

Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center

Protocol: Required vaccinations for employees

1.0 Rabies Vaccination

AWCC receives wildlife from a variety of areas throughout Alaska, and sometimes beyond. In order to keep staff safe from rabies, the following staff are required to receive a full rabies vaccine series prior to working with, feeding, or coming into close contact with any member of the canine family or any newly acquired animal that has been identified by ADF&G as one that comes from a rabies-prone area, and which has not completed its 30-day or 60-day on-site quarantine:

- Animal care staff, including full time, year-round
- Other staff who have a need to enter the enclosure of a newly acquired animal that is within its 30-day or 60-day quarantine period

Although not every AWCC employee is required to receive the rabies vaccine, no AWCC staff, board member, intern, or volunteer may enter the enclosure of any canine family member or any newly acquired animal that has been identified by ADF&G as one that comes from a rabies-prone area, and that is still within its 30-day or 60-day quarantine without a rabies vaccine.

Employees who are pregnant or breast-feeding may defer vaccination while pregnant or breast-feeding but must avoid canines or newly acquired animals from rabies-prone areas that are within their 30-day or 60-day quarantine.

2.0 Tetanus Vaccination

AWCC staff and volunteers who work near animal habitat fence lines are routinely exposed to the potential for damage to the skin which would allow tetanus-causing bacteria to enter the body. In order to keep staff safe from tetanus, the following staff are required to receive a tetanus vaccine at least every ten years, with a booster should a staff member sustain an injury and a physician recommends one:

- Animal care staff, including full time, year-round, part time, seasonal, and interns
- Education staff, including full time, year-round, part-time, seasonal, and interns
- Maintenance staff, including full time, year-round, part-time, and seasonal
- Any other staff member or volunteer who routinely works near fence lines

3.0 COVID Vaccination

AWCC is home to wildlife species in the mustelid, feline and cervid families which have been shown to be susceptible to illness from the corona virus (COVID-19). More than 60% of animals living at AWCC fall into these three categories.

The current mustelids live in the office space shared between every department in Bison Hall. They are highly susceptible to the SARS-Cov-2 virus. Both feline habitats at AWCC are incorporated into buildings occupied by staff: the gift store and the bunkhouse. All members of the cervid family live throughout the AWCC campus and come into close contact daily with staff and guests.

In order to keep staff and animals safe from COVID-19, the following staff are required to be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved by the FDA or has been issued an Emergency Use Authorization:

- Animal care staff, including full time, part time, year-round, seasonal, and interns
- Education staff, including full time, part time, year-round, seasonal, and interns
- Maintenance staff, including full time, part time, year-round, and seasonal
- Gift store staff, including full time, part time, year-round, and seasonal
- Admissions staff, including full time, part-time, year-round, and seasonal
- Management staff, including full time, part-time, year-round, seasonal, and interns
- Sales & Marketing staff, including full-time, part-time, year-round, seasonal, and interns
- Any persons, including visiting veterinarian, film crew, volunteer, or school group who will occupy on-site AWCC housing

Staff who routinely work remotely and not on AWCC property are exempt from this requirement.

Employees who have medical conditions or sincerely held religious beliefs may be exempt from getting a vaccine for COVID-19 but would be ineligible to live in onsite housing or visit staff who live in onsite housing.

Records of required vaccinations and/or exemptions will be kept in each employee's personnel file.