

Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

NEWS RELEASE # 068 Valdez Weekly Summary

For immediate release: 03/19/2021, 6:00 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

Since the time of our last weekly summary on Mar.12, the community of Valdez received notification of eight new resident cases and one new non-resident case of COVID-19. As of midnight on Mar. 18, Valdez has nine active resident cases and one active non-resident case.

Two of the new resident cases are asymptomatic adults, two are asymptomatic minors, and four are minors with symptoms.

Preliminary source investigation indicates:

- Five of the new resident cases linked to each other and travel outside Valdez.
- Two of the new resident cases linked to each other, but not other local cases. Source remains under investigation.
- One of the new resident cases not linked to any of the other local cases. Source remains under investigation.

The new non-resident case is an adult visitor with symptoms. Preliminary source investigation links this case to recent travel.

Seven additional resident cases were added to the Valdez case count dashboard on Mar. 19 due to DHSS data verification procedures. These cases include Valdez residents who tested positive and recovered while out of state. There is often a data entry delay for these cases, as the states where these individuals tested positive must then report the cases to DHSS. Under CDC guidelines since the beginning of the pandemic, case numbers are recorded in the patient's home of record, not in the place they were located at the time of their positive test. These are not active cases and automatically recorded in the "recovered" column of the Valdez case count dashboard.

Please Continue to Protect Our Community & Healthcare System

Many of our recent local cases have been linked to travel outside Valdez. **If you traveled recently, even within Alaska, please consider completing free COVID-19 testing.**

Continue to keep your social circle small and consistent. Continue to wear a mask which covers your mouth and nose when you are around anyone outside of your household.

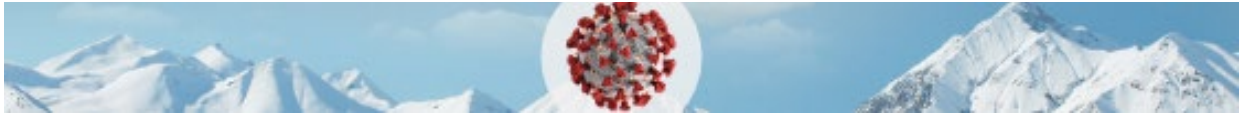
Remember to stay home if you are sick. If you have even one mild symptom or think you've been exposed to the virus which causes COVID-19, arrange to be tested at one of the multiple testing locations in Valdez. Testing promptly and working cooperatively with public health contact tracers helps ensure others at risk are quickly identified to prevent further spread.

Local COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Public health officials urge our community to consider getting vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19. To learn more about the different types of vaccines, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19>.

All those over age 16 who live and/or work in Alaska are now eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are both FDA authorized for individuals over age 18. The Pfizer vaccine is FDA authorized for individuals over age 16.

As of 5:00 p.m. today, 83 appointments remain available for the next Valdez vaccine POD clinic on Mar. 25 (first dose Moderna). Appointments will be added as Valdez receives additional vaccine allocation from the state.



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Two Valdez options exist to make vaccine appointments for those currently eligible:

- **Preferred Appointment Option:** Make a vaccination appointment online: <http://covidvax.alaska.gov>.
- **Alternate Appointment Option:** If you do not have internet access or need help with scheduling online, you can also make a vaccination appointment by calling the DHSS Valdez Public Health Center at 907.835.4612.

Valdez parents/guardians with children age 16 or 17 or others interested in receiving the Pfizer vaccine should call the Valdez Public Health Clinic to express interest. Individuals interested in receiving the Johnson & Johnson Janssen single-dose vaccine should also call the Valdez Public Health clinic to express interest. This will help determine the need to specifically request those brands of vaccine moving forward.

As of Mar. 19, the following cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered in Valdez: *(These numbers include state and IHS allocations. The numbers include both Valdez residents and those who live/work in Alaska who received vaccination in Valdez.)*

- **Pfizer-BioNTech:** 294 first doses and 182 second doses.
- **Moderna:** 1,065 first doses and 566 second doses.
- **Johnson & Johnson Janssen:** 20 doses
- **Total Number of First Dose Vaccinations Administered:** 1,359
- **Total Number of Vaccination Series Completed (second dose or single dose series):** 768

Those interested in volunteering for upcoming vaccine distribution POD clinics should contact the Valdez Unified Command volunteer coordinator, Rhea Cragun, at 907.843.3416 or rcragun@valdezak.gov. All skill levels are welcome.

New CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

On Mar. 8, CDC released the first set of public health recommendations for fully vaccinated individuals in non-healthcare settings. People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after receiving their second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson Janssen).

According to the CDC, fully vaccinated individuals can now:

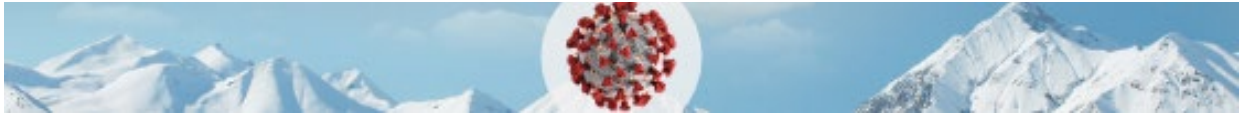
- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors (in private settings such as a home) without wearing a mask or physical distancing.
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors (in private settings such as a home) without wearing a mask or physical distancing.
- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure, as long as they remain asymptomatic.

According to the CDC, fully vaccinated individuals should continue to:

- Wear a mask, physical distance, and practice other precautions while **in public**.
- Wear a mask, physical distance and practice other precautions when around high risk unvaccinated people, when around those with high risk unvaccinated people in their household, and when visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households.
- Avoid medium and large sized in-person gatherings.
- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow guidance issued by individual employers.
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations.

Valdez Testing Options

If you think you may have been exposed to the virus which causes COVID-19 or have even one mild symptom, please reach out to the Valdez Public Health Clinic 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>.



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Local Emergency Declaration, Local Health Mandate, and Future Emergency Planning

Part of the process for responding to any emergency situation, including a pandemic, is development of a demobilization plan. This plan establishes specific priorities, responsibilities, and processes once the emergency phase of the response concludes. **A good demobilization plan is made well in advance of the actual need for demobilization so everyone knows what will happen and why.**

Valdez Unified Command leadership recently met to discuss timing, factors, and impacts involved in demobilization of the local COVID-19 emergency response effort. This leadership team, which includes representatives from the local medical community, public health, City of Valdez staff, Valdez City Schools, Prince William Sound College, and others, developed a recommendation for what will occur once our local emergency disaster declaration ends and routine operations resume.

During the regular Valdez City Council meeting on Mar. 16, Valdez Unified Command leadership presented this recommendation (presentation: <https://bit.ly/3c196sE> and video recording: www.valdezak.gov/agendas). Timing of demobilization remains dependent on local case count trends and allowing for the majority of community members who wish to be vaccinated to complete their dose series.

Following the presentation, Valdez City Council extended the Local COVID-19 Disaster Declaration until May 7. The Council also approved Amendment No. 7 to Valdez Public Health Mandate 003 (mask mandate), removing the **requirement** to mask while outdoors and establishing May 7 as the mandate expiration date unless otherwise extended or rescinded.

(CDC continues to recommend wearing a mask in both indoor public settings **and** when outdoors within six feet of others outside your household.)

The Valdez Unified Command plans to publish information about the demobilization plan – including what will change and what will stay the same – in coming weeks.

More Information

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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Contact: Allie Ferko, public information officer, Valdez Unified Command, PIO@valdezak.gov, (907) 202-0711.