

# DICKENSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

## Board of Supervisors

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March 16, 2020

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to impact our nation and communities and now being under both Federal and State declarations of emergency, Dickenson County has and will implement some immediate steps to help keep our workplaces, citizens, employees and families as safe and healthy as possible. Like most localities, we are closely following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), our County EMS, the Office of the Governor of Virginia, the Federal Government and other nationally recognized health organizations. We continue to receive the latest, most up-to-the-minute information and have taken the following actions:

- Our maintenance department regularly sanitizes our three main facilities (the Dickenson County Judicial Center, the Dickenson County Historic Courthouse and the Dickenson Center for Education & Center); now, we will be performing this sanitization three times a week per building. We will also provide this service to other County buildings, to the extent possible, until this situation subsides. In addition, we will require our individual office staffs to increase the frequency of cleaning and sanitation efforts within their spaces, including twice daily cleaning of all doorknobs, work areas and other frequently touched and high traffic areas.
- Employees are encouraged to do their part in keeping themselves and our workplaces safe by following the guidelines on the attached pages (sent out last week); items of note are:
  - Frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitation
  - Cover your cough and avoid touching your head and face
  - Social distancing during work hours
  - NO handshaking or other physical forms of contact
  - Stay home if you are feeling sick or have a sick family member in your home

- Citizens and others using our offices and services are asked to follow **ALL** of the above guidelines as well, in an effort to keep our employees and families as safe as possible
- In an effort to stay on top of this rapidly developing issue, The Dickenson County Board of Supervisors and office of the County Administrator will make the following operational changes and reserve the right to make others, if conditions warrant. Now:
  - All Dickenson County offices reserve the right to **NOT** serve customers who display any form of illness. If you feel ill and have business with one of our offices, please do not come to our offices but call to make arrangements for your transaction or send a healthy person in your place
  - Employees will be offered gloves for use during their daily work, if desired
  - Once guidelines for State employees are established for the handling of missed work days required due to illness, the County will follow a similar policy for our employees
  - For employees who miss work for illness or quarantine, we will **NOT** require a medical excuse for absenteeism (as currently required per the personnel policy)
  - ALL non-essential work travel is suspended until further notice; if telecommunication is available for your meeting or event, that will be utilized
  - If conditions worsen or warrant, Dickenson County offices may stagger shifts/work hours, allow telework and/or close offices entirely to the public. Essential personnel will still have work hours and their functions will be carried out but may do so under altered time & conditions
  - As of now, Dickenson County Board of Supervisors meetings and workshops will continue, as scheduled, but in accordance with limited public gathering requirements
  - If conditions worsen or warrant, those meetings may be altered or closed to live public attendance (if closed, they will be streamed live for viewing - this is dependent on issuance of a State mandate allowing the practice of allowing the conduct of public meetings electronically) or these meetings may be postponed/cancelled entirely
  - Be aware that County public, non-emergency office hours and services **may** be altered or temporarily suspended (including trash collection)
  - All emergency matters should still be processed through 911; understand that Sheriff, police, fire/rescue response times may be affected if conditions worsen but **ALL** emergencies will be handled in order received or by severity of case
  - Once this document is approved and made matter of record, it will be posted to the County website; any changes to schedules and/or closures will be provided in detail and attached as an Addendum to this document

As part of Governor Northam declaration of a state of emergency on March 12, 2020, many state and local meetings and functions are altered; please see attached document for details. If further directives come from the WHO, CDC, VDH, VDEM, the Office of the Governor or the Federal Government, they **will be implemented immediately** with no required action by the Board of Supervisors or the office of the County Administrator.

We will do our best to keep the great citizens of our County informed and do ask that you be understanding of our offices and employees needs to remain as safe and healthy as possible during this challenging time. This is an extremely fluid situation and our goal is to act appropriately and swiftly, so be advised schedules and operations may change quickly. Please follow [www.dickensonva.org](http://www.dickensonva.org) for all of our latest updates, as well as our social media accounts.

Some other websites of interest for updates are:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

<https://www.vaemergency.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/>

<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

# Keeping the workplace safe

## Encourage your employees to...

### Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

### Be careful with meetings and travel



- Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible
- When not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces
- Consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings
- Assess the risks of business travel

### Handle food carefully



- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen health screening for cafeteria staff and their close contacts
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

### Stay home if...



- They are feeling sick
- They have a sick family member in their home

**What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus**

# Interim Guidance: Considerations for Businesses and Employers, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

March 8, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed guidance for businesses and employers in the United States to help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illness in non-healthcare settings; this guidance also provides planning considerations if there are widespread community outbreaks of COVID-19. Creating a plan for your workplace or business can help protect you, your employees, and the health of the local community. The full text of this guidance can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>.

In consultation with local health officials, businesses should consider the following intervention strategies based on COVID-19 severity status in Virginia. Broadly, VDH will assess and categorize COVID-19 severity using measures including the number of cases reported, case-hospitalization ratio and number of localities affected. Businesses should take into consideration their ability to implement modifications to their normal operations for moderate and high severity level situations depending on the size and scope of their organization.

Workers and employers involved in health care, death care, laboratory, airline, border protection, and solid waste and wastewater management operations should consult [OSHA guidelines](#) for these specific worker groups.

Regularly and proactively communicate with your employees to reduce stigma and misinformation; there is no connection between COVID-19 and race, ethnicity, or national origin.

The guidance below is structured in three sections: **prior** to COVID-19 detection in your community, **once** COVID-19 is detected in your community, and **after** COVID-19 event in your community.



## **PRIOR to COVID-19 Detection in your community**

- **Encourage personal hygiene and environmental cleaning practices to reduce the spread of disease:**
  - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the [cleaning agents](#) that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
    - Businesses with significant customer turnover (tourist destinations, restaurants, movie theaters, museums, gyms) should consider more frequent than usual cleaning of surfaces most commonly touched by the public (doorknobs, etc.)
  - Provide soap, water, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace, including customer areas. Maintain adequate supplies; consider assigning these responsibilities to specific staff.
  - Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are visible.
  - Emphasize hand hygiene to all employees; wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol when soap and water are not available.
- **Prepare for absenteeism and encourage sick employees to stay home or telework:**
  - Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, and dismissals of schools or childcare.

- Ensure you have a company culture and sick leave policies in place that will facilitate employees staying home when sick.
- Create plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism. Consider cross-training personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.
- Consider applying 'Medium Severity' risk procedures for employees of higher risk;
  - Persons aged 60 or older or persons with underlying conditions
- Explore whether you can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others.
- **Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.**
  - Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
  - Coordination with state and local health officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside.
  - Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.



### **ONCE COVID-19 IS DETECTED in the community (low to high severity)**

Once COVID-19 is detected in a community, health department recommendations addressing any change in normal operations will depend on a number of factors such as the number of cases detected, the severity of illness associated with those cases and how widespread infection is or is predicted to be based on case histories. Assessing these and other factors will help the health department determine the severity of the situation, which will help inform recommendations. In consultation with local officials, businesses and employers should consider implementing the following when COVID-19 is detected in their or neighboring communities.

- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work; doctor's offices may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Share absenteeism data with local health departments and community partners.
- Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions based on the condition in each locality.
- If employees have cough or shortness of breath upon arrival to work, separate them from other employee and send them home immediately.
- Use teleconferencing instead of face-to-face meetings when possible, and allow teleworking for employees who are able to do so.
- Consider cancelling non-essential business travel, and if widespread community transmission is occurring, consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events



### **AFTER a COVID-19 event in your community**

Once concern about COVID-19 has subsided, businesses and employers are encouraged to work with local officials to help scale back prevention efforts specific to COVID-19. Recommendations to consider in this phase of response include:

- Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for your company to discuss and note lessons learned.
- Maintain and expand your planning team.
- Participate in community-wide emergency preparedness activities.

# Governor Northam Declares State of Emergency, Outlines Additional Measures to Combat COVID-19

*webmaster@governor.virginia.gov*

## Governor issues guidance on large events and state workforce, activates long-term economic plan

**RICHMOND**—Governor Ralph Northam today declared a state of emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia in response to the continued spread of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

While Virginia has been thoroughly preparing for weeks and has adequate funding to address the situation, this declaration will allow the Commonwealth increased flexibility to ease regulatory requirements and procurement rules, continue federal and multi-state coordination, and ensure continued access to critical services for the most vulnerable Virginians. In addition, it has become increasingly clear that states must take a primary leadership role in the national response to COVID-19. The full text of the Governor's emergency declaration is available [here](#).

“Our top priority is to make sure Virginians stay safe and healthy, and that our response to this situation leaves no one behind,” **said Governor Northam**. “From our health department, to our schools, to our hospitals, to our transit systems, Virginia’s agencies and institutions have been thoroughly planning for every scenario. This emergency declaration will ensure we can continue to prepare for and appropriately respond to Virginians’ needs during this time.”

Governor Northam also announced additional steps to ensure the health and safety of all Virginians, including:

### **Ban on State Employee Travel and Implementation of Telework Policies**

Virginia has over 100,000 state employees stationed throughout the Commonwealth. Governor Northam has halted all official travel outside of Virginia by state employees, with increased flexibility for inter-state commuters and essential personnel. Specific guidance will be released to agency heads and state employees, and Virginia will revisit these guidelines after 30 days.

Governor Northam has also directed his Secretary of Administration to implement a phased transition to teleworking for state employees. The Department of Human Resources Management will work with the Virginia Department of Health’s Equity Workgroup to prioritize support for impacted

state employees that may be unable to perform their duties from home, including janitorial, food, and grounds staff.

The Department of Human Resources Management has worked to ensure all agencies have updated emergency operations and leave policies. State employees, including part-time employees, can access paid Public Health Emergency Leave in the event of exposure to COVID-19 or high-risk travel.

### **Public Gatherings and Large Events**

In accordance with advice from state public health experts, the Commonwealth of Virginia will cancel all specially-scheduled state conferences and large events for a minimum of 30 days.

Governor Northam is directing state agencies, through the Department of Human Resource Management, to limit in-person meetings and non-essential, work-related gatherings.

Governor Northam is also urging localities and non-profits to limit large public events, effective immediately. Localities should make these decisions in coordination with their local health departments and the Virginia Department of Health. Highly populated localities and those with close proximity to positive cases are strongly encouraged to announce updated event guidance by Friday, March 13, at 5:00 PM, in advance of the weekend.

### **Long-Term Economic Planning**

Governor Northam is also assessing the potential long-term economic impacts of COVID-19. While containing the spread of the public health threat remains a top priority, Governor Northam is working with state and local partners to ensure Virginia are prepared for any continued economic disruption.

Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and Trade will coordinate regularly with representatives from the Virginia Employment Commission, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, the Department of Labor and Industry, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and other relevant stakeholders.

Throughout his administration, Governor Northam has worked closely with state legislators to protect Virginia's strong economy and prepare for unexpected economic shocks. The General Assembly will vote today on a budget that boosts Virginia's reserve funds more than at any other time in the Commonwealth's history, an essential mechanism to ensure continued state services regardless of economic uncertainty.

### **Ongoing State Response Efforts**

The Commonwealth of Virginia is continuing to execute a multi-agency response plan across all levels of government. Efforts include the following:

## **Schools**

- The Department of Education has advised all school districts to update their pandemic guidelines, in consultation with their local health departments.
- The Northam administration continues to be in regular communication with superintendents, university and community college presidents, to provide guidance on the unique situations they are facing on the ground.

## **Nursing Homes**

- The Virginia Department of Health has expanded its testing criteria to ensure that anyone who has symptoms and is in a nursing home is top priority and gets immediate testing.
- Nursing homes and senior care facilities have updated their policies to provide additional visitor screening and increased monitoring of patients.

## **Vulnerable Virginians**

- Virginia's social services agencies are preparing options to ensure the most vulnerable populations have continued access to critical services, including the potential for in-home care and food supports.
- In the event of extended school closures, the Virginia Department of Social Services is working with local partners, such as food pantries, to ensure no one goes hungry.

## **Addressing Barriers to Care**

- Virginia is working with insurers to waive co-pays and diagnostic testing related to COVID-19.
- Governor Northam continues to encourage private businesses to explore telework and paid time off options, including those with hourly workers.

## **Transportation**

- Across the Commonwealth's transportation network, which includes airports, Metro, buses, and rail, Virginia is adjusting cleaning schedules according to CDC protocol.
- Virginia is also working with transportation partners to help reduce the potential spread of disease.

# # #

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019

This interim guidance is intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning mass gatherings or large community events in the United States. **A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert, festival, conference, or sporting event.** Guidance specific to schools and childcare settings, institutions of higher education, and community- and faith-based organizations can be found on [CDC's website focused on prevention COVID-19 spread in communities](#).

COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory disease and there is more to learn about its transmission, clinical course, and populations at increased risk of disease and complications (see [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)). Everyone can do their part to help plan, prepare, and respond to this emerging public health threat.

Older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions are considered to be at increased risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19. Priority should be given to ensuring the safety of these groups of people, particularly for any mass gatherings that are expected to have a large number of older adults or persons with underlying conditions.

As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, CDC strongly encourages event organizers and staff to prepare for the possibility of outbreaks in their communities. Creating an emergency plan for mass gatherings and large community events can help protect you and the health of your event participants and the local community.

CDC has developed recommended actions for preventing the spread of COVID-19 at mass gatherings and large community events. This guidance suggests strategies to help you plan for and implement ways in which to better protect all involved in a mass gathering.

Organizers should continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees (if possible) for mass gatherings. Listed below are some considerations organizers should keep in mind as they make decisions about whether to postpone or cancel an event. If organizers decide to proceed with an event they should consult the "Steps to Plan, Prepare, and Proceed with a Mass Gathering" section of this document.

**Dickenson County, in an effort to keep our employees, their families, extended families and our workplaces as safe as possible during this time, has issued a document which we will use as a framework for preparation and response to the Coronavirus. This document will be shared by email with all employees and posted on the County website/pushed to all our social media for the public to view and share.**

**Know that we continue to stay up to date with all of the latest guidelines and information from the Federal Government, CDC, VDH, VDEM, regional and county EMS and the Office of the Governor. As we learn new information requiring us to make schedule/facility/service alterations and/or cancellations, we will keep you apprised immediately of those changes via our website and social media.**

#### **GENERAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

- **Employees were notified last week of the CDC and VDH guides for things they should do to keep themselves and our workplaces safer; good hand hygiene, social distancing including NO handshaking, travel restrictions and stay home if you or family member are ill**
- **We ask that the public follow all of the same practices**
- **Most known cases are mild and recovery takes a few weeks. If you suspect you may be sick, please contact your personal health care provider or the local health department to check out how and where to get tested**
- **The County operates three main buildings (Judicial Center, Courthouse and DCER); those 3 buildings are regularly sanitized but that now will be performed three time per week**

per building. In addition, we are having each individual office clean/sanitize door knobs, work stations and other high traffic areas in their space at least twice per day

- As of now, County offices remain open on regular schedules but that could change quickly; hours could be altered or offices closed all together – we await directives from the Governor and the health agencies for guidance
- Our current plan to keep all essential function of government open and active; but if conditions worsen or warrant, we will make changes, and these could include possible suspension of services
- If offices close, we ask that the public call or contact the office they need services from and arrangements will be made to assist you
- The County will adhere to the current CDC request that no congregations of larger than 50 be allowed; and if that threshold is lowered or eliminated, we will automatically comply
- Our current plan is to continue our BoS public meeting and workshop schedule; however, that could change dependent on future conditions
- If we are forced to close our public meetings (which would require the issue of a state mandate by the Governor allowing so); we will continue to live stream any meetings that we can

**We thank everyone for coming today. We ask that you all stay informed and be patient with us as we work through this. We will get through. Stay safe!**