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ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

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AMHS has implemented changes to our standard operating procedures to protect against the transmission of COVID-19 on our vessels. The safety of passengers and crew is the highest priority for the Alaska Marine Highway System. AMHS continues to work closely with Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to establish protocols intended to protect everyone during sailings, especially sailings that are longer in duration. AMHS highly recommends that all passengers make advanced reservations to ensure confirmed space for travel during this time as we operate with reduced vessel capacity.

Travel protocols for the Alaska Marine Highway were developed with Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) specific to ferry travel and may be more restrictive than State of Alaska travel mandates. **Please review and follow all AMHS Travel Protocols when planning to travel by ferry and State guidance for all other travel. If you are planning to travel through Canada please check the latest entry restrictions before attempting to cross the border <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/services/covid/non-canadians-canadiens-eng.html#s1>.**

Travel Protocols

* AMHS reminds Alaskans and visitors about the importance of adhering to the following protocols. If a positive case develops on a ship during transit, the health of all aboard could be impacted. This may include a required quarantine or isolation period for all aboard, with no access to public transportation for a minimum of 14 days. It is up to all passengers and crew to act responsibly so ferry service can continue in Alaska.

Travel to Alaska – Rules for travelers arriving into Alaska from another state or country can be reviewed on the state [Traveler Information page](#). Health Mandate 10.1 – International and Interstate Travel was revised on July 14, 2020. With the update the Department of Health and Social Services has relaxed testing requirements for passengers under the age of 11 years. This information can be found on the COVID-19 FAQ page under; Intrastate Travel & Testing, [Do Children have to be tested?](#) For all the latest State of Alaska health mandate details, please see the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-mandates/>. For more information about departing from Bellingham please [click here](#).

Travel within Alaska – All travel to or from a community off the road system or marine highway system is prohibited, except as necessary for critical personal needs or critical infrastructure. This mandate is in effect until rescinded. For additional details on the definitions of acceptable travel, critical personal needs, or critical infrastructure, please see the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website.

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<https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-mandates/>.

Crew Screening – When crew members report aboard a vessel, at every crew change, the purser will require evidence of a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 168 hours (7 days) prior to reporting for duty.

AMHS Passenger Screening – Passenger protocols may vary; please carefully read the following new protocols:

♦ **Shorter-duration and day-boat passenger travel** – For passengers traveling on shorter-duration and day-boat trips DO NOT require COVID-19 testing or a sworn statement of quarantine.

♦ **Departures from Bellingham, Washington** – For passengers departing from Bellingham, Washington:

- ▶ A COVID-19 test must be administered within **72-hours** of the day of departure, and a negative result must be presented upon checking in at the terminal or boarding for travel.
- ▶ The mandatory State of Alaska Traveler Declaration Form must be completed for each passenger and provided to AMHS crew at boarding. Passengers must be able to select #1(a) on the declaration form.

♦ **Longer-duration mainline routes originating in Alaska** – For passengers already in Alaska that choose to travel on longer-duration routes within Alaska and / or terminating in Bellingham, Washington, select one of the following two options:

- ▶ A COVID-19 test must be administered within **5 days** of the day of departure, and a negative result must be presented upon checking in at the terminal or boarding for travel.
- ▶ A sworn statement signed that affirms the traveler has followed quarantine standards for at least 14 days preceding the date of travel. The Passenger Screening Form for Mainline Travel must be completed before boarding the vessel.

AMHS Travel Protocols – All AMHS Travel Protocols are defined as follows:

- ▶ All in-state passengers must complete the Passenger Screening Form before boarding and must be able to respond "no" to all questions.
- ▶ All passengers (over 24 months of age) and crew **are required to wear face coverings while onboard vessels**, except when in a stateroom, in a designated smoking area or while eating. To the extent possible, AMHS will make reasonable accommodation for a passenger who is unable to wear a face covering due to a disability.

- Passengers and crew will not be allowed to go ashore during port calls. Passengers will be allowed ashore only upon arrival at their destination port.
- All passengers and crew will practice social distancing.

Testing Information – The following information pertains to testing:

- [Alaska Test Site Locator](#)
- [US Test Site Locator](#)
- [Bellingham / Whatcom County Test Site Locator](#)
- [MultiCare Indigo Urgent Care \(Family Care in Seattle Area\)](#)
- If testing is not available in your location, there are FDA authorized at home test that may be an option:
 - [Pixel system from LabCorp](#)
 - [Everlywell COVID-19 Test Home Collection Kit](#)
- Details about which tests are accepted are located at <https://covid19.alaska.gov/ufags/what-kind-of-tests-are-accepted/>

Longer-Duration – Longer-duration mainline travel is defined as follows:

- Any passenger itinerary originating in Alaska that concludes in Bellingham, Washington.
- Any passenger itinerary that includes a voyage across the Gulf of Alaska.
- Any passenger itinerary to or from the Aleutian Chain that includes the port of Kodiak.

Restricted Capacities to Create a Safer Environment

The Alaska Marine Highway has restricted vessel operating capacities to create space onboard so passengers can practice social distancing while vessels are underway. The new passenger capacities are as follows and are in effect accordingly:

- **Tazlina** – Limited to a total of 90 passengers
- **Lituya** – Limited to a total of 75 passengers
- **Tustumena** – Limited to a total of 60 passengers
- **LeConte** – Limited to a total of 60 passengers
- **Kennicott** – Limited to 125 passengers
- **Matanuska** – Limited to 125 passengers

* Due to limited capacities, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that advanced reservations are confirmed for all travel.

Risk of Disrupted Travel

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is required to immediately report any illness of persons on board our vessels to the US Coast Guard (USCG) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). New protocols have been put in place to help avoid disruptions to service or create a situation involving passengers quarantined aboard ship. All travelers and crew are expected to follow the above protocols.

A passenger or crew member who presents Covid-19 like symptoms while the vessel is underway will be isolated and crew will follow the AMHS Pandemic Response protocol. The Master of the vessel will notify the Coast Guard as required of any potential Covid-19 cases and follow their directions. The Master will also inform AMHS shore side managers once USCG is notified about the potential Covid-19 case(s).

In the event that a COVID-19 case is confirmed onboard a mainline vessel the USCG and State of Alaska DHSS have the authority to quarantine the vessel at the nearest safe port of call. This may cause a risk of disrupted travel to passengers onboard the vessel which may last an undetermined length of time until passengers and crew can be tested, all tests are negative and the vessel is cleaned and deemed safe to continue service. A disruption of travel may cause travelers additional time and unanticipated expense.

Keeping our Travelers and Employees Safe

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the main federal response agency for maritime vessels. The United States Coast Guard has forwarded precautionary information to vessel operators and AMHS is working closely with both entities to ensure our methods and materials remain consistent and current for handling new developments related to the Covid-19 coronavirus.

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) uses cleaning methods and materials that are meant to reduce the potential for acquiring communicable diseases. These cleaning methods and materials are designed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus Covid-19, Influenza A&B, Norovirus, and the multitude of other communicable diseases. AMHS has reviewed our Infection Control Plan with all vessel and shore side employees and modified our standard operating procedures to clean and disinfect passenger areas onboard state ferries and in our terminal facilities more frequently to ensure passenger safety.

Here are the multilayer cleaning protocols AMHS has implemented to keep travelers and

Here are the multilayer cleaning protocols AMHS has implemented to keep travelers and employees safe from communicable diseases:

Intensified Cleaning of our Terminal Facilities

- ▶ AMHS has implemented the use of Virox wipes for cleaning high touch areas; such as ticket counter/window areas, doors and tables. All restrooms are disinfected three times per day and wiped down routinely throughout the day.
- ▶ AMHS has implemented a NO contact policy between employees and customers and will put more distance between themselves and customers when providing assistance.
- ▶ Implemented sanitization protocol after handling customer hand luggage, boxes and freight, on top of regular washing.
- ▶ AMHS employees will no longer be handling customer credit cards, they will request that customers read the credit card details.
- ▶ Signage with protocol for boarding vessels has been added to terminals and boarding areas.

Steps Implemented Onboard our Vessels

- ▶ All restrooms are disinfected three times per day and wiped down routinely throughout the day.
- ▶ High touch areas such as handrails, counter tops, door handles, drinking fountains and vending machines are sanitized several times per day.
- ▶ AMHS has temporarily removed certain food service options such as; salad bars, self-serve and unwrapped food items from our cafes. These items can be requested from the cook, server or cashier.
- ▶ AMHS is providing continuous training of our crew regarding CDC advised cleaning practices.
- ▶ AMHS has updated the use of CDC recommended disinfecting and sanitizing products.

AMHS is currently taking bookings for our summer schedule. Our reservations call center, terminals and administrative offices all remain open on regular business hours. Reservations for travel can continue to be made by calling your local terminal, our toll-free Juneau reservations call center at 1-800-642-0066, or you can confirm reservations online.

Alaska Marine Highway System

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Contact Information

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AMHS Staff Resources 

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