August 23, 2022

TO: All Prison Staff
    All Incarcerated Individuals
    Statewide and Family Councils

FROM: Donald Holbrook, Deputy Assistant Secretary
      Prison Division

SUBJECT: Update on Masking Requirements in Prisons

Thank you for your patience as we work to update our COVID-19 guidance to reflect current Centers for Disease Control guidance.

On August 22, 2022, Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) adopted updated masking guidance for prison facilities in line with the Centers for Disease Control guidance for Correctional and Detention facilities. However, DOC also advised that masking would still be required during visitation by DOC staff, incarcerated individuals and visitors.

We are amending this guidance as follows.

- If community levels are low (green) and there is minimal evidence of COVID-19 activity in the resident population in each individual facility, masking will be offered but not required in general areas or in visitation room. Masking will still be required in medical, quarantine and isolation areas.

This means that staff, incarcerated individuals and visitors do not need to be masked during visitation if community levels are low, but will be required to mask if the facility is in an outbreak or cluster status. Current community levels can be found at this link.

We apologize for the confusion this caused and appreciate your patience as we worked through this most recent update to our guidelines.