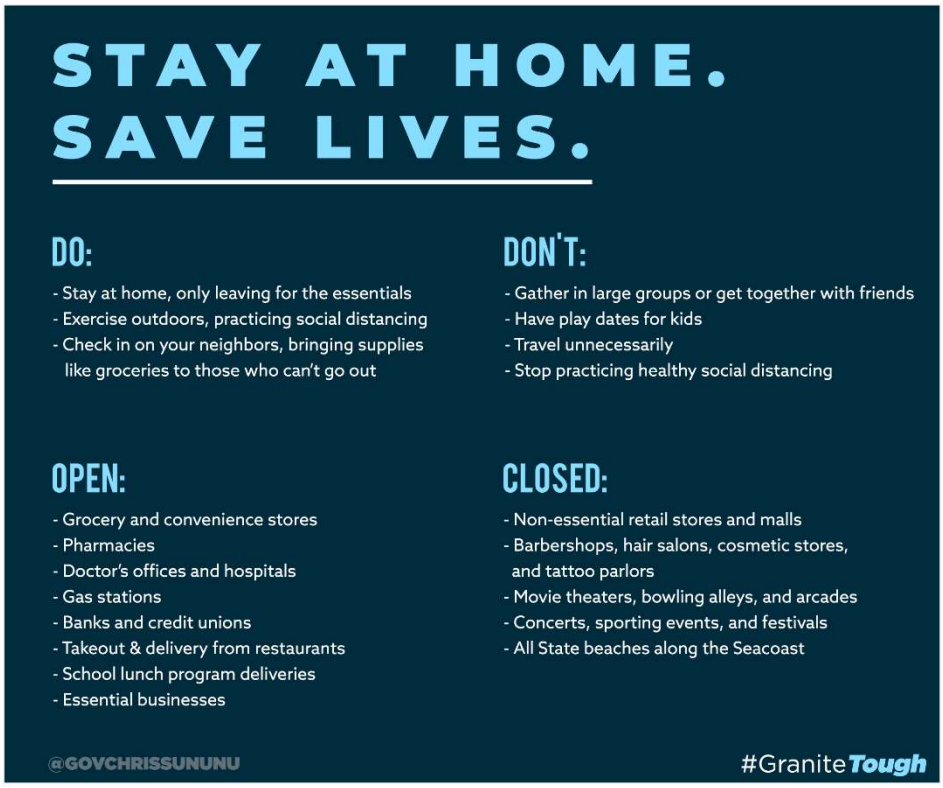
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

UPDATE from the City Manager for Friday, March 27, 2020

Governor Sununu has issued a Stay At Home order, effective at 11:59 pm Friday, March 27 through May 4, 2020.



The City has set up a new page on the website linking directly to COVID-19-related documents and resources. You'll find the link COVID-19 INFORMATION at the top of the homepage. The links include: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/covid-19-information

- Gov Sununu's Stay-At-Home Order https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/emergency-orders/documents/emergency-order-17-1.pdf
- Gov. Sununu's detailed definition of "Essential Businesses" https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/emergency-order-17.pdf
- Health-related information https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/health/coronavirus-preparedness
- Food aid, grocery resources and restaurant takeout options https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/covid-19-food-resources
- Business and employee resources https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/economic/covid-19-response-resources-businesses-employees
- An archive of all City Manager Daily Advisories https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/city-manager-daily-updates

Keep looking out for each other! Our social-distancing efforts -- including avoiding benches and other gathering spots -- seem to be helping, so far. PLEASE continue as we do our part to flatten the curve.

REMINDER: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Donation Drive
The Portsmouth Fire Department is collecting items at the **Portsmouth Indoor Pool (48 Andrew Jarvis Dr., parking lot next to Portsmouth High School entrance), on Saturday, March 28, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

WHAT THEY NEED:

- Sterile and non-sterile gloves - latex-free preferred
- Hand sanitizer
- Bleach bottles or sprays
- Bleach wipes
- Isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol)
- Eye protection and goggles
- Clear face shields - These look like a welder's mask but are transparent
- Masks - tie, ear-loop
- Respirator masks - N95, N99, P100 - all sizes. Extra filters are also needed for these devices.
- PAPR respirators - 3M or MaxAir - unused. Hoods, filters, batteries, chargers, tubes to go with these units are also needed.
- Disposable gowns - unused isolation gowns
- Shoe covers
- Biohazard bags - unused

Please don't bring:

- Used PPE
- Clothing new or used
- Food of any kind
- Water

For more information about PPE donations and collection, please contact Fire Prevention Officer Shawn Wheeler at the Portsmouth Fire Department at fireprevention@cityofportsmouth.com.

VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS

The NH Charitable Foundation has started a specific COVID-19 "Community Crisis" response grant program:

https://www.nhcf.org/about-us/community-crisis-action-action-fund/

But they also offer the following advice:

"Should I give to this fund instead of making other donations?

This fund was created to complement other efforts being undertaken, including United Way of the Greater Seacoast and the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund. Direct donations to nonprofits are also critical right now. **Please continue to give to organizations you regularly support, and those that need additional help**."

Portsmouth Police Department reminds citizens to be vigilant about phone calls and emails requesting donations. Scams are popping up nationwide, asking for donations for doctors, medical supplies and other emergency resources. Be very careful. Make sure you are dealing with a trust-worthy charity.

Operation Blessings asks those who are interested in volunteering to use this online system. Please click here then click on Medical Reserve Corps and then Seacoast MRC.

"Adopt-A-Senior" – The City Health Officer asks: Would everyone please check with any senior or disabled neighbors who live alone -- by phone, a wave through the window as you are walking by, perhaps a note. DO NOT go inside or speak face-to-face in close proximity. Maintain social-distance. If you are concerned about people living alone who may not know how to get food or medicines, or seem like they just need someone to check in with them on occasion, please contact the Health Department in Portsmouth at 603-610-4187. Or the Health Officer for your town.

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FOOD RESOURCES

REVISED: **For the latest list of Portsmouth restaurant/food takeout, pickup and delivery options**, https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/RestaurantTakeout%202020.03.26c.pdf
Note that restaurants with on-premise liquor licenses can now sell beer/wine with takeout food orders. The list of options changes daily so check the SeacoastOnline.com list of Seacoast area restaurants, too.

The Farmers Markets are cancelled, but many participants are offering direct food sales from their farms. Click here for the Seacoast Eat Local directory of these resources.

UPDATE: Food Resources
For an updated list of available food aid resources, click here.

https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/FoodResources%20as%20of%20March%2027%2C%202020b.pdf

Meals on Wheels: Starting on April 2nd, meal delivery will be reduced to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. There will not be meal delivery on Tuesdays and Thursdays. An extra meal will be included on Monday for Tuesday and on Wednesday for Thursday. Additionally, they will continue to deliver extra shelf-stable food and frozen meals, just in case. New customers are still being accepted, so please call 603-431-0561 to complete an application over the phone.

Operation Blessings is still providing a drive-up food pantry at 600a Lafayette Rd. Wed-Fri, 10am to 4pm, for anyone who needs food (some restrictions may apply).

- Senior Mobile Food Pantry operates Mon thru Sat, 10am to 4pm. Seniors-only, ages 62+ from Portsmouth, Greenland, New Castle or Rye.
- Gosling Meadows and Greenleaf Rec Center Family Dinners are cancelled until further notice.
- For any questions or to register, call Food Pantry at 603-430-8561 and Food Delivery at 603-988-2671.

GATHER is our local food pantry that serves more than 1,400 Seacoast residents and 400 schoolchildren through the End 68 Hours of Hunger program on weekends

- **Pantry** hours will be reduced starting Monday, March 30, in an effort to follow guidelines from the Portsmouth Health Dept. Volunteer shifts will be adjusted to match up with our current needs, including a few shifts on Thursdays.
  - Mon, Tues, Wed: 10 am – 3 pm at 210 West Road #3 in Portsmouth
  - Thurs: *Closed*
  - Fri: 9am-1pm at Community Campus, 100 Campus Drive in Portsmouth
- **Food Donations** GATHER needs food! Click here for the list of what's needed and where to drop off donations. GATHER is at 210 West Road #3 in Portsmouth.

Back to Single-Use Plastic Bags -- Gov. Chris Sununu on Saturday ordered all grocery and retail stores to temporarily transition to the use of single-use paper or plastic bags only – no reusable customer bags -- due to the threat of the spread of the coronavirus. Customers' use of reusable bags is banned. The purpose of the order is to avoid the unintentional spread of the virus from home environments.

Update on grocery stores:

- **Latest list of food stores and pharmacy hours**, click here.
- **Market Basket stores now close at 6 pm**.
- **Seniors-Only (age 60+) Shopping Hours**
    - **McKinnons -- Daily 7-8am**
    - **Market Basket, Tues-Thurs mornings, 5:30-7 am**
    - **Hannaford, Tues-Thurs mornings, 6-7 am**

CITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

All municipal buildings and facilities, schools and the Portsmouth Public Library remain closed to the public. City services are staffed *Monday through Friday*, according to staggered work schedules to minimize the number of people in the same place at the same time.

- **Applying for Elderly/Disabled/Solar abatements?** Click here **for the latest update on new and renewed applications.**
- **Paying bills while City Hall is closed to the public.** Residents are asked to use the City's online services to pay their water bills, taxes, fees, fines; secure permits, etc. Payments can be mailed or dropped in the drop-box in the City Hall parking lot.
- **NH DMV has extended the expiration date for temporary motor vehicle plates and licenses.** All temporary plates issued after March 1. 2020 are now valid through April 30, 2020. For information about how vehicle registration works in NH, click here. City residents can renew their registrations online here. **State drivers' licenses and ID cards set to expire can be extended by phone for 6 months**. Call 603-227-4020 to pay for and complete the extension.
- **Along with public utilities (gas, electric, cable, phone, etc.) the City Department of Public Works Water & Sewer Divisions have suspended all disconnect orders and/or late fees. Contact the City directly if you're having difficulty meeting a bill deadline.**
- **Fire Department** has suspended scheduled fire protection inspections and the issuing of any burn permits. If you have a Class 1 or 2 permit (backyard, etc.) the permit expiration is extended to June 1, 2020.
- **Building Inspections continue by video for unoccupied and exteriors of buildings.**
- **Planning Department**: For information about land use applications and submission deadlines click here.
- **City board, commission and committee meetings are in the process of being scheduled remotely**. **City Council intends to meet virtually on April 6, 2020, as scheduled**. Details to come.
- **Portsmouth Public Library:** For details on all of the on-line services offered by the Library and how to access them, click here.

COAST and Senior Transportation are still operating.

Welfare Assistance: Residents in Portsmouth, New Castle, Rye, Newington or Greenland who require assistance should contact the City's Welfare Department. Call 603-610-7267 or email WFDept@CityofPortsmouth.com

The IRS has announced that the deadline for filing Federal income taxes is now July 15, 2020. For more information about the deadline extension, click here.

Feeling anxious? There are many people feeling anxieties about the current situation. Kim McNamara, City Health Officer suggested these resources who are there to help:

- **Seacoast Mental Health** has geared up for exactly these challenges call 603-431-6703 or click here. https://smhc-nh.org/covid-19-updates/
- **SOS Recovery Centers are a good option (**for people in recovery). Click here for SOS; and click here for the recovery center in Portsmouth, Safe Harbor.

SCHOOLS

Meal distribution schedule: Pickup for breakfast and lunch at the Portsmouth High School cafeteria door between 7:30 am and 12 noon, *Monday through Friday*. Meal distribution takes place as following at the satellite sites:

- Wamesit (11:00 - 11:25)
- Ledgewood (11:30 - 11:45)
- Gosling Recreation Center (11:00-11:45)
- Osprey Landing (at mailboxes) (11:00-11:20)
- White Cedars (11:30-11:45)
- Patriots Park (11:00-11:20)
- Beechstone (playground) (11:25 - 11:45)
- Unless indicated otherwise, drop-off locations will be at the typical bus stops in these areas. Our schedule and stops may change as we work to assess and meet the needs of the community.

These online-learning days will count on the school year calendar. The NH Department of Education has been clear with schools that these days will count as "school days" and therefore there should be no need to extend the school year. Teachers are putting some great plans in place to engage students in their learning and we will continue to find new ways to support students and families through this.

Be careful when you're online! To support the safety of all students as we engage in digital learning, click here for some good reminders about staying safe on the internet
https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/education/internetsafety.html

Do your part to discourage gatherings of people. All school buildings are closed to the public at this point. We are supporting online collaboration among teachers. **The School Board will hold a virtual Zoom meeting on March 30th. Details to come.**

For some virtual learning options, including activities, games and videos offered by the local arts, culture and history resources, click here. https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/VirtualLessons%20032520.pdf

DPW

#WIPESCLOGPIPES! Please dispose of disinfectant wipes in a separate trash bag. Flush only toilet paper or tissues in the toilet (even the wipes marked "flushable" can clog pipes like this). Pipes from your home are much smaller in diameter than City sewer lines, so clog much more easily.

Residents should continue to use Click 'n Fix as needed so service requests can be logged and addressed.

The recycling center is open and staffed to allow just a few vehicles at a time for social distancing.

Trash pickup is on the normal schedule and yard waste pickups have also begun but may be limited by the availability of workers and trucks.

Trees & Greenery invites you to participate in the City's Adopt-A-Spot Program -- a great family project you can do while staying 6 feet part.

PARKING: The Portsmouth City Council voted to enact Free Parking through April 6, 2020. **On-street and public garage parking fees are suspended. Patrons with monthly parking contracts in the garages will receive a proportional credit for the month of April to account for this three-week free-parking period**. Should the Council decide to extend the Free Parking, further adjustments to monthly parking fees will be made at that time.

In answer to a hotline@cityofportsmouth.com question: **If you wish to cancel your monthly parking pass, you can turn in your card by dropping it in the gray box in front of City Hall** with a note indicating the name(s) of the person(s) wanting cancellation. **However, the Parking Department advises against this because:**

- There will be further adjustments to May's billing if the free parking is extended.
- If a large number of people opt out of their contracts all at once, and then want them back all at once, it would create a significant backlog, possibly causing delays in getting people restarted.

It is best to leave your contract open if you intend to continue parking after this is over. Adjustments will be given to compensate for the free period, and no interruption would be necessary.

PORTSMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY

All Portsmouth Housing Authority Senior and Multi-Unit properties are closed to the public. Only essential caregivers, health care workers and people delivering food or medical supplies are authorized to enter, and only when absolutely necessary. These properties include Margeson, Feaster, Woodbury Manor, State Street, Pleasant Street and Betty's Dream Apartments, as well as Atlantic Heights, Connors Cottage and Lafayette School Senior Housing.

All area medical and home care agencies that must provide on-site services to their consumers should be in **contact with Executive Director Craig Welch** at craigwelch@nh-pha.com or 603957-2485 with questions.

PHA offices are open only via telephone 603-436-4310 **and email** info@nh-pha.com.

If PHA residents need assistance they should contact our Resident Services Coordinators at 603-957-8131, or via email: people@nh-pha.com.

Rents are due, as scheduled. Please contact Executive Director Craig Welch at craigwelch@nh-pha.com or 603-957-2485 with any questions or concerns.

RECREATION/PARKS

A reminder that you should not congregate – anywhere. The Governor's Stay At Home order includes the **closing of all NH Seacoast beaches as of midnight, March 27, 2020.** Social-distancing is the new norm, for now. Buildings, playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts and dog parks remain closed.

Parks & Playgrounds

- The following parks are open: Daniel Street Pocket Park, Haven Park, Langdon Park, Goodwin Park, Hanscom Park and Big Rock Park. Also Prescott Park and Peirce Island (no dogs allowed at either).
- For a map showing **off-leash dog parks which are also great walking trails,** click here. Also: Pease Tradeport and Wildlife Sanctuary are great places to walk but are not designated off-leash for dogs. The bike bridge and bike path at Pease are away from lots of people. NH State Parks **and trails including the Little Harbor Loop Trail are also open.**

The Easter Bunny has informed the Portsmouth Rec Department that, unfortunately the **annual Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for April 4, 2020 has been CANCELLED.**

All spring sport sign-up sessions originally scheduled to start April 7, 2020 are also POSTPONED

Under normal circumstances, the City would start accepting applications for dock space at Prescott Park about now. Due to the social-distancing guidance, Prescott Park docks will not open for the foreseeable future. We'll keep you posted. Remember that the dock extending from the park where the "Whale Sculpture" is located is also closed while repairs to the railings proceed.

BUSINESS & EMPLOYEES

The Economic Development Department has **created a new page on the City website** with all the resources and links (updated daily) to business assistance resources. Let us know what else you'd like to see on this page! https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/economic/covid-19-response-resources-businesses-employees

NH Employment Security (NHES)

- **Filing for unemployment.** You are assigned a day and time to file based on the first letter of your last name. **The unemployment system hotline is 603-271-7700**.
- **Payments are made beginning eight days from when the claim is filed**. Those filing claims must login again for each week of continued eligibility and file a continued claim.
- **If you're Self Employed and have filed for unemployment benefits**, ignore the Denial Message you receive. **Your unemployment claim requires time to process as a result of your being Self Employed.** You will receive a telephone call from NHES to obtain wage information to process and complete your unemployment claim.

The NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) has started this page to keep employees and businesses update. It includes links to New Hampshire Employment Security and available services. Individuals will need to file for unemployment each week of temporary unemployment and this can and should be done online here or by calling 603-271-7700.

Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth

- **For information about the stores, businesses and restaurants that are open**, go to the Chamber Collaborative's GoPortsmouthNH.com website.
- **For information about business assistance resources,** go to the Chamber Collaborative's COVID-19 website page.
- **For hospitality businesses in particular**, www.GoPortsmouthNH.com.

Local businesses have also put together the following resources:

- Information about which businesses are still operating, doing web programming, etc.
- Website to support local businesses through the purchase of gift cards for use later

STAY SAFE!

Don't congregate. Get outside. Enjoy some fresh air. Just keep your distance. Portsmouth's open space parks and trails and the NH State Parks are open, but ballfields, basketball courts and playgrounds are NOT. The locks on the gates are there for the protection of all. That means no group sports, no group gatherings (not even ones you've planned like birthday parties) and especially no contact with older relatives who are the most susceptible population. Remember that you might unknowingly bring COVID-19 back into your house, putting everyone at risk**.**

Tell first responders if anyone in your household is quarantined due to COVID-19 if you need contact with the Fire Department, Police Department or other emergency services. If they are not wearing personal protective equipment when they are exposed, they must self-quarantine for 14 days. No exceptions. That reduces the force available to respond to emergencies.

Remember to wipe down your cellphones when you're sanitizing surfaces. They're in constant use, connecting hands and face.

And advice from a Boston physician:

- Eliminate play dates, even "1 on 1"
- Eliminate small gatherings, including meetings "between a few families."
- Avoid climbing gyms, restaurants, movie theaters, anything in an enclosed area. Many of these places are advertising increased cleaning and hygiene. This is not sufficient! Do not go.
- Cancel planned vacations for the next month and avoiding airline travel.
- Stay at home as much as possible. They also advise working from home if possible and when you do have to go out to buy groceries or medicine "make the trips quick and purposeful."
- Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after you've been in public places.

For answers to other questions about the City's response to COVID-19, please email: hotline@cityofportsmouth.com

For more information, visit the Health Department page on COVID-19