

March 20, 2020 • Information for Pierce County Healthcare Providers

Communicable Disease Control • (253) 798-6410

Communicable Disease Control
 3629 S. D St. • Tacoma, WA 98418
 (253) 798-6410 • (253) 798-7666 fax

COVID-19 Updates for Providers

Requested actions

Saturday, March 21, Tacoma-Pierce County is setting up a drive-thru COVID-19 testing site for people who work in critical industries or who are in a high-risk group.

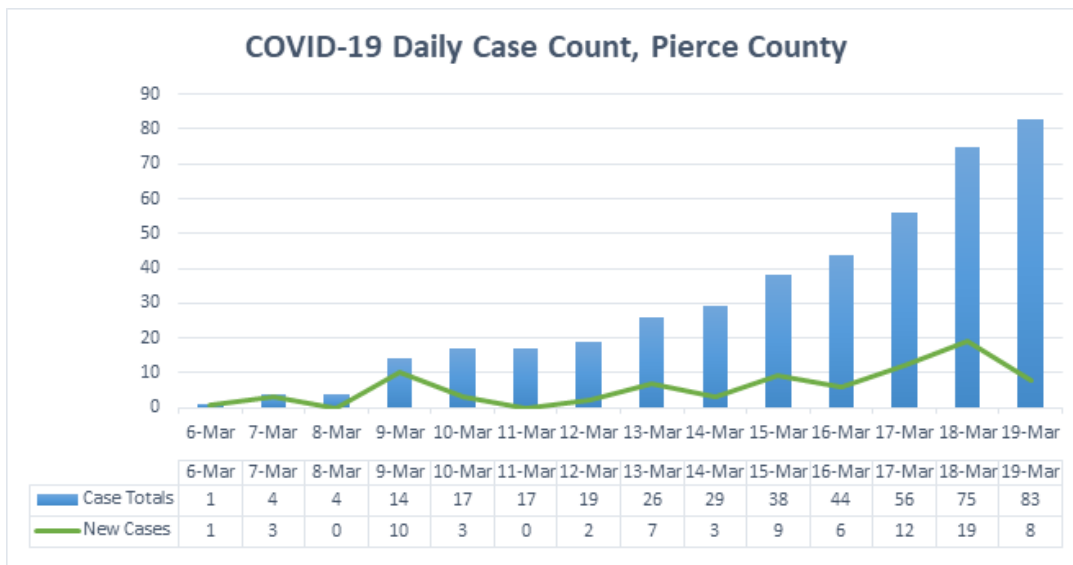
Testing is for people who have symptoms—fever, cough, shortness of breath—**AND**:

- Work in healthcare.
- Work in public safety (e.g., law enforcement, firefighter, EMS, pharmacist).
- Work in critical infrastructure (e.g., grocery store, restaurant, gas station, public utility, homeless shelter).
- Are in a high-risk group (e.g., over age 60, underlying health condition, pregnant).

Testing is not open to the general public. Limited tests are available. People in the above categories must [complete an online survey](#) to determine eligibility. Those who qualify will receive an identification number to present at the testing site.

Situation update

COVID-19 infections have significantly increased in Pierce County. As of March 20, we have 83 cases and 1 death.



Reporting

Providers, including emergency departments, should call (253) 798-6410 to report COVID-19 cases in the following people:

- Healthcare personnel (e.g., EMS, medical, nursing, any healthcare facility employee).
- Lives or works in a long-term care facility, senior living center, permanent supportive housing or similar congregate setting (shelter, correctional facility) housing people at high risk for severe outcomes.
- Public safety personnel (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter).
- Anyone who died with COVID-19.

Guidance for healthcare workers

- Instruct employees to check for any signs of illness before reporting to work each day. If sick, they must immediately notify their supervisor.
- **Healthcare workers with a high or medium risk exposure to COVID-19** should check their temperature twice a day. If they develop fever (measured temperature >100.0°F or subjective fever) **OR** respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must immediately self-isolate and notify their supervisor.
- **Asymptomatic healthcare workers with an exposure to COVID-19** may continue to work after alternate staffing options have been exhausted, and in consultation with their occupational health program. They should check their temperature twice a day. If they develop any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must immediately cease patient care activities, don a facemask and notify their supervisor or occupational health services.
- Instruct healthcare workers who develop fever, cough or shortness of breath and have **no known exposure to COVID-19** not return to work until 3 days after fever resolves or 7 days after symptom onset, whichever is longer.
- Ensure your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance, and employees know about the policies.
- Develop and review your facility's emergency plan. COVID-19 could lead to staff absenteeism. Prepare alternative staffing plans to ensure as many staff are available as possible.
- See [updated guidance for healthcare workers and first responders on returning to work](#).

Patient communication

Share these educational materials with patients.

- [What to do if you have COVID-19.](#)
- [What to do if you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.](#)
- [What to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19 and haven't been exposed or tested.](#)

Contacting the Health Department after business hours

- **Urgent issues**—Call (253) 798-6410 and press 0 to reach a live person.
- **Non-urgent issues**—Call (253) 798-6534 and leave a message. Includes reporting notifiable conditions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Leave the patient's name, date of birth and disease.

Additional resources

- [Our COVID-19 page for providers.](#)
- [CDC's guidance for providers and facilities.](#)
- [DOH's COVID-19 page.](#)
- [CDC's COVID-19 page.](#)