



News Release

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

September 27, 2020

For more information: Jennifer Black, 503-569-3318, Jennifer.Black@doc.state.or.us
Betty Bernt, 971-719-3521, Betty.A.Bernt@doc.state.or.us

Snake River Correctional Institution reports in-custody death

An Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) adult in custody (AIC) died on September 27, 2020. He was incarcerated at the Snake River Correctional Institution and passed away at a local hospital. He tested positive for COVID-19. He was between 65 and 75 years old. As with all in-custody deaths, the Oregon State Police have been notified, and the Medical Examiner will determine cause of death. This is the ninth AIC to die who tested positive for COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 cases inside Oregon's prisons, please visit DOC's [COVID-19 website](#). The agency is responsible for the care and custody of 14,000 adults in custody who are incarcerated in 14 institutions across the state.

Institutions continue to clean and disinfect numerous times a day. DOC asks AICs to report symptoms of COVID to medical staff. Posters are in all DOC institutions encouraging individuals to maintain proper hygiene and to uphold appropriate social distancing to the extent possible. Health screening processes are in place before staff are allowed to enter facilities. Visiting remains closed until further notice.

DOC requires employees and AICs to wear masks if they cannot maintain six feet of social distancing. Wearing masks is mandatory at all times in health services areas, some work areas, and in food services areas. Cloth masks have been provided to AICs and staff. If an AIC becomes ill and exhibits flu like symptoms, then CDC and OHA guidance for supportive care are followed.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, DOC issued a press release when an AIC passed away. This notification would include the person's name, county of conviction, sentence length, and date of death. However, no cause of death would be listed because the Medical Examiner makes that determination. In order to balance the desire for transparency with our legal obligation to protect personal health information, we have changed the AIC death notification process when someone dies who has tested positive for COVID-19. DOC is working with the Oregon Health Authority to publish COVID-19 related data and information on the OHA website.