

Period of Measures to Control the Spread of COVID-19 and to Maintain Social Infrastructure

【Request Period】 **Friday, February 17 - Tuesday, February 28, 2023**

<p>Basic Concept</p>	<p>In order to control the spread of COVID-19 and to maintain social infrastructure, Okinawa prefecture requests any necessary cooperation from residents and business in accordance with the Act on Special Countermeasures against the flu (hereinafter referred to as the "Act"), Article 24, Paragraph 9.</p>
<p>Area</p>	<p>The entirety of Okinawa prefecture</p>
<p>Current Situation</p>	<p>The number of newly confirmed positive cases in the last week in Okinawa prefecture has continued to decline since January 12 and the hospital bed occupancy rate has also been on an improving trend. However, due to the increase in the number of influenza patients, some medical institutions limit their emergency outpatient services or general medical outpatient services. In the area of inpatient care, the burden remains on both outpatient and inpatient services, with reports of situations in which beds for both general and Covid-19 are not being adjusted as desired due to the hospitalization of influenza patients. To control the spread of the infection and ensure the resolving of the current medical shortage, we would appreciate the cooperation of all prefectural residents and businesses in taking measures complying with the prefectural policies.</p>
<p>Prefectural Policies</p>	<p>The alert level will remain a 2 and there will be call outs for increased infection control measures and vaccinations. Additionally, there will be increased calls for medical examinations if there is a risk of serious illness or serious symptoms are present.</p>
<p>Response in Case of Spread of COVID-19 (at the Time of Transition to Level 3)</p>	<p>If the infection spreads further and <u>the alert level is raised to Level 3</u>, a declaration will be made to strengthen measures to prevent medical emergencies, and requests and calls for cooperation will be made to residents and businesses in the prefecture to prevent medical emergencies.</p> <p>【Examples of requests】</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ・ The careful consideration of deciding whether to postpone dining with a large number of people or participating in a large-scale event. ・ Medical institutions should take all possible measures to ensure that medical personnel have access to COVID-19 tests, so that if they have come into close contact they can conduct a test and engage in medical care in the meantime. ・ For elderly care facilities, PCR or other tests should be conducted upon the users return.

Request to Prefectural Residents

We ask that all residents and businesses in the prefecture **prepare for infections and cooperate with infection control measures.**

- ◆ **Please proactively consider vaccination for COVID-19** which is expected to be effective in preventing severe symptoms.
- ◆ **On a daily basis,** avoid 3C “closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings” and make it habit to ventilate, wear a mask properly, use hand sanitizer, and observe your health daily.
- ◆ **When you dine and interact with your friends,** please avoid large, prolonged gatherings as much as possible.
- ◆ **If you have any symptoms** such as a fever, sore throat, cough, or runny nose please refrain from going to work, school, on outings, and to group dining.

1 Vaccination

- Request for cooperation, based on The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9
- Request for cooperation, not based on a law

Please receive vaccinations for the COVID-19 omicron BA.1 subvariant (You can also receive the Novavax vaccine, which is a recombinant protein vaccine.)

- For eligible persons who are 12 years old and over, please proactively consider vaccinations for the COVID-19 omicron BA.1 subvariant which is expected to be effective in preventing severe symptoms and against new COVID-19 variants. Those between the ages of 6 months and 12 years of age should consider getting vaccinated as well.
- Keeping up-to-date with vaccinations reduces the risk of hospitalization and death. Residents of elderly care facilities and users of day facilities should receive their vaccination as soon as possible, as they are at a higher risk of severe infection.
- The seasonal flu is spreading, please consider getting the flu shot as well.

On a daily basis

Please follow the COVID-19 control measures, and avoid “closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings”

- Make it habit to ventilate, wear a mask in a way appropriate to the setting, use hand sanitizer, and observe your health daily (especially, the elderly, people who have underlying conditions, and expectant mothers).
- In case of infection, keep at least a three-day supply of food, (over-the-counter) COVID-19 test kit, and medicine, for example, fever reducers stocked at home.

3 When you dine and interact with friends

Please avoid large, prolonged gatherings and wear a mask indoors as well as when you have a conversation.

- In places where children gather (such as after-school day-cares, cram schools, etc.), adults should check infection control measures such as the ventilation and appropriate usage of masks for the situation.
- As much as possible, only have dinner with family members whom you live with or people who are always with you. When you dine with large groups of people, please confirm negative results with COVID-19 tests and other tests as much as possible.
- Please refrain from attending events where large groups of people are unmasked or please confirm negative results with COVID-19 tests beforehand.
- When dining, use an “Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility” and avoid visiting restaurants and other facilities which are not taking thorough infection prevention measures.
- When you use restaurants that are not certified with Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility Certification, dine with no more than 4 people, for no more than 2 hours.

When you feel unwell

If you have any symptoms such as a fever, sore throat, cough, or runny nose please refrain from going to work, school, on outings, and to group dining.

- If you have any cold symptoms, please make sure to avoid the elderly and expectant mothers for a week as they have a higher risk of a severe case of COVID-19.
- Those who have a family doctor, including the elderly, pregnant women, and dialysis patients, should use their family doctor. Those who have unbearable symptoms (e.g., cannot take fluids) and wish to see a doctor should consult the prefectural call center.
- If you have mild symptoms, please utilize a medical (over-the-counter) antigen test kit and take over-the-counter medicines.
- To protect the emergency medical system, please refrain from going to the emergency room if you have mild symptoms or to take a COVID-19 test and refrain from the misuse of ambulance

To Travelers (Those Considering a Trip to Okinawa)

[Before your visit: Request for cooperation, not based on a law]
[After your visit: Request for cooperation, based on The Act,
Article 24, Paragraph 9]

- Before traveling to Okinawa, please conduct a thorough health check. If you feel unwell, please postpone your trip. Before your trip and during your stay in Okinawa, please make sure to adhere to basic infection prevention measures.
- For those that will visit Okinawa on a school trip, take thorough infection prevention measures, and also make sure to act in accordance with the "Okinawa School Trip Quarantine and Sightseeing Guidelines" and other relevant guidelines.
- For other purposes, such as travel, it is recommended that you update your vaccination 2 weeks before the start of your trip to Okinawa.
- When there is a high risk of infection at the destination, such as when going to your parents' house, vacation rental or attending an event, please confirm negative results with a PCR or other test immediately before the start of the trip.
- For those who have chronic illnesses, take it easy and take care of your health during your stay. Also, ensure you have adequate supplies of prescribed medications, and bring extra medication when you visit Okinawa.
- Please use the Okinawa COVID-19 Countermeasure Personal Support Application (RICCA) to see relevant information on the COVID-19 situation and vaccinations.
- If you feel unwell or have a fever during your stay, please consult the "Traveler's Access Center Okinawa".

[Traveler's Access Center Okinawa (TACO)]

Phone: 098-840-1677 Operation hour: 8:00 ~21:00

Requests to Restaurants

[: Request for cooperation, based on The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9]
 [: Request for cooperation, not based on a law]

<p>Target Facilities</p>	<p>(Restaurants) Restaurants (excluding takeout and delivery) (Entertainment facilities / wedding halls) Bars, karaoke boxes, wedding halls (etc.) that possess a restaurant business license under the Food Sanitation Act</p>
<p>Details of the Requests</p>	<p>Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facilities: please continue to ensure that the restaurant is safe and secure by taking thorough infection prevention measures, including compliance with the industry specific guidelines.</p> <p>Restaurant hygiene management: Sufficient ventilation, disinfection of areas and utensils that are touched by customers.</p> <p>Ensuring staff safety: Conducting thorough health checks of staff, including conducting daily temperature checks before work. Recommend vaccination to staff.</p> <p>Safety for customers: Body temperature checks upon entry, sanitizing hands thoroughly, spaced seating, etc. (Deny entry to customers that display symptoms, such as a fever, even if they are mild symptoms. Ensure customers comply with infection prevention measures.)</p> <p>For restaurants that are not certified with Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility Certification, as a general rule allow only one group at one table with no more than 4 persons.</p> <p>For restaurants that are not certified with Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility Certification, please encourage customers to dine for no more than 2 hours.</p> <p>For restaurants that are not certified with Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility Certification, we encourage these facilities to take thorough infection prevention measures and to get certified as a "Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility" as soon as possible.</p>

When Holding Events

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation]

- ◆ For event organizers, please hold events in accordance with the Event Capacity Requirements (maximum number of people, venue capacity, etc.)

Maximum Venue Capacity		
Less than 5,000 people	Over 5,000 ~ less than 10,000 people	Over 10,000 people
Up to capacity	Up to capacity (If an Infection Prevention Safety Plan is prepared)	
	Up to 5,000 people	Up to Half of the capacity

- Event Organizers should thoroughly comply with the industry specific guidelines.
- **If you are planning to organize an event after March 13, 2023, please take measures referring to the infection prevention measures from the announcement of “Notes for restriction on events and use of facilities based on the basic response policies” issued by Director General of Office for COVID-19 and Other Emerging Infectious Disease Control, Cabinet Secretariat as of February 10, 2023. (Changes have been made to infection prevention measures related to mask-wearing and others.)**
- For events with more than 5,000 participants and over 50% of the capacity (in the case a maximum venue capacity has not been set, events that are estimated to have more than 5,000 participants and are unable to provide sufficient space between people [unable to provide 1 meter of physical distance between people]), the organizers must prepare and submit an Infection Prevention Safety Plan with specific measures to the prefectural government at least two weeks before the event.
- If the event doesn't meet the requirements set by the prefectural government, please adjust the event according to the request of the prefectural government or refrain from holding the event.
- Respond promptly in the event of a national outbreak or cluster at an event, and if the national government revises its industry-specific guidelines, capacity requirements and maximum number of people.
- For events with large numbers of people, recommend visitors receive the latest vaccine or confirm negative COVID-19 results by PCR or other tests in advance.
- If food or drink is served, organizers should designate an eating and drinking area and ensure participants do not eat or drink outside the dedicated areas. In addition, make sure participants adhere to infection control measures when eating and drinking (e.g., wearing masks while not eating/drinking).
- If alcohol is served, please ensure people do not drink in locations other than the designated area for eating and drinking. Even in the designated areas, please take appropriate measures like ensuring participants refrain from actions that have a high risk of infection such as prolonged drinking, loud voices, etc.
- For events that do not have an Infection Prevention Safety Plan, infection control measures should be thoroughly implemented through the preparation of checklists and other. For more details, see the "Restrictions on holding events". <https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/site/chijiko/kohokoryu/koho/20200828.html>

To Commercial and Visitor-attracting Facilities

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation]

The following infection control measures shall be implemented in sports facilities, amusement centers, cinemas, shopping malls and other facilities as regulated in Article 11, section 1 of the Special Measures Act.

- Compliance with relevant industry specific guidelines, and implementation of thorough infection prevention measures.
- Control and guide visitors so that they do not crowd together (work to ensure that it is not crowded or visitors are too close together, especially when holding events that attract visitors)
- Request visitors wear masks properly, etc.
- Take effective measures to prevent infection through droplets from conversation, etc.
(Especially, for food courts, measures such as the installation of acrylic panels, etc. or ensuring seating spacing and thorough ventilation).

To Businesses

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation]

- Ensure that employees take care of their health condition thoroughly and if you are unwell, stay home, if your employees are unwell, do not allow them to go to work.
- In cases that an employee tests positive or becomes a close contact of someone who is COVID-19 positive, negative proof of PCR or other tests shall not be required when the employee goes to work.
- Take measures to prevent crowded commuting to and from work, such as allowing work from home (teleworking), videoconferencing and expanding staggered working hours.
- Business continuity plans (BCP) should be developed and re-examined for industries that require business continuity.
- Adhere to the Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 specified by the industry.
- Encourage vaccination in the workplace (please provide an environment conducive to vaccination).
- Provide an environment that makes it easier for employees to nurse and take care of their children in case of home treatment or temporary closure of primary schools, etc.
- (By utilizing the subsidy for guardians affected by school closures, please establish a paid leave system for employees, etc.).
- Conduct effective indoor ventilation and other measures to deal with aerosol transmission of infections, such as the constant operation of ventilation fans and opening additional windows.

Requests to Elderly Care and Disabled Care Facilities

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation]

- Ensure that employees take care of their health condition thoroughly and if you are unwell, stay home, if your employees are unwell, do not allow them to go to work.
- The "Manual for countermeasures against COVID-19 in facilities for the elderly and those with disabilities (Okinawa Prefectural COVID-19 Countermeasures Headquarters)" and the "Guideline for infection control in nursing care facilities (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)" should be used as the foundation of countermeasures.
- Efforts should be made to formulate a business continuity plan (BCP) based on the assumption that clusters may occur, and simultaneous tests should be conducted around COVID-19 positive persons.
- Conduct effective indoor ventilation and other measures to deal with aerosol transmission of infections, such as the constant operation of ventilation fans and additional window openings.
- Conduct visits after taking infection prevention measures such as prior inspections of the facility. Since visits are important for facility users and their families, consider measures including face-to-face visits, taking into account the outbreak situation in the area, and the physical conditions, vaccination histories, and COVID-19 test results, etc.
- Conduct regular testing of employees and vaccination should be recommended to users of facilities (please provide an environment conducive to vaccination).

Implementation of Initiatives in each Municipality in Cooperation with the Prefecture

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9:
Requests for Cooperation]

- Raise awareness of infection prevention measures among local residents and call for cooperation from residents' associations, etc., by using the information systems and disaster warning systems.
- For municipalities, please continue to maintain the system so that vaccines for the omicron variant and other can be provided to those who wish to receive them.
- Please check the vaccination status of elderly persons requiring care and encourage them to receive vaccination through care managers and other care professionals.
- For events taking place in local municipalities that do not meet the Prefectural standards, upon the request of the Okinawa Prefectural Response Policy encourage the review of the event or encourage the event be cancelled or postponed.

Requests to Schools

[The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation]

- Base your response on the hygiene management manuals, indoor ventilation should be provided in response to aerosol transmission, including constant operation of ventilation fans and additional window openings, and people should be informed of the appropriate usage of masks according to the situation, such as removing masks outdoors when there are no people around.
- **At a graduation ceremony, please take measures in accordance with the notice "Basic guidance on use of masks at a graduation ceremony" from Director General for Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan as of February 10, 2023.**
- Thoroughly monitor the health of teachers, staff and students, using health observation charts and health observation apps, and ensure they refrain from going to work, school, club activities, etc. when they are unwell.
- Club activities should take thorough infection prevention measures, and should perform health checks at the start of activities and competitions.
- Thorough infection control measures, including the wearing of masks, should be taken when using common areas such as practice halls and club rooms outside of club activities, eating and drinking in groups before and after club activities, and traveling by bus.
- Promote the use of RADECO, which allows preschool, elementary, junior high, and high school students who are symptomatic and their family members living with them who may be in close contact to carry out qualitative antigen testing at home.
- In case a teacher, staff member or student tests positive or becomes a close contact of someone who is COVID-19 positive, the teacher, staff member, or student shall not be required to submit a negative PCR test or other tests before being allowed to go to work or school.

Guidelines on **mask-wearing** will be changed from **March 13!**

The decision about "Revision of the guidelines on mask-wearing" has been made in the central government's Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters on February 10.

Revision of the guidelines on mask-wearing **at school** will be effective **from April 1.**

1. Mask-wearing will depend on the decisions of individuals and businesses

Until now, the government has indicated the situations to wear a mask and has asked to wear a mask, however, **from March 13, mask-wearing will depend on decisions of individuals and businesses.**

Businesses are allowed to ask customers or employees **to wear masks** as infection prevention measures or for business reasons.

2. Notification of situations in which mask-wearing are effective.

To prevent the infection with the elderly and those have a higher risk of a severe case of COVID-19, **wearing a mask is recommended in the following situations.**

- **When seeing a doctor**
- **When visiting the elderly care facilities or medical institutions** where the elderly and those have a higher risk of a severe case of COVID-19 are hospitalized or live.
- **When getting on congested monorails or buses** during rush hour, etc.

3. Must wear a mask if you have any symptoms!

When those who have symptoms, positive result with COVID-19 test and people who live with family members who tested positive for the disease need to go out for seeing a doctor, etc., please **avoid the crowd and wear a mask** to prevent infection with people around.

Even if the guidelines on mask-wearing is changed, **for those who have positive results with COVID-19 test or are the close contacted person, please continue to avoid going out** until the legal status of the disease will be changed in the Infectious Disease Act.

4. Please continue to cooperate to take basic infection prevention measures

Even though the guidelines on mask-wearing is changed, **basic infection prevention measures are important.**

Please continue to take infection prevention measures such as **avoiding "crowded places, close-contact settings, and closed spaces"**, **conducting ventilation, sanitizing your hands.**

Observe your health daily and **if you have any symptoms** such as fever, sore throat, cough, **please refrain from going out.**