-19.

Practice compassion. Have compassion for people and communities who have been heavily impacted by this disease. We are very likely to see more people with COVID-19 identified in the coming days. For additional updates, see our [2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak webpage](#). Remember, viruses don't discriminate, and neither should we.