



Town of Walpole
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Town Administrator
James A. Johnson

TO: All Town Hall Staff
All Council on Aging Staff
All Recreation Department Staff
All Library Department Staff

FROM: James A. Johnson
Town Administrator

DATE: March 15, 2020

RE: Building Closures / Attendance

Earlier today, and in consultation with the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Public Works Director, Health Director, and Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, the Town of Walpole declared a state of local emergency in accordance with MGL Chapter 34, §31 in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Massachusetts. Pursuant to this state of local emergency, I have determined that it is in the interest of the health and wellbeing of town staff and the general public to close all Town Buildings to the public, including the Police Station and Fire Station, until further notice. The determination of keeping the buildings closed to the public will be made on a week-to-week basis, until the outbreak becomes contained or unless circumstances require a different approach.

In order to ensure the delivery of essential municipal services as this situation evolves, staff of the Town Hall, Council on Aging, Recreation Department, and Public Library are still expected to come to work as scheduled.

As always, I encourage all Town employees to please remain home if you are ill. Employees may continue to use their accrued sick time for COVID-19 –related reasons (ex. if you feel unwell, if a family-member is sick, child care if daycare / schools are closed, etc.) and in accordance with the Personnel Bylaw or their Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The CDC has identified that certain demographics of individuals are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness, including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions (such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease). If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, I encourage you to please take everyday precautions and consider your own personal health when making a decision about coming to work.

In the meantime, I encourage all Town employees to take preventative actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as washing your hands, avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should stay at home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Anyone who is experiencing a fever or respiratory

illness and is concerned they have either come into contact with the virus or traveled to an effected country within the last 14 days is advised to stay home and contact their primary health care provider.

Additionally, Blue Cross Blue Shield has advised the Town that they are taking the steps to expedite access and testing for members. For more information on this, please visit the Human Resource Department.

The Walpole Board of Health remains the primary point of contact for any communicable disease outbreaks. Their work is informed by Mass DPH and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). As you know this is an evolving situation. We will continue to take our lead from their direction and guidance.

Finally, in light of this local state of emergency, it is presently contemplated that staff from certain departments may be temporarily reassigned to support the outreach efforts that the Town is making to contain the virus and support Walpole residents. At this time, I am hereby giving Department Heads the discretion to alter employee schedules as necessary to best serve the public interest.

Further updates from Town, Health, and School officials will be provided on the Town website and various social media platforms as they become available. This situation is evolving every day, and we continue to be grateful for your patience and efforts as we work through this together.

As always, if you have any questions about these, please contact your Department Head or this office directly.

Thank you.