



Nevada Department of Corrections

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Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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NDOC Confirms First Offender Case of COVID-19

The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) announces its first confirmed case of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in an offender housed at High Desert State Prison (HDSP) located north of Las Vegas, NV.

“Our top priority is the health of staff and offenders at our facilities,” said Charles Daniels, NDOC Director. “Our response is deliberate and in accordance with agency contingency plans and protocols. Now that we have a confirmed offender case, our next goal is mitigating and preventing the spread of the virus.”

The male offender arrived at HDSP from Clark County Detention Center on April 22, 2020. He entered HDSP’s intake unit where recently arrived offenders undergo health, mental, and physical screening. The positive test result occurred on May 18 when he was taken to a local hospital for unrelated medical care, as he was asymptomatic for COVID-19 symptoms.

NDOC’s standard operations for intake requires all offenders be in isolation for a minimum of 20 days. This timeframe allows medical staff to ensure the health assessment takes into account the generally accepted 14-day incubation period for COVID-19 symptoms to present. As the offender was still in the intake unit, no offenders in HDSP’s general population were exposed.

NDOC is working with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services and the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory on a comprehensive testing plan for offenders at all NDOC facilities. This plan, which is being finalized and will be implemented soon, aligns with the State's goal to increase testing statewide and protect vulnerable populations.

In addition to the comprehensive testing plan, NDOC has implemented the following protocols at HDSP to contain the virus thus far:

- The facility’s intake unit is currently in modified operations.
- The offender’s cellmate was moved into medical isolation in a negative airflow room in the infirmary.

The Nevada Department of Corrections is committed to building a safer community by striving to incorporate progressive best practices in all aspects of corrections. NDOC houses more than 12,000 persons with felony convictions in 18 facilities statewide. For more information visit www.doc.nv.gov.

- Staff who may have come in contact with the offender have been released from duty to begin quarantine. They will return to work only after testing negative for COVID-19 and receiving approval from NDOC's medical director.
- Staff who currently work in the intake unit have been issued full personal protective equipment, to include booties, gloves, and N-95 masks.
- The Warden and his executive team continue regularly scheduled townhalls to update staff and offenders on the developing situation and the department's pro-active response.
- All offenders housed in the affected housing unit have been tested for COVID-19 with test results pending.

NDOC will continue to monitor the situation at all facilities.

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