



4. Staffing Guidance for Local Confinement Facility (Jail) Administrators

Emergency Staffing Needs

Staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be unable to work until they meet the [criteria for returning to work](#). This can cause sudden staffing shortages at a time when extra work is required to control the outbreak. Facilities should prepare for the possibility of staffing shortages and have a [concrete plan](#) with specific steps to take if they do need additional staff.

The following options should be considered for emergency staffing:

- Contacting temporary staffing agencies
- Contacting other sister jails, prison or law enforcement agencies for temporary staffing support
- Contacting local hospitals for temporary medical staffing support
- If all these options have been exhausted and additional staffing is still needed, consult with your local emergency management and local health department for ideas about other options.

Emergency staffing requests typically take several days to fill. Facilities should begin searching for additional staff as soon as staff are tested rather than waiting for test results to come back, so these emergency staffing requests can be filled if necessary.

Personnel Practices

Prevention

Everyone should follow the 3 Ws: Wear a cloth mask, Wait six feet apart, and Wash your hands.

- All people in the facility, including staff, incarcerated people, and visitors, should wear a cloth mask at minimum, whenever possible. Staff such as onsite healthcare staff or detention officers providing direct care or in close contact with COVID-19 positive persons should follow [CDC recommendations for personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) in correctional facilities.
- Place reminders in common areas such as break rooms to stay six feet apart from others.
- Identify duties that can be performed remotely. Where possible, allowing administrative staff to work from home can be an effective social distancing strategy to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Provide staff with a supply of alcohol-based hand sanitizer so they can frequently perform hand hygiene, if possible.
- Minimize the need for sharing equipment, especially headsets. Disinfect shared equipment between uses, using a disinfectant that is [EPA-registered as effective against coronaviruses](#).

Staff should be trained on the proper use of any personal protective equipment (PPE) they may need to use.

- Staff, as well as any inmates who may need to use PPE, need to be trained on [how to put on, remove, and dispose of PPE](#). Please see the [CDC guidance for correctional facilities](#) for the latest recommendations on PPE use.
- If N-95 respirators will be used, all wearers must be [medically cleared](#) and [fit-tested by a safety officer or industrial hygienist](#). At least one facility employee should be trained to administer a [respiratory protection program](#) to advise staff on fit and use of respiratory protection. Training is available through the [NC Occupational Safety & Health Education & Research Center](#) or other similar training providers.

Consider establishing an on-site laundry option for staff so they can change out of their uniforms, launder them at the facility, and wear street clothes and shoes home.

- If this is not feasible, encourage staff to change before leaving the facility and provide a location for them to do so. This practice may help reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 between the facility and community.

Work with your local health department or occupational health provider to offer the seasonal influenza vaccine to all staff throughout the [influenza season](#) (typically October – May in NC).

[Symptoms of COVID-19 are like those of influenza](#). Preventing influenza in a facility can speed the detection of COVID-19 and reduce pressure on local healthcare resources.

- Consider hosting a worksite health event where staff can receive the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- Refer employees to <https://vaccinefinder.org/> to find opportunities to get the flu vaccine at a location convenient to them. Many insurers cover the cost of the vaccine with no copay.
- Refer to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) website for recommendations regarding worker health.
- Review [CDC's guidance for businesses and employers](#) to identify any additional strategies the facility can use within its role as an employer.

Staff illnesses

Staff should not come to work if they are sick.

- Educate staff on the symptoms of COVID-19 and [where to find the most updated list of potential COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- When staff arrive at work each day, they should be given a verbal screening and temperature check before entering the facility.
- If staff start feeling sick at work, they should leave the facility as soon as possible, self-isolate at home, and contact their healthcare provider.
- Report positive or suspected COVID-19 cases among staff to the local health department.

Review the sick leave policy that operates within your facility.

- Ensure that the sick leave policy is flexible, non-punitive, and actively encourages staff not to report to work when sick.
- Determine which officers will have the authority to send symptomatic staff home.
- Do not share staff test results with other jail staff.

Plan ahead for staff absences. Staff should stay home when they are sick. They may also need to stay home to care for a sick household member or care for children due to school and childcare closures.

- Identify critical job functions and plan for alternative coverage.
- Determine minimum levels of staff in all categories required for the facility to function safely. If possible, develop a plan to secure additional staff if absenteeism due to COVID-19 threatens to bring staffing to minimum levels.
- [Exposed staff should quarantine](#) at home after exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual. For extreme staffing shortages, review latest [CDC guidance on safety practices for critical infrastructure workers](#) (including correctional officers, law enforcement officers, and healthcare workers) who continue to work after a potential exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Consider increasing keep on person (KOP) medication orders to cover 30 days in case of healthcare staff shortages.

Consider offering revised duties to staff who are at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).

- Staff at increased risk may include older staff and persons of any age with serious underlying medical conditions including lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, severe obesity, and diabetes. Check [CDC's website](#) regularly for updates as more data become available.

Outbreak Mitigation

Make plans for how to prevent unnecessary movement of staff or detainees between housing units during a COVID-19 outbreak.

- If there are detainees with COVID-19 inside the facility, it is essential for staff members to maintain a consistent duty assignment in the same area of the facility across shifts to prevent transmission across different facility areas. This strategy is recommended at all times but required when there is an outbreak.
- Where feasible, consider the use of telemedicine to evaluate persons with COVID-19 symptoms and other health conditions to limit the movement of healthcare staff across housing units.

For more information about keeping staff in your jail or detention facility safe, please see the [CDC guidance for management of COVID-19 in correctional facilities](#).

Review [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#) for answers to frequently asked questions about employee testing and symptom reporting.