

NPS Public Health Update

The National Park Service (NPS) strives to ensure the safety of its visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners. When the NPS is responding to an ongoing public health incident, this page will provide timely updates about NPS response activities and links to specific information about parks that may be involved.

The NPS coordinates closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local public health authorities, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As of March 11, 2020

The CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) that was first detected in China and has expanded internationally, including in the United States.

The **NPS Office of Public Health**, Office of Risk Management, and the Division of Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services, in conjunction with the Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Occupational Safety and Health and Office of Emergency Management (OEM), are responsible for managing and supporting activities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, and respond to such hazards. Over the last couple of weeks, they have been actively engaged and coordinating efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

- National parks are open and facilities are maintaining continuity of operations.
- The NPS Office of Public Health and the US Public Health Service officers assigned to the NPS are closely monitoring the situation and keeping staff informed, relying on the most updated data and information from the **CDC**, **OPM**, OEM, and state and local public health authorities.
- The NPS is focused on ensuring employees, their families, volunteers, and visitors are safe by following the most current guidance from the CDC, OPM, OEM, and other federal, state, and local health authorities.

Public Health Preparation and Response

Visitors can be assured that facilities in national parks, including lodges and restaurants, continue to monitor conditions and maintain high standards related to the health and wellness of staff and visitors. Park and concession staff are working to maintain clean and healthy facilities in parks in accordance with CDC guidance. Following CDC

guidance, NPS Public Health Service Officers recommend that everyone should take the following routine precautions:

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Wash with soap and water to destroy the virus. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.
 - While an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol can be used, it's best to reserve those resources for work locations where soap and water are not readily available.
 - If your hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be used rather than hand sanitizer.
- As always, it is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Regular household cleaners will destroy the virus.
- The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- **Most importantly, stay home when you are sick in order to avoid exposing others.**

Other Federal Resources and Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) at the Department of Health and Human Services is the lead federal agency with responsibility for public health.

What the U.S. Government is Doing

GSA has created a **landing page on USA.gov (Español)** for government-wide information related to COVID-19 activities.