



News Release

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

January 26, 2021

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

Two Rivers Correctional Institution reports two in-custody deaths

An Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) adult in custody (AIC) died January 26, 2021. He was incarcerated at Two Rivers Correctional Institution and passed away at a local hospital. He tested positive for COVID-19 and 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. Department-wide, this is the fortieth AIC to die who tested positive for COVID-19.

An Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) adult in custody (AIC) died January 26, 2021. He was incarcerated at Two Rivers Correctional Institution and passed away at a local hospital. He tested positive for COVID-19 and was between 55 and 65 years old. As with all in-custody deaths, the Oregon State Police have been notified, and the Medical Examiner will determine cause of death. Department-wide, this is the forty-first 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 13,000 adults in custody who are incarcerated in 14 institutions across the state. Oregon's prisons have not escaped the devastating impacts of COVID-19. More than half of DOC's incarcerated population have been identified as COVID-19-vulnerable, based on community standard criteria. Generally, incarcerated people are in worse health than their peers in the community, and Oregon has one of the oldest incarcerated populations in the country. DOC employees will continue to work to bring outbreaks under control as positive cases in prisons not only impact employees and AICs, but also the surrounding communities.

Anyone entering DOC property is required to wear a mask or face covering in any indoor work setting or other indoor premises regardless of distance from others unless they are in a private, individual office not shared by anyone else; or they are actively eating or drinking AND at least six (6) feet of distance can be maintained between other people.

Institutions continue to clean and disinfect numerous times a day. DOC asks AICs to report symptoms of COVID-19 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. This screening includes a temperature check and a screening questionnaire. Visiting remains closed until further notice.

DOC has begun administering COVID-19 vaccinations – eventually offering to all DOC staff, contractors, Oregon Corrections Enterprises employees, and AICs. Prioritization of vaccines is determined by guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Governor's Office.

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

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 works with the Oregon Health Authority to publish COVID-19 related data and information on the OHA website.

####