



Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

NEWS RELEASE # 054

Valdez Weekly Summary

For immediate release: 12/11/2020, 4:30 p.m.

Valdez, AK – Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command provides the following local weekly summary covering developments over the last seven days.

Valdez Case Count Updates & Trends

As of midnight on Dec. 10, Valdez has five active resident cases and zero active non-resident cases.

Since the time of our last weekly summary on Dec. 4, the community of Valdez received notification of four new resident cases of COVID-19, three active and one recovered.

The three active cases are all asymptomatic adults. Source for one case is attributed to travel outside Valdez. Source for the other two cases remain under investigation.

The fourth new case is a Valdez resident who tested positive while physically out of state. This case was reported to DHSS from the state where the patient is currently located. The patient already completed their isolation period while out of state, so they are counted as a recovery in the Valdez cumulative case count. Counting patients based on their home community and not their physical location is the standard procedure used by CDC and DHSS since the beginning of the pandemic to ensure case counts are not duplicated.

These new cases bring the total Valdez resident case count to 61 cumulative cases, 55 recoveries, three cumulative hospitalizations, and one death. Total non-resident (non-Alaskan) cases identified in Valdez include 31 cumulative cases, 31 recoveries, one cumulative hospitalization, and zero deaths. To view the current Valdez case count dashboard, please visit the Valdez Unified Command website (www.valdezak.gov/COVID-19).

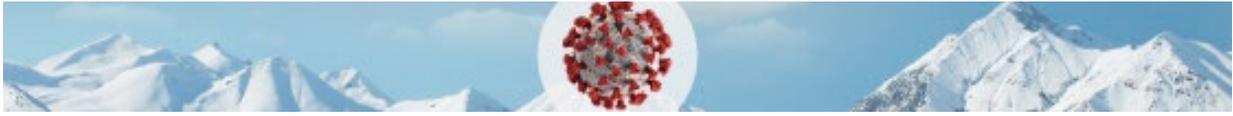
During the last seven days, two additional Alaskan resident cases were identified through testing while physically present in Valdez. However, these patients are not counted as Valdez cases as they are residents of other Alaskan communities. Instead, they are counted in the communities where they reside full time. One patient has returned to their home community to complete their isolation period. The other patient is isolating in a residence in Valdez.

Public health officials continue to believe community spread is occurring in Valdez. Most identifiable transmissions appear to be either occurring between family, friends, and co-workers or during travel. Small social events and gatherings where people let their guard down continue to be an area of concern. Travel to communities outside Valdez should also be considered a high risk activity.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Valdez Unified Command continues to closely monitor the progress of COVID-19 vaccine development. Multiple types of vaccine are being tested and submitted for authorization. According to estimates by the federal government, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may be ready before other options.

The Valdez Unified Command's Vaccine Task Force, comprised of members of the local medical community, public health, city staff, and others, continue advance planning efforts for local COVID-19 vaccine distribution. The City of Valdez recently purchased specialized refrigeration units designed to support cold and/or frozen storage of the several different types of vaccine currently in development. Once vaccine becomes available locally, community members should anticipate distribution will mirror the processes used for both open and closed flu vaccine point of dispensing practiced every fall in Valdez.



Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

A supply of vaccine could be available in Alaska as early as next week, pending FDA authorization. Once approved, vaccine supply will be very limited and made available to specific populations in a phased approach based upon federal and state guidelines. The initial distribution group, called Phase 1A, will receive the vaccination first to preserve capacity to care for patients and protect the groups at highest risk of exposure or severe illness.

On Dec. 3, the State of Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Committee met and unanimously determined a portion of the group to be included in Phase 1A in Alaska. These include:

- Hospital based front line healthcare workers at highest risk for COVID-19 infection.
- Long-term care facility residents and staff.
- EMS and firefighters who provide emergency medical services.
- Community health aides and practitioners.
- Individuals who are required to perform vaccinations.

Additional groups may be added to Phase 1A in the near future. Alaska's distribution process will not include military service members. They will be vaccinated separately through a federal allocation.

Both the Pfizer and Moderna immunizations require two doses of vaccine given over a period of time. Current science shows immunity is not immediate following vaccination and may also require future booster immunizations. CDC states cost will not be a barrier to receiving COVID-19 vaccination. The State of Alaska is working to ensure all Alaskans have access to the vaccine at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient.

Many factors related to COVID-19 vaccine distribution remain unknown. Keeping you informed is an important part of the planning process. As you explore vaccine options for yourself and your family, we encourage you to seek out credible sources for science based information, such as CDC, DHSS, and your healthcare provider. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/> and <http://covidvax.alaska.gov> for the latest updates and to view specifics on different types of vaccines.

Valdez Testing Options

Please stay home and get tested if you have even one mild symptom of COVID-19. If you think you may have been exposed to the virus, please reach out to the Valdez Public Health Nurse (835-4612) or your medical provider for guidance on next steps. Multiple options exist for both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing in Valdez. All local testing options are by appointment only and at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient. Please visit the Valdez Unified Command website to learn more: <http://www.valdezak.gov/COVID-19>.

Help Protect Valdez

Please continue to work together to protect our community and our healthcare system. Please remain extra cautious and make thoughtful decisions as you go about your day. Please continue to wear a mask which covers your mouth and nose when you are around anyone outside of your household, even if you are outdoors or can maintain six feet of physical distance. As a reminder, City of Valdez Public Health Mandate 003 remains in effect until January 6, 2021 unless otherwise extended or rescinded by Valdez City Council. Continue to keep your social circle small and consistent. Try to limit your time traveling outside Valdez to only that which is necessary.

The Valdez Unified Command remains committed to providing information, support, and resources for our community. For the most up-to-date local information, please continue to monitor the Valdez Unified Command website (www.valdezak.gov/COVID-19) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ValdezUCRG).

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