



TOWN OF WALPOLE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Walpole Town Hall
135 School Street
Walpole, MA 02081
Phone (508) 660-7304
Fax (508) 660-7303

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TOWN OF WALPOLE PUBLIC SERVICE
ANNOUNCEMENT ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Town Administrator
James A. Johnson

Health Director
Melissa Ranieri

As concerns rise over the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Town officials would like to take this opportunity to provide Walpole residents with an update on some of the measures that Town Officials have taken to date in regards to COVID-19.

Town and School Officials continue to meet on a weekly and if necessary daily basis to review communication and preparedness protocols due to the evolving situation created by the outbreak. While this is a new virus the Town's protocol for public health preparedness is not. Officials have reviewed reinforcing safety protocols for First Responders for respiratory viruses as well as cleaning protocols in Town and School Building to prevent the spread of viruses. While the risk continues to remain low, if necessary Town staff are prepared to work remotely to ensure a continuity of operations. Town officials are confident that the Town will be prepared to deliver essential services as this situation evolves.

The Town of Walpole has set up a webpage (<https://walpole-ma.gov/covid19>) which will provide the latest Coronavirus information available to residents. The Town will ensure that memos, advisories and school related information will be posted on this site to ensure that everyone has the most up to date information available. The Town will take advantage of various municipal social media service outlets, such as Schools, Public Safety, Recreation and Council on Aging to disseminate educational material to promote preventative measures to reduce the risk of exposure. If the Town is forced to take actions to close buildings or cancel events we will share this information on multiple platforms including the Town of Walpole's Twitter feed (<https://twitter.com/TownofWalpole>) ,the Walpole Board of Health's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WalpoleHealthDepartment/>) and the Town's website.

Going forward please be mindful of the following:

- Please take everyday preventive actions to avoid 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 home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals.
- Anyone who is experiencing a fever and/or respiratory illness and is concerned they have either come into contact with the virus or traveled to an affected country within the last 14 days is advised to contact their primary health care provider.
- School and Town buildings are cleaned with particular attention to touch points and high contact surfaces. Areas will continue to be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.
- The Walpole Board of Health remains the primary point of contact for any communicable disease outbreaks. Their work is informed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As you might expect this is

an evolving situation. We will continue to take our lead from their direction and guidance. For the most up to date information please visit the MDPH and CDC websites at, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health> and <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

- The Town's cyber security team has advised there have been several reports of cyber criminals impersonating health officials in an attempt to gain access to your personal data. The methods usually involve creating a sense of urgency, ultimately tricking victims to sign up for upcoming COVID19 vaccines so they are not put onto a long wait list. We ask all residents to keep vigilant during this time and to never disclose any personal information over email or phone should this scenario present itself.
- As always, please remain home if you are ill.

Boards, Committees and Commissions will continue to meet as scheduled as of the writing of this release. This determination will be reevaluated on a weekly basis.

At this time Walpole Public School Superintendent, Dr. Bridget Gough, has advised that there are no plans to close schools or cancel after school activities. The School Department is in constant communication with the DPH regarding domestic school trips. The School Department is encouraging parents and guardians to stay informed and that they will notify parents if there are any updates.

The Town of Walpole continues to monitor this situation very carefully and will be taking any new information day by day. 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 very fluid, and we are grateful for your patience and efforts as we work through this together.