

# DOC COVID-19 Response Timeline

Updated August 8, 2020

The below is an outline of significant events related to the COVID-19 pandemic and actions taken by the Department in order to mitigate the spread of the disease and keep the people that live and work its facilities safe. This timeline will be updated on a weekly basis, as appropriate, as long as the public health state of emergency remains in effect.

- March 1 - 7
  - DOC rolls out COVID-19 sanitation training for certain staff members and people in custody.
  - DOC begins providing staff, visitors, and people in custody with information on COVID-19 and guidance on preventing the spread of this illness
  
- March 8 - 14
  - First COVID-19 related death of a DOC staff member occurs
  - DOC and Correctional Health Services (CHS) provide updates on COVID-19 preparedness to BOC and relevant City Council committee chairs
  - DOC activates its protocol regarding provision of N95 masks to staff assigned to court and transportation commands
  - Social distancing protocols for certain congregate spaces implemented in all DOC facilities and commands
  - CHS begins COVID-19 testing
  - A COVID-like symptom screening process is implemented for all in-person visits to people in custody
  
- March 15 - 21
  - Mayor de Blasio signs Executive Order No. 100, exempting DOC from various BOC Minimum Standards requiring the provision of certain congregate services and in-person visitation
  - DOC implements telework operations for all non-essential employees
  - DOC begins making daily notifications to BOC of information related to COVID-19
  - CHS begins COVID-19 screening for all clinical encounters
  - DOC and CHS implement a COVID-like symptom screening for all persons entering jail facilities
  - DOC begins releasing sentenced people in custody into a community release program, per the Commissioner's authority outlined in state law
  - DOC orders masks be worn in close contact areas
  
- March 22-28
  - Eric M. Taylor Center (EMTC) is reopened to house people in custody who are symptomatic and/or COVID-confirmed
  - DOC modifies its new admission housing process and designates Manhattan Detention Center as the primary intake facility for male asymptomatic individuals entering custody; housing units for newly admitted females are designated for the same purpose at the Rose M. Singer Center (RSMC)

- DOC begins distributing the DOC End of the Day Report Newsletter, which includes data on the spread of COVID-19 among DOC staff and people in custody, information regarding the Department's response to COVID-19, and general COVID-19 information, to all DOC staff, uniform union leadership, and members of the Board of Correction
- CHS implements a COVID-like symptom screening for patients upon discharge
- DOC launches a newly developed at-home televisit program to support connections between people in custody and their loved ones
- March 29 – April 4
  - In accordance with newly announced public health guidelines by the City, DOC advises staff that they and individuals in custody are required to wear face masks at all times and provides mask distribution information
  - CHS establishes a dedicated phone line to provide additional medical support to individuals in asymptomatic exposed housing
- April 5 - 11
  - First death of a person in custody presumed to be related to COVID-19
  - Northwell Health-Go First Responder hotline is active for staff to schedule COVID-19 testing free of charge
  - Burials on Hart Island transition to external workers
  - CHS establishes a dedicated mental health phone line to further support individuals in symptomatic and COVID-19 positive housing from their unit
- April 12-18
  - DOC implements enhanced social distancing guidelines in its facilities and posts information in every housing area, including guidance that encourages limits to the number of people in common areas like dayrooms
- April 19 – 25
  - DOC Chaplain begins to provide blessings over burials on all burial days on Hart Island
  - Painting of social distancing cues is completed in all day rooms and intakes
  - PPE distribution locations are reiterated and supplies are added to all housing units for ease of access for staff and people in custody
- April 26 – May 2
  - COVID-19 testing begins for all new admissions to RMSC
- May 3 – May 9
  - COVID-19 testing begins for all new admissions to all Department facilities
  - Nunez Monitor provides letter to federal judge overseeing Nunez case with updates on DOC and CHS efforts to contain COVID-19 within the City's jails
- May 26-30
  - Free COVID-19 antibody testing is made available to DOC and CHS staff in the borough facilities and on Rikers Island
- July 5-11
  - DOC begins providing people in custody with a weekly informational flyer related to COVID-19