

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Isolation, Quarantine, and Recovery Sites

Why is King County developing sites to temporarily house people for COVID-19?

There is a declared public health emergency as the county deals with the COVID-19 outbreak. It is critical to do all that we can do to:

1. reduce the spread of the illness, and
2. keep our hospital beds available for people with acute healthcare needs.

Most people will isolate and recover in their own homes. King County is creating temporary housing for those who cannot safely isolate and recover in their homes, and for those who do not have homes. Examples could include travelers, symptomatic or COVID positive people who cannot safely isolate away from a medically fragile or high-risk person (senior, immune-compromised child) in their home, or people experiencing homelessness. Public Health has been clear that isolation and quarantine help keep the community safe by containing illness.

What is shelter “de-intensification” and why is this important?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Public Health-Seattle & King County have been clear that people need to practice social distancing and stay 6’ away from each other. Most shelters do not normally have such distance between beds or mats. As a prevention step, King County and Seattle are working with shelter providers to create that needed distance, adding space to some locations or setting up additional temporary shelters where shelter providers can move some of their guests and spread out the concentrations of people. This is called “de-intensification.”

Both King County and the City of Seattle have moved to de-intensify shelters.

- King County opened additional space in the King County Administration Building and the King County 4th and Jefferson Building to help both shelters create social distance.
- King County dedicated space 24/7 in the King County International Airport Arrivals (7277 Perimeter Road S) to help one of the county’s largest shelter operators to spread out.
- King County provided funding for 60 hotel vouchers for people in the largest shelters who are in the highest risk categories for age and underlying health issues (prevention).
- King County is working with the City of Bellevue to support one of the largest Eastside shelter operators to achieve social distancing with additional space and pallet units.
- King County is providing space at the Harbor Island warehouse.
- Seattle opened the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall and Fisher Pavilion to move about 300 individuals from the largest Seattle shelter operators to achieve space between beds, and is implementing several additional de-intensification steps in locations city-wide. The city is also adding 95 new shelter beds at three locations.

What are the types of temporary facilities and how are they being used?

Isolation and Quarantine

Isolation is used for people who are currently ill and able to spread the disease and who need to stay away from others in order to avoid infecting them.

Quarantine is for people who are not currently showing symptoms, but are at increased risk for having been exposed to an infectious disease.

Assessment Center/Recovery Center (AC/RC)

Assessment Center/Recovery Center (AC/RC) refers to a congregate care facility that will provide Public Health-supervised care to symptomatic or COVID-positive adults who are not able to follow public health guidance for isolation, quarantine or recovery in their own home, or do not have a home. Examples could include travelers, symptomatic or COVID positive people who cannot safely isolate away from a medically fragile or high-risk individual (senior, immune-compromised child) in their home, or people experiencing homelessness. It could also provide flex space for hospitals to discharge non-emergency COVID cases, freeing up space for more acute patients. Size for a recovery site could vary.

Who is likely to be temporarily housed in Isolation, Quarantine and Recovery sites?

Examples of people who may occupy the facilities:

- People who can't self-isolate or quarantine at home; for example, a shared dorm room or a person who cannot safely isolate from a fragile family member in the home (senior, immune-compromised child)
- First responders and health care workers
- People experiencing homelessness

Where are the sites being set up in response to COVID-19, and how many beds will be available at each?

Isolation and Quarantine

Kent Central Avenue Motel (former EconoLodge) Open
1233 Central Avenue North, Kent (15 rooms initially; total capacity 79)

North Seattle/Aurora Open
1132 N. 128th Street, Seattle (Six modular units; total capacity 23)

White Center
206 SW 112th St., Seattle (Eight modular units; total capacity 31)

Issaquah Hotel (leased former Holiday Inn)
1801 12th Avenue NW, Issaquah (99)

Harborview Hall, operated by Harborview Medical Center
326 Ninth Avenue, Seattle (45)

Assessment Center/Recovery Center (AR/RC)

Eastgate
13620 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue (Durable fabric structures, 2, 140-150 people)

Shoreline
18560 1st Avenue NE, Shoreline (Durable fabric structures, 2, 140-150 people)

SoDo
1039 Sixth Ave. S., Seattle (warehouse, 240)

Interbay
601 Elliott Avenue West, Seattle
Use and staffing plan TBD (72)

What other sites and locations will be added?

King County continues to look for additional sites and may identify new locations soon. Those who have property or hotel/motel space they would like the county to consider can go to kingcounty.gov/emergency/donate or email donations@kingcounty.gov

How were these locations/facilities chosen?

The initial Public Health criteria* on isolation and quarantine facilities called for:

- Doors that face outward
- No shared corridors
- Individual hygiene facilities in each room
- Individual, self-contained HVAC systems in each room

For the siting of modular units, these criteria are applied:

- To the extent possible, County-owned sites in unincorporated King County (for ease of permitting)
- Parcel large enough to accommodate multiple modulars
- Parcel able to hook up to utilities

*These criteria may change as the crisis unfolds and/or Public Health guidance is revised.

Can people bring their pets to the Isolation and Quarantine facilities?

No, but Regional Animal Services of King County will assist people who need help caring for their pets during their stay in isolation and quarantine.

How will the county decide who stays in these facilities?

Public Health-Seattle & King County will triage calls to the King County COVID Call Center and assess need for placement. Only Public Health can approve a resident for referral to an isolation, quarantine and recovery site. No walk-ups are allowed.

How will people get there?

Transportation will be provided by the most appropriate means, including ambulances or other contracted transportation providers.

How will the county monitor the health of those in the facilities?

Isolation and quarantine are a proven Public Health practice, giving people a place where they can go to wait out their exposure, or recover and keep their family members safe. Isolation and quarantine monitoring is handled primarily via regular telephone contact. Trained health and, where needed, behavioral health professionals will speak regularly with each person in isolation and quarantine and monitor any changes in health status and any need for additional care. Healthcare staff will be onsite at all IQR locations. Anyone needing a higher level of care will be immediately transferred to a medical facility.

Will there be onsite medical assistance?

Health and behavioral health care needs will be closely monitored, primarily by phone, but all sites will have onsite health care staff and access to behavioral health services. Behavioral health services will also be onsite at some locations.

Will there be onsite security?

Yes, there will be 24/7 onsite security at all locations.

How will people get their other needs met - food, water and other supplies?

Staff will check in with every patient multiple times per day to identify any needs, including food, water, or other requests. Supplies will be delivered to their door. There will be no person-to-person contact between patients and delivery persons.

Who will provide the food?

King County is contracting with FareStart and possibly other food delivery outlets. Dietary restrictions, allergies and cultural needs will be addressed through the food options.

Will the individuals be allowed to leave the premises?

Isolation and quarantine mean that the guests stay away from the general public. Every person will have a 24/7 phone number they can call if they need anything, or if their condition changes. In addition, staff will check in with every patient multiple times per day to identify any needs and deliver supplies to their door. They will have no need to go out to get anything. Every guest will be strongly advised as to the importance of remaining for the full length of time to recover. However, their stay is voluntary.

Who decides when they get to leave? Will they have transportation upon discharge?

Medical staff will monitor each person's condition and make an individual determination as to when it is safe for the individual to leave the isolation and quarantine site. They will receive transportation to return to their home or shelter when they have been cleared to leave by PHSKC staff.

How will the county get information to people who speak languages other than English?

The Public Health website has information in multiple languages on the COVID-19 outbreak, including what to do if you suspect you have been exposed to the illness or are experiencing symptoms. The King County Council approved an emergency appropriations ordinance that includes funding for language access services and community outreach and education pertaining to COVID-19. A welcome sheet is being translated into 12 languages for each site.

What is the future use of these locations?

King County is wholly focused on the public health emergency and creating spaces for people to safely isolate, quarantine and recover. Future use of any of these locations is a community conversation for a future time.

How much money does King County have budgeted for acquiring, leasing, and preparing isolation/quarantine/recovery facilities? How much is allocated/being used for these three facilities?

The first budget supplemental request approved by the Council for the emergency declaration included \$15.8 million for Top Hat (White Center), Elliott, Aurora and Central Motel (Kent) which will all serve as Isolation and Quarantine facilities. Appropriation for the Issaquah and Bellevue sites will be included in a subsequent budget appropriation supplemental request.

Is King County continuing to look for additional capacity, beyond these sites?

Yes, King County will continue to look at additional county properties and other resources as this public health emergency unfolds.

Kent motel background

When was the sale of the motel finalized?

The sale was finalized on March 6.

Who approved the purchase of the motel?

Executive Constantine approved the purchase as part of the countywide emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Why did King County buy the motel rather than lease it?

This was the only facility on the market that met the requirements set forth by Public Health, and there was no option for a lease on the building. There is a ground lease for the structure that extends several more years.

What is the cost of the motel?

The county purchased the former Econo Lodge for \$4 million.

Where is the money coming from to pay for the motel?

As part of an emergency appropriations package, on March 10 the County Council approved a request for \$5.5 million from the "rainy day" fund to cover the purchase cost of the facility, make any needed repairs or improvements, hire up to 11 current motel employees, and the ground lease.

What will King County do with the motel after the COVID-19 outbreak is over?

Our top concern right now is responding to this outbreak and providing the support necessary to help people recover from COVID-19 and protect public health. We will address the future of this facility at a later time.

Issaquah Hotel Background

How long is the lease for the Issaquah hotel?

One year

How much is the county paying for the lease?

\$2 million/year

When will the County know what purpose they will use the site for?

The public health emergency is still unfolding in our community and we will make a determination soon on the most appropriate use for this location.

How many staff members do you anticipate will be on site?

The service plan will be determined as we finalize the plans for this site.

When do you anticipate this site will open?

This is dependent on the final determination of use.

Are there any plans for this to be mixed-use, with both regular hotel guests and individuals in need of isolation or recovery?

King County has leased the entire motel. All hotel functions have ceased.

Eastgate site

This is a parking lot. What facilities will the county set up here?

The County will set up two Durable Fabric Structures, temporary modular structures similar to those used for temporary facility expansions or in the field after a natural disaster. It has hard sidewalls and hard floors, with power outlets and lighting fixtures. While they are sometimes referred to as tents, these structures are more like portable prefab buildings, intended for longer-term use, and take longer to set up than an event tent.

How will this site be used and who will be served?

This location will likely be an assessment and recovery location, a congregate care facility designed to provide Public Health-supervised care to symptomatic or COVID positive adults who are not able to follow public health guidance for isolation, quarantine, or recovery in their own home, or because they do not have a home. An AC/RC can also serve as flex space for hospitals, making it possible to discharge non-serious COVID cases to the AC/RC, freeing hospital beds for the more acute cases. Public Health will approve all placements at AC/RC sites and all discharges.

How many people can this site hold?

We will begin with around 70 in one structure and evaluate the need. The site can accommodate two structures with a total of about 140-150 people.

How many staff members do you anticipate will be on-site?

Public Health-supervised care will support patients in recovery. At a minimum, the site will have an onsite director and physician, clinical staff and non-medical professionals, with numbers of staff based on the numbers of patients admitted (i.e., using one structure or two). There will be 24/7 onsite security personnel, monitoring both interior and exterior. Meals will be provided, as well as transportation to and from the site.

How will the structures be used, post COVID-19?

The purchase was a public health emergency response. Future use of the site and the structures are discussions for another time.

Shoreline site

This is a soccer field. What facilities will the county set up here?

The County will set up two Durable Fabric Structures, temporary modular structures similar to those used for temporary facility expansions or in the field after a natural disaster. It has hard sidewalls and hard floors, with power outlets and lighting fixtures. While they are sometimes referred to as tents, these structures are more like portable prefab buildings, intended for longer-term use, and take longer to set up than an event tent.

How did this location become available?

The City of Shoreline offered the location to aid in the public health emergency. Development of this site is in collaboration with the City of Shoreline.

How will this site be used and who will be served?

This location will likely be an assessment and recovery location, a congregate care facility designed to provide Public Health-supervised care to symptomatic or COVID positive adults who are not able to follow public health guidance for isolation, quarantine, or recovery in their own home, or because they do not have a home. An AC/RC can also serve as flex space for hospitals, making it possible to discharge non-serious COVID cases to the AC/RC, freeing hospital beds for the more acute cases. Public Health will approve all placements at AC/RC sites and all discharges.

How many people can this site hold?

We will begin with around 70 in one structure and evaluate the need. The site can accommodate two structures with a total of about 140 people.

How many staff members do you anticipate will be on-site?

Public Health-supervised care will support patients in recovery. At a minimum, the site will have an onsite director and physician, clinical staff and non-medical professionals, with numbers of staff based on the numbers of patients admitted (i.e., using one structure or two). There will be 24/7 onsite security personnel, monitoring both interior and exterior. Meals will be provided, as well as transportation to and from the site.

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