



# Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

## Office of the Secretary

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## OOS INFORMATION BULLETIN

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Updates

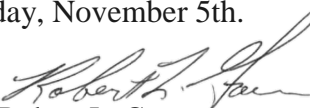
I want to thank each of you for your commitment and continued work through this very challenging time. Your work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within our facilities and your dedication to maintaining the safety of our communities has been incredible. This Department continues to be guided by our Maryland Department of Health (MDH) partners, the Center for Disease Control, and what we continue to learn about this disease. Our focus on the immediate future continues to evolve.

Governor Hogan has announced in his draft *COVID-19 Vaccination Plan* that our Department will be part of the phase I vaccination rollout. Immunization with a safe and effective vaccine is another critical component of containing and limiting the spread of COVID-19 related illnesses. Phase I vaccination efforts will target those individuals at highest risk of developing complications from COVID-19 and essential workers in public safety, education, and congregate care facilities.

Effective immediately, we will make some adjustments in our safety protocols based on the best science available. We will continue to utilize the best equipment and to employ the best practices in virus mitigation. We have previously permitted goggles to be utilized as a substitution for face-shields. Unfortunately, emerging research shows the full-face shield provides superior protection (an additional barrier to the eyes, nose, and mask/mouth). A full-face shield also helps to prevent employees from unconsciously touching their faces. While many employees have continued to use the face-shield, it will, once again, become the required “approved eye protection” in our correctional facilities.

Additionally, scientists are continuing to evaluate the efficacy of neck-gaiters in preventing the spread of the virus. While neck-gaiters may provide some limited level of protection, that level is inadequate for use in congregate care facilities. Effective immediately, neck gaiters will no longer be allowed as a substitute for a cloth face covering or surgical mask.

Administrators will ensure we are fully compliant with these personal protective equipment changes by Thursday, November 5th.

  
Robert L. Green  
Secretary

**Distribution: A, B**