

2021/2022 Mitigation Plan for Boards of Fisheries and Game Meetings

Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
September 2021

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Meeting Oversight Group.....	4
Emergency Outbreak Response Team.....	4
Meeting Contacts and Locations.....	4
Board of Fisheries Work Session, October 20-21, 2021, Anchorage, Egan Center.....	5
Contact Information and Location.....	5
Board of Fisheries Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting.....	5
Contact Information and Location.....	5
Board of Fisheries Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting.....	5
Contact Information and Location.....	5
Board of Game Work Session and Central/Southwest Regions Meeting.....	6
Contact Information and Location.....	6
Board of Game Statewide Regulations Meeting.....	6
Contact Information and Location.....	6
Board of Fisheries Hatchery Committee and Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Westward, Arctic Shellfish, General Provisions Shellfish, and Prince William Sound Shrimp Meeting.....	6
Contact Information and Location.....	6
Participant Requirements.....	7
Registration.....	7
Waiver Agreement.....	7
Adherence to Local Requirements.....	7
Self-Quarantine.....	8
Workplace Protective Measures.....	8
Registration.....	8
Registration and Entrance at the Meeting.....	8
Registration badges.....	8
Face covers.....	8
Electronic record copies.....	8
Staff Reports via Web Conference.....	9
Signage.....	9
Traffic Flow.....	9
Protective Equipment and Supplies.....	9
No Coffee Service / Bottled Water Available.....	9
Wi-Fi Internet Available.....	9

Improved Connectivity with Non-attending Public	9
Web Conferencing for Key Participants.....	9
Increased Staffing	9
Security	10
Daily Sanitation	10
Alternative Methods for Committee Participation for Board of Fisheries	10
Procedures for Participants Who Become Ill.....	11
Boards Support	11
Board Members, Advisory Committee members and Other Agency Staff.....	12
Public	12
Communication Plan.....	12
Staff and Board Member Training	13
Attachment A – Board Meeting Rooms	14

Introduction

The 2021/2022 Boards of Game and Fisheries COVID-19 mitigation plan is designed to provide a safe meeting environment that allows for flexibility based on local and statewide conditions. Mitigation measures at board meetings will tie to risk-alert statuses in the community and state, changing depending on whether these areas are sustaining a high-, substantial-, moderate-, or low-alert status. For instance, if the meeting community and state are in a low-alert status, mitigation measures may be limited to registration, signage, hand sanitizer, and other moderate measures. However, if there is a high-alert status, more restrictive measures may be assigned at the meeting or by the local government.

In-person board meetings with normal participation do not allow for social distancing measures commonly recognized throughout the pandemic. Given this, board meetings are classified as a high-risk environment by the US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([Hazard Recognition](#)).

Much of this plan describes potential mitigation measures which may be applied to a meeting based on local and statewide conditions. While describing the measures and degrees of implementation for each measure, in most cases is not intended to pre-prescribe whether they will be applied. Later in the document Table 1 offers a matrix that relays how mitigation measures might be applied based on a current alert status.

Board meetings are public gatherings that run between two and 14 days. "Personnel" in this plan include Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) staff (including Boards Support), other state and federal agency staff, and board members. Boards Support staff is specifically charged with running the meeting and controlling the facility. "Public" includes all persons, including advisory committee members, who arrive on their own volition.¹

It is fully expected this plan will find revisions throughout the year as lessons are learned.

Meeting Oversight Group

Each meeting is guided by an Oversight Group that reviews community status and provides guidance as meetings approach, including mitigation measures. Each group may include a staff member from Boards Support, one staff from the applicable Divisions: Sport Fish, Commercial Fisheries, and Wildlife Conservation, the Subsistence Section, at least one ADF&G staff from the local community, a representative of the facility, and a representative from the local municipality (if the facility is privately owned). The group will meet as needed prior to the meeting to monitor COVID-19 conditions, and determine the level of mitigation measures to employ at the meeting. Findings from the oversight group will be relayed to registered meeting participants and posted on the board meeting webpages.

Emergency Outbreak Response Team

Each meeting will have an Emergency Outbreak Response Team (Response Team). Generally, this is composed of Boards Support staff, appropriate staff from the Department of Health and Social Services, members of the meeting community's medical professionals, and a local government contact. In the event of an outbreak, the Response Team will serve to direct the medical response, testing, quarantine requirements, contact tracing, and cleaning measures.

Meeting Contacts and Locations

Prior to the meeting, Boards Support will work with facility managers to clearly define roles and responsibilities. A facility's services related to COVID-19 (such as a HEPA filtration system, hand sanitizer,

¹ Advisory committee members may expect the state to cover expenses related to their travel.

etc.) will impact recommended mitigation measures. Discussions will also determine if other events are occurring in the facility, and if so, what mitigation measures those events are following. It may be assumed individuals attending other events will be using the shared bathroom facilities and entrances.

Board of Fisheries Work Session, October 20-21, 2021, Anchorage, Egan Center

Contact Information and Location

- Glenn Haight, Executive Director, glenn.haight@alaska.gov, 907-465-6095
- Henry Leasia, Publication Specialist, henry.leasia@alaska.gov, 907-465-6097

The Board of Fisheries Work Session is scheduled at the Anchorage Egan Civic and Convention Center, lower-level Summit Hall, 555 W. 5th Avenue. The facility has three main entrances on the street level floor, with a small security/employee entrance. There are four public access points to the lower Summit Hall including an escalator, two stairwells, and an elevator with two cars.

The meeting hall reserved is approximately 4,400 square feet with multiple exits on either side of the room. There is a separate “office” reserved for ADF&G staff. See Attachment A for board meeting layouts.

Board of Fisheries Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting

November 30-December 6, 2021, Cordova, The Cordova Center

Contact Information and Location

- Glenn Haight, Executive Director, glenn.haight@alaska.gov, 907-465-6095
- Henry Leasia, Publication Specialist, henry.leasia@alaska.gov, 907-465-6097

The Board of Fisheries Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting is set for [The Cordova Center](#) in Cordova Alaska. This meeting is scheduled to last seven days. The meeting room is accessible through several public entrances.

The meeting hall is a combination of two rooms conjoined to form the board table and public seating area. The board table will start in a conference room and extend as necessary into the Center’s atrium. The remaining atrium area will serve as the public sitting area. The entire room is approximately 2,430 square feet (Community Rooms A&B – 1,232 square feet and the atrium is 1,200 square feet). There are multiple exits from this area. There is a separate “office” reserved for ADF&G staff. See Attachment A for the current meeting room layout.

Board of Fisheries Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting

January 4-15, 2022, Ketchikan, Ted Ferry Civic Center

Contact Information and Location

- Glenn Haight, Executive Director, glenn.haight@alaska.gov, 907-465-6095
- Henry Leasia, Publication Specialist, henry.leasia@alaska.gov, 907-465-6097

The Board of Fisheries Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting is set for [The Ted Ferry Civic Center](#) in Ketchikan, Alaska. This meeting is set to last 12 days. The meeting room is accessible through several public entrances.

The meeting hall is approximately 4,260 square feet. There are multiple exits from this area. There is a separate “office” reserved for ADF&G staff. See Attachment A for the current meeting room layout.

The facility will set limits to the meeting based on the mitigation measures required in this plan.

Board of Game Work Session and Central/Southwest Regions Meeting

January 20-28, 2022, Wasilla, Best Western Lake Lucille Hotel

Contact Information and Location

- Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director, Kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov, 907 465-6098
- Annie Bartholomew, Publication Specialist, annie.bartholomew@alaska.gov, 907-465-4046

The Board of Game Work Session and Central/Southwest Regions Meeting is set for the [Best Western Lake Lucille](#) in Wasilla, Alaska. The combined meeting is set to last 9 days. The meeting room is accessible through the hotel hallway and two public entrances from the outside.

The meeting hall is approximately 1,920 square feet. There is a separate “office” reserved for ADF&G staff.

Board of Game Statewide Regulations Meeting

March 4-11, 2022, Fairbanks, Pike’s Waterfront Lodge

Contact Information and Location

- Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director, Kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov, 907 465-6098
- Annie Bartholomew, Publication Specialist, annie.bartholomew@alaska.gov, 907-465-4046

The Board of Game Statewide Regulations Meeting is set for [Pikes Waterfront Lodge](#) in Fairbanks, Alaska. The combined meeting is set to last 9 days. The meeting room is accessible through the hotel lobby and two public entrances from the outside.

The meeting hall is approximately 2,800 square feet. There is a separate “office” reserved for ADF&G staff.

Board of Fisheries Hatchery Committee and Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Westward, Arctic Shellfish, General Provisions Shellfish, and Prince William Sound Shrimp Meeting

March 10-16, 2022, Anchorage, Egan Center

Contact Information and Location

- Glenn Haight, Executive Director, glenn.haight@alaska.gov, 907-465-6095
- Henry Leasia, Publication Specialist, henry.leasia@alaska.gov, 907-465-6097

See facility description under the Board of Fisheries Work Session.

Participant Requirements

The following section provides an overview of what participants must plan for if they wish to attend an in-person meeting. This section, along with the following Workplace Protective Measures, describes the range of mitigation measures that could be applied to the meetings based on alert status conditions.

Registration

Registration is among the most important requirements for participants. All participants from the public are required to register to attend. The chief COVID-related benefits from registration are contact information in the event of an outbreak, completion of a waiver, and a means to clearly articulate expectations or mitigation measures for the meeting.

There are several other benefits from pre-registration. Individuals will be able to select which day/time to provide public testimony, if applicable. This will reduce paper exchange at the meeting and help reduce attendance during public testimony. For the Board of Fisheries, it may include a question regarding which Committee(s) of the Whole the individual would like to join. The registration will also serve as a communication tool for updates on the meeting for COVID and other matters.

If an individual fails to pre-register, they may do so at the meeting. Boards Support will have the necessary equipment to register participants at the meeting. On-site registration will ask for preferred public testimony times if applicable, but options may be reduced at that late time. Everyone who registers will be given and asked to wear a badge while in the meeting room to help identify those who are registered. In the event of an outbreak at the meeting, information will be used by the Response Team. Once the meeting is adjourned, Boards Support will delete registration information.

Agency staff and board members need not formally register, but efforts will be made to collect the same information to enhance communication and assist in emergency response if necessary.

Waiver Agreement

As part of the registration, attendees must sign a waiver.

- The waiver will clearly describe the risks associated with COVID-19 at the meeting.
- The waiver will describe all expectations of the participants including monitoring symptoms for COVID-19 and avoiding the meeting if they exhibit symptoms.

Adherence to Local Requirements

All participants must adhere to local municipal requirements. If local mandates limit the number of people able to gather, the Oversight Group will determine if that limit unfairly impacts the public's ability to participate and may cancel the meeting.

Registration questions

- First and last name
- Home community
- Contact information (email and cell phone).
- Organization or interest representing
- Select from the remaining available public testimony time slots if you plan to testify.
- Select, if any, committees you wish to serve on. (Fisheries meetings only)
- Agreement to a waiver & assumption of risk

Self-Quarantine

If an individual is feeling any symptoms associated with COVID-19 they must self-quarantine. This is among the more difficult aspects of the meeting. Despite feeling symptoms, many will choose to stay given the stakes of the meeting. To alleviate some of this pressure and help participants make good choices, Boards Support is installing the ability for people to follow the meeting online via video stream and to receive written comments via email. Key participants such as board members and staff will be able to participate virtually. This is described in better detail below under *Procedures for Participants Who Become Ill*.

Workplace Protective Measures

Registration

There are several important elements to registration that lead to a more protective workplace. Registration will align times for public testimony which will help meter traffic during the busiest times early in the meeting. Registration also provides an immediate means to communicate new information to attendees which is critical in the event of an outbreak.

Registration and Entrance at the Meeting

All the Board of Fisheries venues are public facilities and denying entrance to non-attendees or people showing symptoms of COVID-19 may be problematic. Additionally, meetings at the Anchorage Egan Center have had trouble with transient populations entering the meeting hall and causing disturbances. Boards Support will work with all venues to funnel meeting attendees through a single point of entrance and close off other entrances to assure only registered individuals may enter.

Boards Support will provide extra staff at the registration point in the mornings and meeting attendees are encouraged to arrive early to afford adequate time for the process.

Registration badges

Everyone who registers will have a badge to indicate to Boards Support they are registered. Boards Support will have the ability to replace lost badges and create them for people registering at the time of the meeting.

Face covers

Face covers are optional unless required by the local community or the state. Boards Support will have ample face masks on hand for anyone that may need one.

Electronic record copies

All record copies (RC) at a meeting will be submitted to Boards Support via email. Boards Support staff will scan RCs for those who are unable to email during the meeting. Board members will be encouraged to use electronic devices to read RCs, but if they prefer hardcopy that will be provided. Boards Support staff will not distribute RCs around the table, but rather leave copies at an assigned location for those board members that prefer hardcopies. This will eliminate a certain amount of movement around the room.

Hardcopies of record copies will not be distributed to meeting attendees. Rather, participants may view RCs from the meeting website. Free wi-fi will be provided in the room. Boards Support will use the projectors to highlight substitute language, particularly during deliberations.

Board members will be provided hardcopies of the board workbooks with on-time advisory committee and public comment, department reports and comments, and other material. Only record copies will not be in hardcopy.

Staff Reports via Web Conference

ADF&G staff are critical at board meetings and expected to attend. However, there may be instances where they can provide their oral reports via web conference from an offsite location. This will alleviate just slightly the number of individuals in the room when reports are given. Those staff members are expected to join the meeting during committees and deliberations as appropriate. The meeting is generally less attended during committees and deliberations.

Signage

A copious amount of signage will be distributed throughout the meeting room. Signs will recommend distancing when possible, the virtues of mask wearing, use of hand sanitizer and washing hands, and warnings to those unvaccinated. There will be floor signage as well to help guide traffic flow.

Traffic Flow

Traffic flow is an important component at the meeting. Signage will assist participants in using the correct entrances and exits. At all times, the building or main entrance will be staffed by Boards Support. Individuals entering the meeting venue must have their registration badge for reentry. Exits around the building will be more widespread.

Protective Equipment and Supplies

Boards Support will utilize sneeze guards at its record copy desk and at the board and staff tables if desired. There will be a surplus of hand sanitizer, face shields/masks, and gloves. Depending on the alert-status review, Boards Support may provide and constantly refresh microphone covers.

No Coffee Service / Bottled Water Available

To avoid touch points, there will be no coffee service under higher alert statuses. Boards Support will stock the room with bottled water for all participants to avoid additional touch points. Participants are admonished to not bring food to share.

Wi-Fi Internet Available

Boards Support will enable public wi-fi to afford participants the ability to review record copies and other meeting material.

Improved Connectivity with Non-attending Public

Along with its standard Internet audio stream, Boards Support will endeavor to add video streams of the meeting room to improve visibility for the non-attending public. Increased access to the meeting may provide some members of the public a greater sense of involvement and potentially alleviate greater attendance in the meeting room. The video streams will be available to watch on YouTube.

Web Conferencing for Key Participants

With the Internet audio and video streams of the meeting room, Boards Support will install web conferencing capacity for key participants who are required to self-quarantine. This may include a board member or a staff member critical to a discussion. The web conference platform is Zoom and will run through YouTube enabling everyone in the room to easily see the quarantined participants. It is hoped by providing this option, and the equipment necessary to participate and view the meeting, more meeting attendees will take seriously the request to self-quarantine if they are feeling COVID-19 related symptoms. (There is more discussion on this under *Procedures for Participants Who Become Ill*.)

Increased Staffing

In cases where significant mitigation measures are put in place Boards Support will require greater staffing to complete all the work. Along with the Executive Director and Publication Specialist, most meetings have one

regional coordinator. For these meetings there will be two, perhaps three regional coordinators to handle the additional workload.

Security

Repeated failure by attendees to comply with the basic expectations at the meeting may result in their permanent removal from the proceedings. Boards Support is not an enforcement agency, but will not tolerate blatant disregard for safety measures intended to keep all participants well. While a separate security duty is not planned for the meetings, Boards Support will work with the Department of Public Safety and venue managers to assure adequate security is on hand if need be.

Daily Sanitation

Following each meeting day, in concert with the venue’s requirements, Boards Support may sanitize the meeting room and general area. Participants will be encouraged to leave the meeting hall quickly after adjournment to allow the cleaning to occur and avoid prolonged exposure to other meeting attendees.

Alternative Methods for Committee Participation for Board of Fisheries

Currently, the Board of Fisheries conducts Committees of the Whole (COTW) where proposals are taken one-by-one and vetted with the entire audience. During COTWs, Boards Support staff walks around the meeting hall from participant to participant with a microphone that is used by anyone wishing to speak. This movement around the room and sharing of a single device that people are breathing into, poses an unnecessary risk when a locale is in a high-alert level.

For meetings during COVID-19, the board will modify the manner it handles committees. The current method is a departure from the original committee process where the board held two committees (with three board members on each) simultaneously and participants were selected by the committee chair from a sign-up list. Selecting a balanced slate of committee participants will allow these individuals to speak at a stationary microphone where there is less movement and no microphone sharing. In addition to avoiding frequent contact of one microphone, if a selected committee member is forced to self-quarantine they will be able to participate via web-conference.

Alternatively, the board may choose to set up stationary microphones throughout the meeting room and individuals wishing to participate may stand at the microphone and provide their remarks. Individuals waiting to speak will stand an adequate distance away.

Regardless of what method the board chooses to follow, the current process for COTWs will be modified based on local conditions.

Table 1: Example of Mitigation Measures Based on Alert Status; Actual Measures May Vary

Mitigation Measure	Low-alert	Moderate-alert	Substantial-alert	High-alert
Adherence to local and facility mandates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration	✓	✓	✓	✓
Completing the waiver	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public testimony signup during registration only	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration badge	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controlled admittance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Face coverings (if required by local mandate)				
Electronic record copies	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mitigation Measure	Low-alert	Moderate-alert	Substantial-alert	High-alert
Staff presentations via web conferencing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web conference access for Board of Fisheries committees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daily room sanitation		✓	✓	✓
Coffee service provided	✓			
Meeting room traffic flow		✓	✓	✓
Signage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safeguards (hand sanitizer, microphone guards, sneeze guards, other)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased staffing		✓	✓	✓
Video images of meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wi-fi for public use	✓	✓	✓	✓

Procedures for Participants Who Become Ill

Boards Support staff members will receive training on identifying individuals who are demonstrating symptoms consistent with COVID-19. All attendees are expected to self-monitor and report if they are sick. If personnel or participants identify symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they are to seek testing immediately. Boards Support will identify in advance testing providers in the community, and potentially stock rapid tests at the meeting. If the person is incapacitated, the Response Team will assist in arranging transportation to a medical facility.

If the individual has a positive test, all unvaccinated meeting participants exposed to the individual must self-quarantine for 14 days, or until cleared by a medical professional. At any time it is determined a meeting participant has COVID-19, the meeting will stop to allow for a thorough cleaning of the room and building based on direction by the Response Team. If the positive test occurs for unvaccinated personnel, the department will cover the cost of their quarantine.

Board members, staff and many in the public may resist the requirement to leave the meeting if they begin to feel COVID-19 related symptoms. To assist individuals who are facing symptoms and pressure to remain engaged, Boards Support will run the entire meeting as a web conference. This will happen regardless of whether anyone needs to join through web conference or not. In the event a key participant must quarantine and still feels able to participate, they may easily do so through the web conference. Boards Support will also furnish small laptops or iPad that board members, advisory committee members, and staff may use if they do not have sufficient equipment.

In describing procedures there are three categories of attendees.

Boards Support

Boards Support staff are integral to running the meeting. Functions at the meeting include operating all of the equipment which includes the sound system, taking log notes in the main recording device, posting record copies and other material to the meeting website, checking incoming faxes and emails for comments, running the video and audio stream, activating and managing the web conference platform, running the audio mixer, manning the front entrance, assisting staff and the public as needed, recording the vote count, and assisting attendees with process questions. Staff will cross-train on these functions in the event a Boards Support staff

member develops symptoms. There will be additional staff brought to the event to assist in the added duties. Most Boards Support staff are vaccinated which should eliminate most requirements to quarantine.

Board Members, Advisory Committee members and Other Agency Staff

Board members, approved advisory committee members, and other agency staff who are unvaccinated and contract COVID-19 may participate via the web conference if they are able. Staff would only do so when they are part of a presentation or deliberations. If the board is off the record and working on material, Boards Support will work with the quarantined board member and staff to help them engage in side discussions if essential and applicable. Tools such as FaceTime and Zoom breakout rooms may be employed.

Public

If an unvaccinated member of the public develops COVID-19 at a meeting, they will follow protocol and self-quarantine. If the board is conducting public testimony that member will have the opportunity to email written comments instead of providing oral comments. If the board is off the record and working on material, Boards Support will work with the quarantined member of the public to help engage in side discussions if requested by either a board member or staff.

Boards Support will not provide its own equipment to a member of the participating public who is quarantined. It is an expectation of that participant to have the necessary tools (laptop, cell phone, etc.) to join a web conference if needed. This expectation will be stated during registration, in the legal notice, and on other forms of communication.

Communication Plan

Communicating to meeting participants is extremely important prior to and during the meeting. Clear communication of expectations will improve compliance and reduce the risks associated with meeting in this high-risk environment. Boards Support will issue meeting advisories through several means.

- **Proposal books:** Proposal books are published in July/August. Information regarding plans for meetings will be included in the opening letter.
- **Proposal book announcement:** When the proposal book is ready it is common to issue an announcement to all on the Board's email subscription list. These announcements will include information on meeting expectations.
- **Website page:** Boards Support will design a temporary website page that provides a general overview of meeting expectations, lists the mitigation plan, and the registration portal.
- **Registration process:** Through the required registration process, participants will become familiar with all the expectations at the meeting. Registration will generate a database with contact information which will be used to message attendees on latest changes at the meeting venue.
- **Facilities:** Well prior to the meetings, Boards Support will meet frequently and as needed with the venue/facility operators to assure items such as testing, crowd control, cleaning, security, quarantining facilities, and medical services are secure for the meeting.
- **Legal notice/meeting notice:** The legal notice will include information about meeting expectations.
- **Frequent meeting announcements:** Prior to each board meeting, Boards Support issues a meeting announcement to its email subscription list. Along with those who register for the meeting, this announcement will be emailed to all interested parties. In addition to the standard meeting announcement, Boards Support will issue reports from the Oversight Group 3-months, 1-month, and 1-2 weeks prior to the meeting detailing current conditions and expected mitigation measures.

- **Community Public Service Announcements (PSA):** Boards Support may prepare PSAs for the smaller communities that will air a month or a few weeks out from the meeting. The PSAs will speak to the Board meeting and encourage local practices which lower the level of COVID-19.
- **Meeting signage:** Boards Support will employ significant and relevant signage at the meeting venue to reinforce expectations. Signage will also include floor signage to assist with attendee flow.
- **Registration badge:** All participants will be issued a registration badge with the expectation that it is always worn in the meeting venue and throughout the meeting building. Individuals will not be allowed to enter the meeting hall without the badge.
- **Boards Support and ADF&G staff:** All department staff will be expected to conform with meeting requirements and through this, reinforce and set an example for other meeting participants.

Staff and Board Member Training

Boards Support staff will train in items discussed throughout the mitigation plan. This includes –

- Cross-training on all Boards Support duties at the meeting.
- Symptom identification.
- Assisting in a medical emergency.
- Handling tense or volatile situations.

Board members will be versed in meeting protocols at their orientation session which occurs prior to the first meeting.

Staff attending the meetings will receive an overview of the protocols by Boards Support prior to each meeting. If needed, staff will receive training on the use of the web conference platform.

Attachment A – Board Meeting Rooms