

To: The Alaskan Commercial Fishing Fleets

Our industry and communities are facing an unprecedented challenge in the COVID-19 pandemic. With the 2020 salmon season nearly here, we must all take extra precautions to ensure the health and safety of our crews, and the communities we work within. Fishing during the COVID-19 pandemic will not be “business as usual,” and we must all commit to a high standard of caution and personal responsibility. Recently, the State of Alaska made major progress in that regard by announcing [Health Mandate 17](#), which implements protective measures for independent commercial fishing vessels as well as requiring operators to sign an [Agreement Form \(Appendix 02\)](#). This mandate is based on extensive input from medical professionals and commercial fishing trade associations. **It is crucial that you take the time to read and understand the entire mandate. As a vessel operator, you are responsible for your crew’s compliance with the mandate.**

To help you through that process, we have put together a summary of what is required. This is not a complete list, however, and should not substitute your own reading and understanding of the document. There are three elements of the mandate: planning, documentation/reporting, and compliance.

Planning

Above all, you need to go into the season with a plan. You must:

- Know what is required of you. Familiarize yourself with the mandate and have a plan to implement the protocols;
- Know what the local rules and mandates are in the community in which you are fishing;
- If you or your crew is traveling from out of state, know where are you going to quarantine in Alaska, what work you can do while you’re in quarantine and what precautions you’ll need to take, and how you will get food, supplies and tools while in quarantine without having contact with the community;
- Know what you will do if you or your crew gets sick.
- Have a plan for obtaining appropriate personal protective equipment and thermometers so that you can effectively screen crew during quarantine and illness.

You will also need to have enough sanitation and washing materials to keep your crew and others safe throughout the season by following sanitation guidelines in the mandate.

Documentation and Reporting

The new mandate requires some documentation and reporting. Make sure you keep a record of the following:

- Screening of crew upon arrival, self-quarantine period, and illness;
- Signed acknowledgment form (Appendix 02) to show law enforcement or ADFG;
- Sufficient quantity of printed signed acknowledgment forms to provide to processors or tenders;
- Crew documentation indicating that they are a Critical Infrastructure worker as defined under [State Health Mandates](#); and

- Vessel travel days if counting towards 14-day self-quarantine.

You will also be required to report that your vessel is in self-quarantine if you have contact with other vessels, processor, or harbors, and must check-in with harbormasters prior to ports of call.

Compliance

Compliance is where the planning hits the water and is the most important element of ensuring good health and safety. The mandate is detailed and provides guidance on certain technical aspects of the protocol, like screenings and actions needed for ill crewmembers, but it also contains some mandatory elements that are essential for the health and safety of the communities and our fellow fishermen. These include:

- Face coverings for travel to and from your destination;
- Training the crew on the requirements of the mandate;
- Twice daily screenings for yourself and crew while in self-quarantine;
- Flying a lima flag if boat is in quarantine;
- Not leaving the vessel when in town for non-essential items (if you live in the community, then you must adhere to Health Mandate 11 related to social distancing);
- Procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting the vessel; and
- Disinfecting any new supplies that arrive on board.

Our harvests this summer will provide vital food production for Alaska, the nation and the world, and it is essential that we maximize our ability to do so. However, we can only operate if it can be done safely and with the health of the communities and our fellow crew as the top priority. We at UFA are here to support you in your efforts and want to serve as a resource. We have all of the up to date COVID-19 information available on [The UFA Website](#) including the mandates and their related FAQ's. Please reach out if you need further assistance in understanding these mandates.

Matt Alward, President
United Fishermen of Alaska