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Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 9, 2020

*Press Release: 20-0048*

**Contact:** Meadow Bailey, [meadow.bailey@alaska.gov](mailto:meadow.bailey@alaska.gov), (907) 451-2240

**Six Additional AMHS Employees Test Positive for COVID-19**

*All six passengers and the remaining 28 employees test negative.*

**(ANCHORAGE, Alaska)** – Six additional employees aboard the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) M/V Tustumena have tested positive for COVID-19. This brings the total number of COVID-19 positive crewmembers to seven.

The Tustumena returned to Homer last night at 8 p.m. with 41 people aboard, including the one known positive crewmember. Forty people were tested; this included six passengers and 34 AMHS crewmembers. After the vessel docked, staff from South Peninsula Hospital boarded the ship to conduct testing. Testing was completed last night and results were shared with individuals by 9 a.m.

The seven crewmembers who have tested positive will remain in isolation on the Tustumena. The positive crewmembers are being monitored and supported by medical professionals.

The six passengers, and some of the crewmembers who tested negative have left the vessel and are returning home if they have private transportation and can appropriately self-monitor and quarantine at home for 14 days. They will continue to coordinate with the Alaska Section of Epidemiology.

Some of the crewmembers who tested negative will remain on the Tustumena to help support vessel operations. The positive and negative crewmembers will remain separated on board.

Out of an abundance of caution, the State of Alaska is recommending that anyone who was on the ship follow the guidance below for 14 days after leaving the ship:

1. Wear a mask/face covering when in public.
2. Minimize exposure to others (maintain at least 6 feet distance), as able.
3. Self-monitor for symptoms twice a day and get tested for COVID-19 if any symptoms arise.

4. Consider getting tested 7-14 days after leaving the ship if no symptoms arise.

This guidance is similar to the recommendations that the State of Alaska is emphasizing for all Alaskans.

This incident began Saturday when an AMHS employee on the Tustumena received notice that they had been in contact with a person who had just tested positive for COVID-19. At the time, the AMHS employee had mild symptoms. The employee tested Saturday evening in Dutch Harbor, and that test came back positive. Saturday, Epidemiology identified 16 AMHS employees who were considered close contacts. Of the six new positives, four were part of the 16 who were considered close contacts, two were not. Epidemiology will continue to conduct contact tracing and will notify anyone who was in contact with the new positive cases.

No passengers or additional AMHS employees are considered to be close contacts. The crewmember who tested positive Saturday developed symptoms that were similar to a severe cold. The six crewmembers who recently tested positive have experienced minor or no symptoms.

At this time, sailings for the Tustumena are anticipated to resume Saturday, June 27. This will give time for the vessel to be thoroughly sanitized and staffed with crew. All AMHS passengers who are impacted by the canceled sailings are being notified. If you have questions about reservations, please visit [www.FerryAlaska.com](http://www.FerryAlaska.com) or contact the AMHS reservation call center by dialing 1-907-465-3941 or toll-free at 1-800-642-0066.

This spring, AMHS worked with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to develop mitigation protocols to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These protocols include passenger screening, reduced passenger numbers to facilitate social distancing, recommendations of face coverings for all and frequent sanitization on board and in terminals. AMHS will continue to work with DHSS to review the current mitigation protocols and make any necessary adjustments for the safety of passengers and crewmembers.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities oversees 239 airports, 10 ferries serving 35 communities, more than 5,600 miles of highway and 776 public facilities throughout the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to “**Keep Alaska Moving** through service and infrastructure.”