



State of Idaho  
DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES  
*"Caring for America's Heroes"*



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Dear Veterans, Residents, Family Members, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors of our State Veterans Homes:

This is a follow up to our letter dated March 9, 2020.

Maintaining the health, wellness, safety and protection of our veterans', and their families', is our top priority. Due to the rapidly changing guidance available related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, IDVS is adapting our policies as new information becomes available, particularly as it pertains to visitors in our three State Veterans Homes.

Although currently, we don't have any confirmed COVID-19 cases in Idaho and we have no suspected cases of the virus in any of our Homes, there is a risk that people who appear healthy will enter nursing homes and infect residents so we are taking all necessary precautions. Studies of past viral epidemics show that early intervention through limiting interactions with each other can significantly reduce the spread of the virus (such as social distancing, restricting interaction with others, and washing hands properly).

As such, in addition to the precautionary measures we've previously implemented in our Veterans Homes, we have or are in the process of actively employing new guidance received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in the past 48 hours.

1. All individuals entering an Idaho State Veterans Home are required to utilize an alcohol-based hand sanitizer upon entry.
2. All resident family and visitors are advised and encouraged to defer their visitation until further notice.
3. Processes are being implemented to allow remote communication between residents and others.
4. A screening protocol for fever is in effect for all persons entering an Idaho State Veterans Home (to include all family, visitors, staff, contractors, vendors, and volunteers). Those exhibiting a fever of 100.4°F or higher will not be allowed to enter.
5. All persons seeking entry into an Idaho State Veterans Home (to include all family, visitors, staff, and contractors, etc.) will be asked a series of questions to determine risk. An affirmative response to any of the risk questions will require rescheduling their visit based on CDC guidance.
6. If a visitor's entry is determined to be necessary, they will be educated on proper hand hygiene and limited surface touching, as well as instructed to limit their movement within the facility to either the resident's room or a designated visitation location that will be sanitized after each visitation. Visitors will also be educated on proper PPE use according to the Homes' policy if allowed in the residents' room.

We understand that connecting with your loved ones is incredibly important and there are a variety of other ways you might consider connecting with them and our facilities will work to accommodate, whether that be via telephone, email, text and/or video conferencing.


All of us are key partners in keeping our veterans and our communities healthy and illness free. In order to assist in battling COVID-19, or any other virus, it requires vigilance from each of us. We can't stress enough the importance and responsibility each of us have in helping prevent the spread throughout our communities and within our Homes and Offices. Below are some examples of how you can be an active participant in helping our residents during your visit to the Homes, as well as practices that can be used to help prevent the spread throughout the community.

1. **Illness or sickness.** We kindly request that you do not visit the Veterans Home and minimize public interaction if you have any symptoms of respiratory illness. Those symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, and/or shortness of breath.
2. **Practice proper hand washing hygiene.** We kindly ask that all family, volunteers, contractors and visitors clean their hands before and after interaction with residents and their environment with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
3. **Coughing or Sneezing.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Please review the [CDC's information on coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).
4. **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, doorknobs, and cellphones. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. No special cleaning is necessary for COVID-19.

As always, we appreciate your strong commitment to our veterans and their families, to our communities, and to our mission.

**NOTE:** The situation regarding COVID-19 is still evolving worldwide and can change rapidly. IDVS and our Veterans Homes adapt as CMS, the CDC, and other Health Agencies push out relevant information. For the most up to date information please regularly monitor the [IDVS webpage](#) and <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>.

Sincerely,



Marv Hagedorn  
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Idaho Division of Veterans Services