



Nevada Department of Corrections

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Silver State Industries Produces Gowns and Masks to Protect Nevadans During COVID-19 Pandemic

Silver State Industries, the industrial arm of the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) has launched manufacturing programs at several of its facilities to produce medical gowns and masks to help protect Nevadans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"NDOC has the experience, equipment, and manpower needed to mass-produce personal protective equipment," said Charles Daniels, Director of NDOC. "The global shortage is putting people at risk of contracting COVID-19, and our department is doing its part by helping meet this urgent demand for medical gowns and masks."

The production involves more than one hundred offenders at Lovelock Correctional Center (LCC) and Northern Nevada Correctional Center (NNCC) who work around the clock in assembly-line fashion.

Creating a medical gown requires fabric that is 65% cotton and 35% polyester, and ¼-inch elastic. This material is delivered to LCC and NNCC, where it is fed into the assembly line.



Offenders at Lovelock Correctional Center manufacture medical gowns to help protect Nevadans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two offenders start the process by cutting a cotton sheet into a 3 x 6-foot rectangle. The fabric then passes through multiple stations where offenders attach the left and right sleeves, collar, left and right wristbands, left and right arms, and belt. With all of the pieces in place, the gown is serged together with a two-up / two-down weave, and hemmed where the cloth edge is folded narrowly and sewn to prevent unravelling. Then the elastic parts are added. Next, offenders performing a quality control check, gently fold the gowns and package 100 into a box, and prepare the boxes for shipment.

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 nearly 13,000 persons with felony convictions in 18 facilities statewide. For more information visit www.doc.nv.gov.

Finally, Silver State Industry drivers pick up the medical gowns and masks from LCC and NNCC and deliver them to central processing stations where they're distributed to medical clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and other places throughout Nevada.



Part of the process for making masks involves attaching draw strings and ironing them to the fabric.

An assembly-line process involving more than 60 offenders is used to create face masks as well. On average, more than 500 medical gowns and 3,500 face masks are made every day.

"Silver State Industries had to revamp its current sewing structure in order to create the gowns and masks," said Matthew Brown, Supervisor. "We accepted this challenge, revamped the structure and created samples. When those were approved, we

went into production on March 25 and haven't stopped since. This pandemic reminded everyone that individuals can band together to create something for the common good."

Since offenders began creating the gowns and masks, they have been receiving letters from the public expressing appreciation for what they're doing. The importance of their work wasn't lost on offenders at Lovelock Correctional Center.

"This work helps me build character and the understanding that there are other things in life besides crime," said Alquandre Turner, who has worked at Silver State Industries for eight years. "I have a family, and creating masks to help other families feels good."

Offender Arnold P. Bertnick, who has worked at Silver State Industries for seven years, agreed saying he wanted to do anything he could to protect his loved ones. "This is rewarding work because we know we're helping our families and friends, and the community. It's also good experience. In the past we've created life vests, medical blankets, and other safety gear, so everyone knew how to switch to making face masks and gowns."

Creating and distributing gowns and masks are just one of many public health measures NDOC is taking during the COVID-19 pandemic. At its own facilities, NDOC suspended visitation, screens all incoming staff for symptoms of COVID-19, requires staff to wear face masks at secure facilities, and employs Surface Sanitation Teams to thoroughly clean surfaces using a 10% bleach solution. Offenders at NNCC are also creating thousands of 2-oz bottles of hand sanitizer for law enforcement and medical personnel.

To learn more about Silver State Industries, please visit www.ssi.nv.gov.

Learn about NDOC's COVID-19 response at www.doc.nv.gov/About/Press_Release/covid19_updates.

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