



**Office of Emergency Management
City of Chester**

320 E. 14th Street, Chester PA 19013
(O) 610-447-7765 (F) 610-447-7840

PUBLIC RELEASE

3/12/2020

To Whom It May Concern,

With the recent events that have transpired and in keeping with the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Center for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC), the City of Chester Office of Emergency Management (OEM) recommends following the guidelines in the two (2) attached CDC informational bulletins and the Delaware County's March 11th COVID-19 update.

In addition to these recommendations, The City of Chester Office of Emergency Management also recommends the following to the general public:

- 1) The public should limit visiting government buildings unless absolutely necessary.
- 2) The public should limit the amount of time spent in public stores and areas.
- 3) Launder clothes and bed linens frequently and shower daily.
- 4) There is no need to panic and you should continue to go about your lives in a normal fashion but, whenever possible, limit the amount of activities associated with public gatherings.

While the Office of Emergency Management does not recommend business cease operations, we do recommend that social gatherings and church services be postponed. We ask that the churches in the city use the the service on Sunday, March 15th to convey the attached information.

I will continue to update you as more information becomes available or if circumstances warrant.

Respectfully,

W.C. Rigby
Fire Commissioner
Emergency management Corrdinator
City of Chester



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What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



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For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19



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CORONAVIRUS
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What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.



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For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19



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Delaware County March 11 Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This morning the Pennsylvania Department of Health announced two presumptive positive cases of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Bucks County and an additional presumptive positive in Montgomery County. That brings the total number of cases in Pennsylvania to 15, one of which is in Delaware County. The Delaware County case has been confirmed by the CDC. The Delaware County case was not community spread. The patient had recently traveled to an area where COVID-19 is present.

Today the World Health Organization declared 2019 Novel Coronavirus a pandemic, stating that the viral disease is now in at least 114 countries and has killed more than 4,000 people internationally.

Delaware County continues to be in daily contact with the Pennsylvania Department of Health for updates and guidance. The County first met in January to discuss planning and prevention and has been meeting daily to adjust and add procedures which best protect residents and County employees.

Currently, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and CDC are not advising that the general public avoid public gatherings in Delaware County; however, this is a rapidly changing situation, and these recommendations could change. The County is reminding residents to be prudent and use common sense in the same way you would to avoid germs and getting sick with any virus.

An important note for the elderly and people with severe underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease and diabetes who are at higher risk to develop more serious health effects of COVID-19: These at risk groups should exercise extra precautions, including avoiding public gatherings. More information about at risk groups can be found here:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html

Several weeks ago the County began to prepare for the prevention of Coronavirus at George W. Hill Correctional Facility. Extra sanitation measures are being taken to protect inmates and staff. On March 10, the County's Jail Oversight Board took further measures to ensure that inmates, who may be more vulnerable due to compromised immune systems, are protected as much as possible. As part of these measures, visitation to the prison will be temporarily restricted except for essential visitors including legal counsel and court evaluators. The visitation restriction policy will be reviewed weekly and adjusted as the rapidly evolving status of Coronavirus changes. During this time, inmates will have access to one free phone call a week.

The Elections Board and County Council are closely monitoring COVID -19 and researching and preparing for appropriate and safe locations for the polls. New details regarding COVID-19 are emerging daily and the County will be providing a more detailed plan as the Primary Election on April 28 becomes closer.



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On March 9, the County met with superintendents from across the County to discuss a Continuity of a Countywide Pandemic Action Plan, to best guide our county schools. School districts developed a county-wide Pandemic Action Plan in conjunction with Delaware County Emergency Services, Delaware County Council, and the Delaware County Department of Intercommunity Health. This plan is a guide to various response levels and to ensure planning and messaging is uniform across the County. The response level will be determined in coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and educational agencies. At this time, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the CDC are not advising Delaware County schools to close. The decision to close a school remains to be dependent on guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The County has also been in communication with universities and colleges in the County. Many are offering students and staff alternate options to learn and work.

Governor Tom Wolf announced on March 11 that the state's Medicaid program, Medical Assistance (MA) and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), will cover COVID-19 testing and treatment for recipients and is lifting some prior authorization requirements to ease access to necessary testing and treatment. There are no MA or CHIP copayments for laboratory tests for COVID-19. For those services that do have copayments, MA providers may not deny services if a beneficiary is unable to pay the copayment. The decision was made to ensure that anyone who needs to be tested for COVID-19 has access to testing.

Delaware County is reminding residents that currently, the best way to protect yourself is to take the same precautions you would to prevent the flu or common cold:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your elbow to avoid touching your face
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm/hot water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items
- If you are feeling sick, stay home. Rest, take care of yourself and don't spread the germs.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you are asked to call the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

The County has created a website dedicated to information on the Coronavirus, including prevention, resources and a FAQ section with a link to the Pennsylvania Department of Health and CDC. The website can be found here: www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html

Residents are encouraged to register for the DelcoAlert notification system which alerts residents of updates and emergencies. The website to register can be found here: www.delcopa.gov/delcoalert/delcoalert.html