

**Text of Message:**

**From:** Wildlife DIRECTOR <DIRECTOR@wildlife.ca.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2020 4:51 PM

**Subject:** CDFW COVID-19 (coronavirus) update

*This message is being sent to all CDFW employees*

CDFW Family,

This message is intended to update you on information we are receiving from various agencies regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus). It also provides guidance for working together calmly as we navigate the event. The health and safety of CDFW employees and those we serve is of the utmost concern, and we are monitoring and following the guidance of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) as the recognized expert on this matter for the State of California, and responding to guidance and direction from CalHR.

First and most importantly, please stay calm and thoughtful. Even though we are seeing new cases in our state, contracting COVID-19 is still a low risk in California.

Still, we must all do everything we can to prevent further spread of this serious virus. As you've heard many times, we ask you to please stay home if you are symptomatic or otherwise ill. Prevention is absolutely key. CDPH is continuing to update guidance at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>.

From CDPH:

*Every person has a role to play. So much of protecting yourself and your family comes down to common sense:*

- *Washing hands with soap and water.*
- *Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.*
- *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow.*
- *Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.*
- *Staying away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough.*
- *Following guidance from public health officials.*

CDFW will continue normal activities to the extent possible unless and until we are advised to do otherwise. We are adjusting our response based on the guidance provided. However, if there are easy alternative accommodations that can be made for a meeting (for example using conference calls, Skype or Webex) that will not disrupt normal business, these alternatives should be strongly considered and are in alignment with guidance we have received.

As we continue to navigate this event, it is imperative that we protect the privacy rights of our employees. Do not make assumptions about the health of fellow employees. As we continue through this event, we may learn of individuals who may have been

exposed or tested positive. If that happens, please do not share that information as it is a violation of privacy rights.

Understand this is a very serious matter and it potentially affects everyone. Please be mindful of your communications when talking about this virus, and be respectful of others and how they may be impacted. It is not a laughing matter.

For those that are having a difficult time emotionally or personally due to the COVID-19 situation, please consider accessing the Employee Assistance Program, free to all state employees (<http://www.eap.calhr.ca.gov/home-page.aspx>).

Again, we ask and recommend that any employee experiencing illness please stay home.

As the situation develops, guidance is expected to change. We have created an internal task force to provide information to staff, answer questions as we are able and assist with guidance. We will be providing updates like the one attached to keep you as informed as possible. The attached update includes current guidance on prevention of COVID-19, teleworking, time off, travel restrictions, large gatherings and more.

Please continue to watch for these updates in the near future. Please contact [COVID-19@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:COVID-19@wildlife.ca.gov) with any questions, and again, it is of the utmost importance that we remain calm and thoughtful as we navigate through this rapidly changing event.

Thank you.

Chuck

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**Attachment to message**

**CDFW Staff Covid-19 Update #1**

**March 11, 2020**

Background

California is responding to the spread of a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which is known now to have spread internationally and in the United States, including multiple counties in California. Much information and recommendations are being generated regarding public health issues about the virus, and actions that federal, state, and local agencies are taking.

CDFW has established an internal taskforce that will monitor and message out to staff information from various sources and develop recommended actions to protect CDFW staff and mission-critical functions.

This CDFW All Staff COVID-19 Update is intended to provide you with summarized information that is helpful to you as a state employee. It is not intended as a universal source of information but aims to highlight information important for Department staff to

be aware of. This update will be distributed to all staff on a weekly basis at minimum, and possibly more often as needed.

### Preventing Spread of COVID-19

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends the following measures to protect yourself and minimize the spread of COVID-19:

- Washing hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or into your elbow.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying away from work, school, or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough.
- Following other guidance from public health officials.

While much is still unknown about COVID-19, older individuals and individuals with some underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes seem to be at greater risk of serious illness.

### If You or Your Family Are Ill

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and have reason to believe you have been exposed, call your health care provider or local public health department first before seeking medical care so that appropriate precautions can be taken. Local health agencies will determine whether hospitalization or home isolation is appropriate. An employee who is subject to quarantine or self-monitoring as issued from a local public health department will be provided ATO, and telework will be considered consistent with department policy (for more information on ATO, see <http://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/ManualItem/1/2121>). In addition to leave credits, employees who are caring for a family member with a serious health condition, which could include family members testing positive for COVID-19, may be eligible for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or California Family Rights Act (CFRA). Employees can work with the human resources office to determine if they meet eligibility.

### Travel

Regarding travel for state work, the California Department of Human Resources has provided this guidance:

- No travel restrictions within California
- Travel essential to job function should not be canceled
- Non-critical travel may be canceled at the discretion of supervisors/managers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided [guidance](#) related to international travel. The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to South Korea, Italy, Iran, and the People's Republic of China. The Department will

continue to review all previously approved travel blankets and individual out-of-state travel requests, and defer all mission critical and discretionary travel to the named countries until notified. Regarding personal, discretionary travel, an employee who chooses to travel to a high-risk area after knowing the risks and becomes subject to quarantine will not be provided ATO and the employee should contact the Department's human resources office regarding leave options.

### Telecommuting

CDFW is following CalHR's recommendation and exploring telecommuting for high-risk individuals. Further direction on this issue will be forthcoming. Currently, CDFW has no plans in place for large-scale telecommuting due to COVID-19 threats, and standard telecommuting policies remain in place. However, this situation is fluid and continuity planning is a priority for Department programs.

### Meetings

At this time, CDPH is not directing that meetings or events be cancelled unless they are in a county with community transmission. However, if you are organizing or otherwise involved in a future large meeting or mass gathering, please read these guidelines from the CDPH and take action accordingly: [\(PDF\) guidance for large events](#).

### School Closures

Sudden school closures could disrupt work schedules and increase absenteeism. If you are being impacted by a school closure, please work with your supervisor to explore work schedule options.

### More Information:

If you have questions or concerns regarding COVID-19, please discuss with your supervisor. You may also direct questions to [COVID-19@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:COVID-19@wildlife.ca.gov).

CDPH is issuing daily updates on COVID-19, which can be viewed here: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/New-Release-2020.aspx>.

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains COVID-19 information here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Many local public health agencies also have information on COVID-19, including recommendations based on local conditions.