



## **COVID 19 Mitigation Plan**

### **PLAN INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

The COVID 19 Mitigation Plan outlines the steps the VMHA will take prior to reopening the Valdez Museum & Historical Archive and the protocol to follow once opened. The plan is a dynamic document that should be regularly reviewed and refined as needed so that VMHA Staff can respond promptly and thoughtfully to changes brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Plan directives and considerations are based upon science and directives from public health officials, medical experts and Federal, State and Local governments along with research and recommendations by AAM, AASLH, OSHA and others.

The Plan includes an assessments and situation analysis of the following categories:

- Health and Safety Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors
- Communication: Internal & External
- Cleaning Protocols
- New Workplace Directives for Staff and Volunteers
- Training for Staff
- Access and Capacity
- Social Distancing and Restricted Contact
- Modification of the Museum's Program of Work
- New Signage
- Coordinating the Effort

In summary, all of the areas take into consideration the health and safety of Staff/Volunteers and Visitors. The Plan outlines the steps for facilities preparedness, including cleaning protocols, new work place and operational directives.

Section one is an assessment period, entitled Assessment Prior to the Plan. Section two is Implementation of the Plan.

# SECTION 1

## Assessment Prior to the Plan

### **Human Resources and Preparedness**

During this phase and prior to reopening the Museum and implementing a Covid-19 Mitigation Plan, the Valdez Museum staff will assess the situation, staff and facilities and educate and train on revised operations and new protocols. The VMHA will communicate changes to the public and potential visitors. Staff will practice new protocols and familiarize themselves with their new roles and routines, allowing for a learning curve prior to opening the Museum to the public. This approach affords the Museum the opportunity to analyze, adapt and adjust operations as necessary, and gives Museum staff the chance to refine each respective phase before moving on to the next.

The initial strategy is a phased approach for the reopening of the Museum. Staff with the ability to effectively perform their duties remotely and from home will be encouraged to do so. Staff schedules will be coordinated to minimize physical contact with coworkers and the public. The VMHA will continue to hold virtual meetings.

The VMHA will share essential information with staff, board, potential visitors, public, and community prior to reopening. Specifically, the VMHA will convey clearly to all what the Museum is doing to promote safety and well-being for its staff and guests.

The Valdez Museum staff will draft a Covid-19 Mitigation Plan for review by the Board and other entities as directed by the State of Alaska.

### **Facility Preparedness**

The VMHA staff will perform an initial walk-through of all public spaces, exhibits, offices, restrooms and entrances and exits. Thereafter, they will recommend changes needed to satisfy the safe reopening of the Museum.

VMHA staff will confer with City of Valdez Maintenance to assess the status of the Museum environment and HVAC systems and the scheduled maintenance.

## **SECTION 2**

### **Implementation of the Plan**

#### **Health and Safety Staff, Volunteers and Visitors**

Guests and staff will be required to follow specific safety guidelines, designed for their health and well-being.

All Staff, Volunteers & Contracted Labor will be required to sign in daily and answer a set of questions linked to their health. The VMHA will implement a plan to monitor signs and symptoms of Museum staff.

Staff, especially those who interact regularly with the public will have access to personal protective equipment such as facemasks, disposable gloves and individual hand-sanitizers for their workstations. Both staff and visitors will be encouraged to wash their hands often using hot water and soap for 20 seconds.

The VMHA will source and purchase sufficient PPE and cleaning supplies that can be used throughout the day to keep staff and visitors safe and support scheduled cleaning. Barriers will be provided to maintain distance between staff and visitors.

To that end the Valdez Museum will implement the following actions:

#### **Face Coverings**

Policies regarding face masks will be dictated by national, state and local guidance. Upon their return to work staff will be provided with face masks and be required to wear them during hours of operation. Guests will be required to wear face coverings, which they must provide while on site. This policy will be in effect until further notice.

#### **Other health and safety measures**

The Museum will review and explore other safety measures as the situation evolves. They will be vetted and included in the plan as deemed appropriate and with guidance from the State's mandate attachment "O and E."

#### **Communication**

##### **INTERNAL**

The VMHA Executive Director will notify the Board and governing body of its intention to move to reopening at 25% triggered by an official signal from the State of Alaska. Upon approval, the VMHA Marketing Coordinator will announce the planned reopening of the Museum to the staff, volunteers and public.

The Museum Services Manager will notify custodial staff and City Maintenance Crews of the timeline and guidelines for reopening.

## **EXTERNAL**

The Marketing Coordinator will ensure broad communication of any adjustments to access, capacity, schedule, procedures, assignment and protocols at the Museum for visiting public. Communication includes a variety of marketing strategies.

### **Cleaning Protocols**

Cleaning and sanitation will be conducted in a highly visible and reassuring manner. Areas that have high foot traffic will be disinfected 3 times per day prior to opening, midday and after 4:00 pm, when final guests of the day have departed. These timings will be reviewed and considered with the number of visitors present in mind that particular day.

In addition to high-traffic areas, all knobs, handles and work-surfaces are to be sanitized on the same schedule.

A disinfecting log will be generated that will outline the areas that are to be sanitized, and the time at which it is to happen. Signs posted in bathrooms will reflect the disinfecting schedule.

### **Disinfectant/Sanitizing Stations**

Disinfecting stations will be placed at key points and in high traffic areas along Museum thoroughfares where guests can access products for use on their hands and disinfect themselves. Staff will be responsible for ensuring that disinfectant/sanitizing stations are stocked and serviceable during VMHA's opening hours.

In addition, staff will disinfect all high-traffic areas, doorknobs, door handles, handrails, toilet handles, sinks, faucets, and work areas three times per day. Such cleanings will take place at strategic times: before opening to the public, midday, and once after closing to the public for the day. Similarly, staff and volunteers will be required to sanitize their workstations upon arrival and before departing the Museum site.

### **New Workplace Directives for Staff and Volunteers**

Staff will review and be knowledgeable about the latest Federal, State and Local legislation to ensure compliance. A Department of Labor poster outlining employee rights mandated by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act will be prominently displayed.

Staff schedules will be a hybrid of on-site and remote work, with a focus on social distancing. Volunteers, if they return to the site, will do so in a limited capacity and will be asked to perform only those tasks with which they are comfortable.

All staff and volunteers will be required to wear face coverings during hours of operation when interacting with the public and when working within six feet of other staff members and volunteers. This directive will remain in place until further notice. The Valdez Museum greatly values their staff and volunteers and will do everything possible to prioritize their health and well-being.

### **Training for Staff**

The VMHA will provide training materials for staff such as the CDC fact sheets and posters, and post these at the Museum and on social media. The Museum will provide clear guidelines for how to respond to visitors who are not following health and safety protocols.

### **Access and Capacity**

Access to the Museum upon reopening is limited to 25% of capacity, which translates to no more than 20 people including staff that is present. Museum staff will monitor the number of visitors entering and exiting and present at the Museum to ensure capacity. This percentage may change as new directives issued by the State government are established and the Museum is able to accommodate.

Access to the Museum store will be limited to one person at a time.

### **Designated Thoroughfares**

Upon initially entering the Museum proper and outside the Museum entrance, signage will lead guests to the main desk and payment and reveal practices and procedures. The Museum will offer laminated maps of the gallery for use by visitors that will be cleaned after each use.

The removal of some furniture, including the clothes rack along with pedestals and vitrines, will open up the space. Modifications to the entranceway thoroughfare have been designed to minimize contact with others and allow for appropriate distancing.

### **Social Distancing and Restricted Contact**

These constraints will be put in place to protect the VMHA's capacity to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet of space between individuals at all times.

The Museum will adhere to the 25% capacity and monitor the number of visitors. Admissions may be purchased in advance. The VMHA will also accept walk-ins. The Museum prefers a digital exchange but will accept cash, too.

### **Adjustment of Hours Open to the Public**

To offset the limited amount of people that will be allowed on-site at any given time, the VMHA will adjust their hours of operation at the Museum on Egan Drive to: Tuesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 4 pm and at the Museum on Hazelet St. by appointment only.

## **Modification of the Museum's Program of Work**

### **Regulating Interactives**

To limit contact with surfaces, objects, printed works and utensils and better ensure the safety of visitors, the VMHA will remove, clean and store many items that have traditionally been accessible and hands-on. These include but are not limited to: seating, coat racks, gallery inter-actives, art making tools and papers, and any other items deemed appropriate.

Physical barriers will be placed in exhibits when needed and possible. Hand sanitizing stations or tissues may be situated next to touch screen or button activated areas.

### **New Signage**

The VMHA will require and post visible new signage to direct visitors and ensure them of the VMHA's commitment to their safety. These visuals will include floor decals and tape lines to enforce physical distancing, hand washing, and other requirements and recommendations. Any laminated and printed signage will be sanitized after each use.

Signage will share with the public cleaning protocols and steps that the Museum is taking to ensure visitor safety, both on the Museum website and throughout the Museum itself

### **Coordinating the Effort**

Museum staff will meet regularly to review the mitigation plan and day-to-day operations, and make recommendations for change. With the forthcoming changes, the VMHA still aspires to maintain our current aesthetic, and stay true to our mission to preserve and educate, but it also sees the necessity of enacting practices that protect and ensure the safety and health of our patrons and staff whose well-being is our highest priority.

The Plan remains in effect unless and until it is amended, rescinded, or suspended by the VMHA Board of Directors.

Approved this day 23 May, 2020.