



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten the health and well-being of Valdez, with cases surging locally, as well as across the state and nation; and

WHEREAS, the delta variant is highly contagious and can more easily spread between people as compared to previous strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus; and

WHEREAS, Providence Anchorage Medical Center has publically stated the number and severity of patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 now exceeds their resources and their ability to staff beds with skilled caregivers to the point they are now forced to implement crisis standards of care; and

WHEREAS, availability of hospital resources in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the greater Pacific Northwest, may impact the ability of Providence Valdez Medical Center to transfer critical patients suffering from not just COVID-19 but all types of serious illness or injury, for more specialized, potentially life-saving care; and

WHEREAS, many of our local healthcare professionals are overwhelmed and burnt out following 18 months of fighting the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, many local Valdez businesses have recently had to make the tough decision to temporarily close their doors due to employee illness or COVID-19 exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Valdez School District has been at the red operational level, which includes universal masking requirements, for several weeks with many students and staff absent due to illness or quarantine; and

WHEREAS, to avoid more drastic steps and the issuance of local health mandates, we must all do our part **now** to meet the goals of (1) keeping local schools open to in-person learning, (2) keeping the doors of local businesses open, and (3) ensuring our local hospital maintains the ability to treat those sick or injured; and

WHEREAS, our community holds dear our long-standing tradition during challenging times of putting aside our differences and coming together for the greater good.

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Valdez hereby issues this Proclamation, imploring our residents and visitors to work together over the next four weeks as follows:

1. **Please avoid going to work or school when sick or exposed to COVID-19.** Get tested to rule out COVID-19. Many people honestly mistake mild symptoms as a common cold and transmit the virus unintentionally to others. Symptomatic testing is available at multiple locations in Valdez at no cost to the patient. Monitoring infection rates through testing provides critical data our local medical professionals use to make important decisions and prepare for the health needs of our community.
2. **Please follow CDC guidelines related to testing, isolation, and quarantine.** CDC guidelines as of September 18, 2021 can be found here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

3. **Please consider implementing workforce policies for your business or organization to encourage employees to stay home and get tested if sick.** Investing in the health of your employees can sometimes mean the difference between your business staying open and having to close your doors due to absent employees.
4. **Please be respectful of those conducting contact tracing.** These public health workers are doing an important job and must comply with privacy rules to protect your identity and health information. Please answer their call and help them notify others who might be at risk.
5. **Please wear a mask indoors, regardless of your vaccination status.** Masks are not perfect, nor foolproof, but they do help. Masks are especially important if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19, are not vaccinated, or have recently participated in large gatherings or other activities where transmission occurs more frequently.
6. **Please be respectful of mitigation guidelines established by local businesses and organizations while in their establishments.** Businesses and organizations are trying their best to keep their workforce and patrons healthy. They have authority to establish their own mitigation measures and may continue to trespass individuals who fail to follow guidelines.
7. **Please consider COVID-19 vaccination for you and your family.** Vaccination is the best way of preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19. Please make informed decisions based upon factual information. Speak with your trusted medical provider about your specific situation and the benefits and risks of vaccination. All brands of vaccine are readily available in Valdez at no cost to the patient. Booster vaccinations are also available for high-risk individuals who qualify under current CDC guidelines.
8. **Please consider COVID-19 vaccination even if you have had COVID-19 in the past.** Natural antibodies from a past infection provide an undisputable layer of protection. Addition of even one dose of COVID-19 vaccination in combination with natural antibodies lengthens and strengthens protections against the virus.
9. **Please carefully consider risk regarding indoor events and social functions.** In order to protect yourself, your family, and our community, carefully consider the risks versus benefits when attending social functions. If you are hosting an event, consider keeping it small in size or moving it outdoors. Please also consider consulting the City's COVID-19 Event Mitigation Guide (available for free on the city website) to reduce the risk of exposure at your event.
10. **Please do what Valdezeans do best – work together to support each other so we can keep our community healthy, our children in school, and our businesses open.**

DATED this 23rd day of September, 2021.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA

Sharon Scheidt, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sheri L. Pierce, MMC, City Clerk