Introduction:

This document was developed by the DNR COVID-19 Safe Start Workgroup and outlines the steps DNR is taking to safely restart all phases and types of operations within the Department. This document references other documents that have been developed as part of the COVID-19 response, including but not limited to DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocols.

Unless otherwise noted, this document does not discuss any non-COVID practices/ requirements and only focuses on those practices specific to COVID-19 response. Further, this document is focused on DNR employees and public entry into DNR facilities; this document does not address COVID-related requirements for DNR contractors or volunteers. DNR’s objectives related to COVID-19, are:

1. Reduce risk of new infections of DNR employees from COVID-19;
2. Slow the spread of COVID-19 in the DNR Community;
3. Ensure DNR essential functions;
4. Provide for frequent communication to all DNR personnel

This document is categorized into four separate tiers. Each tier builds upon the previous one until all operations are returned to a normal “pre-COVID-19” state. This document is not meant to interpret the Governor’s direction, it provides internal direction to DNR employees.
Tier Movement:

Unless directed by the Commissioner of Public Lands (CPL) or the Chief Operating Officer (COO), tier movement will be determined by the process outlined below.

As requested by the CPL or COO, the SSG will provide a recommendation on tier movement based on relevant information outlined in Appendix A of this document. There is no specific timeframe that DNR will remain in a single tier; however, tier movement will be communicated to DNR employees with as much advance notice as possible.

Final determination for tier movement resides with the CPL and the COO.

DNR COVID-19 Safe Start Workgroup Members:

Special thanks to the many employees who volunteered to participate on this workgroup. Please don’t hesitate to contact any of us with questions you may have.

1. Chris Allen – Safety (SSG Lead)
2. Lauren Burnes – WCD SSG CO-Lead)
3. Susanna Fenner – Risk & Legal
4. Mona Griswold – Region Manager
5. Doug Kennedy – Uplands
6. Russ Lane – Wildland Fire Management Program
7. Lenny Young – DCOO
8. Pat Young – Facilities
9. Dale Mix – Division Manager
TIER 1 - Required Practices & Guidelines

- Employees are directed to telework unless their work includes essential functions that must be performed at DNR facilities, individually in the field, or under an approved alternate safety plan.
- Employees are to limit travel to only that required for essential functions.
- Follow all safety measures outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol. This includes utilizing PPE as needed and following other safety measures as outlined.
- Maintain social distancing if at all possible.
- Do not use meeting rooms unless pre-arranged for social distancing.
- Break rooms should have chairs removed or arranged to limit use.
- Non-DNR employees are not permitted in DNR buildings, but DNR employees can be contacted for services via phone or email.
- Have access to disinfectant products as outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol.
- Have the ability for employees to properly clean their hands. This can be accomplished by either (1) washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; or (2) using an alcohol based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. The preferred method for cleaning hands is soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- A clean workplace is essential to ensure we continue to reduce the risk of new infections and continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the DNR Community. This will be accomplished by (1) Routine daily cleaning for vehicles and other equipment before use. (2) Ventilate vehicles during and after use. (3) Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day. (4) Wipe down / clean all shared equipment before and after use. This includes things such as coffee pots, microwaves, copiers, etc. (5) Wash hands thoroughly after cleaning equipment, surfaces, etc.
TIER 2 - Required Practices & Guidelines

- **Up to** 1/3 of employees are permitted in DNR buildings.
  - Appointing Authorities (e.g., Region or Division Managers or Directors) will work with all supervisors to determine the employees who are required be in buildings.
  - Determination will be based on need but also on limitations of telework. Limitations may include but are not limited to:
    - Job/task requirements
    - Job effectiveness
    - Access to information
    - Insurmountable technology problems
  - Consider incorporating employee’s rotations on specific days or times within the day. An example of possible rotation ideas is included in Appendix B
- Employees are to limit travel to only that required for essential functions.
- Follow all safety measures outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol. This includes utilizing PPE as needed, completing daily health self-screening, and following other safety measures as outlined.
- Do not use meeting rooms unless pre-arranged for social distancing.
- Break rooms should have chairs removed or arranged to limit use.
- Non-DNR employees are not permitted in DNR buildings, but DNR employees can be contacted for services via phone or email.
- Have access to disinfectant products (wipes or an alternative disinfectant and disposable paper product) to clean surfaces as outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol.
- Have the ability for employees to properly clean their hands. This can be accomplished by either (1) washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; or (2) using an alcohol based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. **The preferred method for cleaning hands is soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**
- A clean workplace is essential to ensure we continue to reduce the risk of new infections and continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the DNR Community. This will be accomplished by (1) Routine daily cleaning for vehicles and other equipment before use. (2) Ventilate vehicles during and after use. (3) Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day. (4) Wipe down / clean all shared equipment before and after use. This includes things such as coffee pots, microwaves, copiers, etc. (5) Wash hands thoroughly after cleaning equipment, surfaces, etc.
TIER 3 - Required Practices & Guidelines

- There is no restriction on the number of DNR employees permitted in DNR buildings. DNR-Directed Emergency Telework is no longer in effect. Elective Telework may be approved in accordance with DNR’s Telework Policy.
- Follow all safety measures outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol. This includes utilizing PPE as needed, completing daily health self-screening, and following other safety measures as outlined.
- DNR facilities are reopened to the public. Public entry into DNR buildings may be restricted to designated entry points and areas. Masking is required for the public while inside DNR buildings—disposable masks are provided by DNR.
- Appointing Authorities may authorize installation of protective barriers (e.g., Plexiglas) for situations in which employees routinely interact with the public.
- Protective signs are employed as needed. Examples include signs reminding that PPE is required, signs instructing people to not enter if sick, and signs indicating what protective measures non-employees must utilize.
- Have access to disinfectant products as outlined in DNR’s COVID-19 Safety Protocol.
- Have the ability for employees to properly clean their hands. This can be accomplished by either (1) washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; or (2) using an alcohol based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. The preferred method for cleaning hands is soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- A clean workplace is essential to ensure we continue to reduce the risk of new infections and continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the DNR Community. This will be accomplished by (1) Routine daily cleaning for vehicles and other equipment before use. (2) Ventilate vehicles during and after use. (3) Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day. (4) Wipe down / clean all shared equipment before and after use. This includes things such as coffee pots, microwaves, copiers, etc. (5) Wash hands thoroughly after cleaning equipment, surfaces, etc.
TIER 4 - Required Practices & Guidelines

- The State of Washington is no longer managing COVID-19 as a pandemic.
- Facilities are open to the public in accordance with agency security practices.
- Operations are no longer restricted due to COVID-19.
- Elective Telework may be approved in accordance with DNR's Telework Policy.
- No COVID-19 PPE is required, but employees can still utilize COVID-19 PPE when/as desired.
- Regular cleaning and sanitation supplies should be available for use. This includes bathrooms having soap/water/towels, garbage emptied on a regular basis, cleaning occurs on a regular basis. Maintain self-awareness and care.
APPENDIX A – Triggers for DNR Tier

The following triggers can be used to help determine which Tier is appropriate for operations. Note that each Tier has information on both conditions and actions that are in place to help limit exposure and ensure DNR’s meets its objectives.

DNR Tier 1 – (03/2020 – 06/2021)
- Pre-vaccination
- All employees working remotely
- Some programs operating under approved alternate safety plans.
- DNR buildings closed to public
- PPE and social distancing required in accordance with COVID-19 Safety Protocol.
- Travel is limited to essential functions
- Very limited non-employee access to DNR buildings, on a case-by-case basis

DNR Tier 2 – (07/2021 – Present)
- Vaccination – Initial Stage(s), transition to all DNR employees becoming vaccinated or working under an approved accommodation.
- PPE, social distancing, and health screening required in accordance with COVID-19 Safety Protocol.
- Travel is limited to essential functions
- Up-to 1/3 of DNR Employees permitted in facilities.
- Very limited non-employee access to DNR buildings, on a case-by-case basis

DNR Tier 3 –
- Vaccination – Mid/Late Stage(s), all DNR employees are vaccinated or working under an approved accommodation.
- No limit on the number of DNR Employees permitted in buildings.
- DNR buildings reopening to the public. Public entry into DNR buildings may be restricted to designated entry points and areas. Masking required for the public, while inside DNR buildings—disposable masks are provided by DNR.

DNR Tier 4 –
- The State of Washington is no longer managing COVID-19 as a pandemic.
- Facilities are open to the public in accordance with agency security practices.
- Operations are no longer restricted due to COVID-19.
APPENDIX B – Work Shift Rotations

As DNR begins to allow employees to return into the office environment, it is likely that there will be reduced capacity requirements to ensure that employees are able to remain safe in an enclosed environment. Recognizing that each office location where DNR employees work at have their own unique physical layouts and considerations, the Safe Start Workgroup is offering the following suggestions when developing a plan to allow employees to return to the office environment.

Recommendations:

A. Familiarize yourself with employee interest in returning to the office environment. The DNR COVID survey sent to all employees in April found that many employees believe they are successfully working from home and can continue to do so for the foreseeable future. However, there were others that expressed insurmountable concerns working from home such as work-life balance. Have managers talk with employees to get an estimate of how many individuals need or want to return to the office.

Priority considerations (criteria) for returning to the office environment should be given to:
   o Those employees that do not have the appropriate technological resources to best complete their work in a remote setting;
   o Those employees that have not been able to efficiently complete their work in a remote setting; or
   o Those employees that are not able to maintain high productivity in a remote setting.

Initial priority to return to the office environment should be given to those meeting one or more of the criteria listed above. On a case-by-case basis, those employees that prefer to work in the office environment should be eligible to return to the office as capacity allows as DNR progresses through its different tiers of opening.

B. Assess the number of employees that need to/want to return to the office environment (returning employees) as DNR progresses through its tiers of opening. Work with managers within the office locations to develop and coordinate a suitable schedule/work shift plan that can ensure that the number of individuals in the office do not exceed the capacity limitations prescribed by the respective DNR tier.

Example work shifts include:
   o Allow returning employees to enter the office on alternating days;
   o Allow returning employees to enter the office on one assigned day weekly;
   o Allow returning employees to work at the office for one week straight and then work from home the following week

C. When DNR shifts between tiers, office-location managers should convene to review the current number of individuals that can be safely allowed into the office environment and reevaluate the best work shift option.

D. Each office location should try to keep a daily log of those individuals that enter the office for a duration of longer than 15 minutes to help with tracking/notification should there be an individual whom tests positive for COVID.
APPENDIX C – How to Limit Feelings of Isolation for Employees

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (see #3 in “additional resources below”):

Many of us have felt isolated at some point during the coronavirus pandemic. As COVID-19 has forcefully swept across the world, it has caused a ripple effect of loneliness for millions of people in every sector of the workforce. No one is immune from the feelings of isolation that this contagion has caused. When loneliness becomes a chronic experience, it can harm our health and well-being.

Leaders have a responsibility to help mitigate workplace isolation. They need to prioritize social connections in these unprecedented times of social distancing and remote work. Since random lunchroom run-ins and deskside drop-bys are no longer a given—even after employees are asked to return to their workplaces—new approaches will be needed to foster healthy relationships at a distance. Absent that, workplaces will feel the aftershocks of isolation and burnout long after the pandemic is over.

Why connection matters

The pandemic has impacted everyone differently, some more significant than others. Many employees have experienced increased feelings of stress and isolation due in part to the need to “Stay Home, Stay Safe.” For many employees, working with coworkers in the office was the main source of social interaction and human connection – regardless of whether you’re an introvert or extrovert we all need some level of social engagement for our well-being. When we feel connected and part of a team, it positively impacts our productivity, morale, and ultimately the service we are able to provide to the public. We are all public servants but most importantly we are all humans trying to navigate these unprecedented times as best we can. By taking a little extra effort to reach out to people, even if only by phone or computer, can help ease stress, fatigue, and build a sense of togetherness as our agency works through this. Taking a little extra time to limit isolation between you and your coworkers will go a long way at building resilience for you and your team. Resilience is how we will get through this.

What are some ways employees are building more connection with their coworkers?

- Communicate with genuine care and thought towards colleagues when engaging via email – pause before you hit “send”
- Communicate with clarity and positivity - working remotely makes it vital for communications, especially by email or chat, to be clear and positive, or they may be viewed as cold or indifferent. Salutations before jumping into business is helpful too. Happy emojis, fun photos, and generous compliments all are tools to maintain morale and build rapport. (Source: Harvard Business Review #4 in resources below)
- Supervisors are adding more time to 1:1s to check in with their employee(s) and see how they’re doing – it can be easy to fall into just discussing work but engaging in personal connection can go a long way at building trust and camaraderie.
- Use Skype’s instant messenger function for a quick note or team chat.
- Socialize with colleagues - isolation is a common problem for remote workers, so it’s more important than ever to come together. Try creating and participating in chat threads where team
members can talk about common interests. Video calls are better to connect with colleagues, even just for an end-of-day watercooler chat. They also help introverts—who'd rather not constantly socialize in surface conversation—periodically connect with team members. (Source: Harvard Business Review #4 in resources below)

- Some teams meet outdoors in a social/physical distancing environment for face to face time (this may rely on the status of the outbreak in order to ensure safety).
- Some teams have set up monthly/weekly Zoom check-ins for virtual “face to face” time.
- Establish a Book club! Pick a book you can discuss, work through concepts and engage with each other – some use leadership and development books as a theme and your group can decide on which book to choose together.
- Invite someone new to your workgroup meeting for connection and cross-pollination.
- Encourage peers and employees to reach out to each other, saying it out loud to employees gets them motivated to do that.
- Contact IT for technical issues or ideas – they can help troubleshoot issues such as which platform is best, what’s safest, what reduces risk, and what to do with low Wi-Fi.
- When in doubt, ask a colleague what they do/have seen that works!

Remember: It’s ok to take time for yourself to be healthy, it can be hard to take care of others when you can’t take care of yourself. Please make sure you are taking time for your mental and emotional well-being and reach out to family, friends, a colleague, EAP, HR, or supervisor if you’re feeling isolated.

Additional Resources and Reading:

1. COVID-19 Resources (WA Employee Assistance Program)

2. How to Receive EAP Services (WA Employee Assistance Program)

3. Dealing with Social Isolation: With millions of workers now telecommuting due to the coronavirus, business leaders must help them foster social connections (SHRM)

4. 6 Ways to Avoid Isolation Fatigue While Balancing the Demands of Remote Work (Harvard Business Review)

5. How to Prepare Yourself for a Return to the Office (Harvard Business Review)

6. Why Relational Connection Is So Important During the Coronavirus Pandemic (LinkedIn)
   - [https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-relational-connection-so-important-during-michael-stallard/?trackingId=Q1j5V4NYqI4dGWTA6DiSCg==](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-relational-connection-so-important-during-michael-stallard/?trackingId=Q1j5V4NYqI4dGWTA6DiSCg==)