



# Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida

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## **The State of Florida Issues COVID-19 Updates**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** - The State of Florida is responding to COVID-19. In an effort to keep Florida residents and visitors safe and aware regarding the status of the virus, the Florida Department of Health will issue this update every day, seven days per week.

Governor Ron DeSantis is in constant communication with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees as the State of Florida continues to monitor and respond to the threat of COVID-19.

**Today, in a briefing at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Governor DeSantis announced more actions on COVID-19:**

- The federal testing site at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami will open to the public tomorrow and those 65 and older who have symptoms of COVID-19, in addition to the first responders and health care workers who started testing today.
  - This site is federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.
  - Partners involved in setting up this site include the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Florida Department of Health, the Florida National Guard, Miami-Dade Police, Miami-Dade Fire and FedEx.
- There are two additional federal testing sites:
  - The Jacksonville site at TIAA Bank Field, Lot J, opened yesterday and collected more than 280 people on the first day.
  - The Orlando site at the Orange County Convention Center is set to open on Wednesday.
- At this time, there are more than 18,000 hospital beds available statewide, including nearly 1,700 adult intensive care unit beds.

### **More Information on COVID-19**

To find the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19, please visit the Department of Health's dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#). For information and advisories from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), please visit the [CDC COVID-19 website](#). For more information about current travel advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State, please visit the [travel advisory website](#).

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling **(866) 779-6121**. **The Call Center is available 24 hours per day**. Inquiries may also be emailed to **COVID-19@flhealth.gov**.

## **What you Should Know**

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. These droplets may land on objects and surfaces. Other people may contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Most people recover from COVID-19 without needing special treatment. The elderly and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes are more likely to develop serious illness.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The Department recommends everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Covering your cough or sneezing into a tissue, then disposing of the tissue;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty; and
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The CDC does not recommend that asymptomatic, healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

A person that experiences a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from any other destination with community transmission should call ahead to their health care provider and local CHD and mention their recent travel or close contact.

If a person has had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area or been in contact with a person with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, he or she should call ahead to a health care professional and the CHD. The health care provider will work with the Department to determine if the person should be tested for COVID-19.

## **Actions the state has taken to prepare for and respond to COVID-19:**

- Yesterday, Governor DeSantis issued four executive orders:
  - [Executive Order 20-69](#): this Executive Order waives in-person meeting requirements so that public officials can safely continue their duties without impediment.

- [Executive Order 20-70](#): this Executive Order directs all movie theatres, concert houses, auditoriums, playhouses, bowling alleys, arcades, gymnasiums, fitness studios and beaches to close in Broward County and Palm Beach County.
- [Executive Order 20-71](#): this Executive Order directs all restaurants and food establishments within the state to suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers.
- [Executive Order 20-72](#): this Executive Order prohibits medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries.

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- Governor DeSantis announced that the State ordered an additional 2,500 test kits to supplement the adequate resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable the Department of Health, working with Florida health care providers, to test up to an additional 625,000 individuals. The Governor also suspended non-essential in state and all out-of-state travel for state employees for 30 days.
- Established an Incident Management Team to coordinate response operations.
- Defined a high-level phased response strategy for COVID-19.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.
- Conducted three public health and health care stakeholder conference calls to provide statewide updates on the current outbreak situation, response actions and guidance for pandemic planning. Over five hundred participants joined the calls.
- Established a public call center for questions regarding COVID-19. The call center launched Monday, March 2.
- Developed and distributed COVID-19 presentation materials to County Health Departments (CHD) for use at community meetings.
- Activated the Joint Information Center in coordination with the Division of Emergency Management.
- Developed and implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for monitoring and coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding epidemiological activities.
- Distributed CDC Interim Guidance for public health personnel evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUI) and asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases at their home or non-home residential settings to CHDs.
- Approved and disseminated an updated Clinician Screening Tool for identifying COVID-19 PUIs.
- Distributed a health care provider letter regarding enhanced surveillance and preparedness for COVID-19 to associations, licensed providers, Health Care Coalitions and CHDs.
- Implemented testing at all three State Public Health Laboratories.
- Distributed updated CDC guidance for schools to CHDs and the Department of Education.
- Distributed updated laboratory guidance regarding implementation of testing at State Public Health Laboratories.
- Developing a laboratory surge plan.
- Developing a clinician-level briefing for medical audiences.
- Identifying and monitoring close contacts of presumptive cases. Any close contacts with symptoms will be tested.
- Implemented private lab testing.
- Developed and disseminated pandemic planning guidance.

- Advised CHDs and HCCs to retain expired personal protective equipment until further notice.
- Continued development of public information resources.
- Developing infographics for first responders (fire, law enforcement and EMS) regarding infection control and personal protection for COVID-19.
- At the Governor's direction, a public-private partnership has been put in place between Memorial Healthcare in Broward and the National Guard to set up a mobile testing unit.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis hiring additional epidemiologists from university health programs to help with workload.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to extend all existing nursing home and assisted living facility licenses for 90 days to remove distraction from patient care.

## **THE DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- The State Emergency Operations Center is activated at a Level 1.
- To support communities responding to COVID-19, Governor DeSantis has directed FDEM Director Jared Moskowitz to expedite the delivery of more than \$170 million in Hurricane Irma reimbursements to cities, counties and hospital districts that have now reached the 50-percent auditing threshold to receive funds.
- After conducting a thorough assessment of needs, Director Moskowitz has requested the following supplies through Direct Federal Assistance. Supplies are being delivered on a rolling basis, and inventory is being distributed throughout the state 24 hours a day.
  - 5 mobile intensive care units
  - 5,000 ventilators
  - 5,000 hospital beds
  - 50,000 two oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
  - 250,000 coveralls
  - 500,000 gloves
  - 500,000 gowns
  - 500,000 collection kits
  - 100,000 16 oz. bottles of hand sanitizers
  - 150,000 Personal Protective Equipment kits, including coveralls, gowns, and goggles
  - 2 million N95 face masks
- Yesterday, the Florida Division of Emergency Management sent collection kits out to the following areas:
  - Baptist health in Jacksonville: 600
  - Orlando health: 600
  - City of Tampa test site at Raymond James Stadium (partnership with County and city): 900
  - Martin County Cleveland Clinic: 300
  - Duval County Health Department: 300
  - Miami-Dade County Health Department: 1,200
  - Volusia County Health Department: 300
  - Johns County Health Department: 600
  - Collier County Health Department: 600
  - Manatee County Health Department: 600
  - Okaloosa County Health Department: 300
  - Brevard County Health Department: 600
  - Citrus County Health Department: 300

## **AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION**

- AHCA worked with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to develop a Frequently Asked Questions webpage for home and community-based waiver providers.
- AHCA highlighted current testing requirements and criteria for the elderly and medically vulnerable in a health care provider alert.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION**

- DBPR shared information with all agency staff statewide pertaining to the declaration of a state public health emergency, state response protocols as ordered in EO 20-51, and FDOH information and resources available on the dedicated FDOH COVID-19 webpage. DBPR communication with staff has emphasized the best practices and preventive steps recommended by FDOH for impeding the spread of respiratory illnesses.
- DBPR added a web banner with information on COVID-19 and link to the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at [www.floridahealth.gov/COVID-19](http://www.floridahealth.gov/COVID-19).
- DBPR is incorporating informational comments on all on-site inspection reports issued to public lodging, public food service, and alcohol and tobacco license holders that will promote situational awareness of the current public health emergency and will direct parties to the FDOH COVID-19 webpage for guidance and resources related to prevention best practices. Copies of informational flyers from the FDOH COVID-19 toolkit will also be available for inspectors to distribute when interacting with managers of these premises.
- DBPR has suspended all official business visits, including inspections, that involve licenses located at a facility covered under the visitation restrictions implemented pursuant to FDEM Emergency Order 20-002.
- DBPR hosted a senior management meeting with all program directors to discuss the latest departmental actions and preparations associated with COVID-19 in Florida.
- DBPR is providing guidance to appointed professional licensing boards related to procedural considerations and available technology options for remote, web-based or telephonic board meetings.
- DBPR issued an emergency order, [EO 2020-01](#) to extend license renewal deadlines and renewal requirements for a period of 30 days for licenses with an existing renewal deadline occurring in the months of March or April, 2020.
- DBPR has distributed the Governor's Executive Order ([EO-20-68](#)) regarding bars, nightclubs, beaches, and restaurants to all known e-mail addresses of record for alcoholic beverage, public food service, and public lodging license holders. DBPR will continue to push information and guidance relating to the directives of EO 20-68 to impacted parties through the DBPR Emergency Information Page, social media channels, and outreach to industry and public sector partners.
- DBPR has launched a dedicated emergency information page (<http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/emergency/>) with direct links to the FDOH COVID-19 webpage as well as information on agency emergency orders, schedule and meeting changes for divisions and boards, business resources and other emergency information. It also includes links to: the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey, Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program, Reemployment Assistance Program, and U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loans.
- DBPR has distributed a document titled [Frequently Asked Questions Related to Restaurant, Bars and Nightclubs](#) pursuant to Executive Order ([EO-20-68](#)). This document helps to clarify the agency's role in the enforcement of the Executive Order as well as guidelines for restaurants per the Governor's directive.
- DBPR has implemented the DMS restrictions on public access at DMS-managed facilities and has adopted the same approach for all DBPR offices in privately-leased facilities. DBPR will continue to provide customer service and licensing support by phone and other electronic means to enable continuity of operations during these facility restrictions.

- DBPR has distributed the Governor's Executive Order ([EO-20-71](#)) regarding alcohol sales, restaurants and gyms to all known e-mail addresses of record for alcoholic beverage, public food service, and public lodging license holders. DBPR will continue to push information and guidance relating to the directives of EO 20-71 to impacted parties through the DBPR Emergency Information Page, social media channels, and outreach to industry and public sector partners.

## **DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

- DCF is coordinating with specific providers to issue provisional licenses for child care services to support Florida's first responders during this pandemic.
- DCF, DOH, and DOE are developing guidance for child care providers to assist with COVID-19 prevention in facilities and safe operations.
- DCF has consolidated all entrances to state and contracted mental health treatment facilities into one entrance to ensure all staff, vendors, and providers are screened prior to entrance. Visitation has also been suspended at all facilities until April 15.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

- Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) has no known or suspected cases of COVID-19 within its correctional institutions at this time.
- FDC Community Corrections officers are working with offenders on supervision to adjust reporting schedules to minimize congregating at probation offices and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- FDC's Office of Health Services coordinates with the Department for guidance on any type of outbreak and is closely monitoring new information as it is disseminated from the Department and the CDC.
- FDC has suspended visitation at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020. The decision to reinstate the normal visitation schedule will be evaluated in consultation with the Department.
  - Inmates will continue to have access to mail, email, phone calls and video visitation.
  - Legal visits will not be impacted.
  - FDC has partnered with vendors to provide some complimentary phone and video visitation services.
- Volunteer activities within correctional institutions statewide have been suspended.
- Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened, and entrance will be restricted if they:
  - Have traveled internationally or on a cruise within the last 14 days.
  - Have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.
  - Have had contact with someone who has been or is under investigation for COVID-19.
- All non-critical inmate transfers have been suspended.
- New commitments and intakes have been restricted.
- Outside inmate work squads have been restricted.
- FDC has a plan in place and dedicated staff members trained in the prevention and containment of infectious diseases.
- FDC initiated its Incident Command System in response to COVID-19.
- Education has been provided to staff, inmates and visitors to prevent the spread of any infectious disease, including COVID-19.
- Precautions are in place at facilities to protect inmates and staff from exposure to flu, COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness; preventative measures are being followed per CDC recommendations.

## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) has approved the first two Small Business Emergency Bridge Loans to businesses impacted by COVID-19.
- Governor DeSantis directed DEO to Waive Job Search Requirements for claimants (i.e., individuals who file for Reemployment Assistance). Claimants are not required to submit to DEO the information on the number of employers they contact each week.
- Additionally, Governor DeSantis directed DEO to waive the online work registration requirement, enabling DEO to suspend the requirement that requires a claimant to register with the state job search portal (Employ Florida).
- Governor DeSantis directed DEO to waive benefit charges for employers, by waiving the benefit charges, employers may be relieved of charges for benefits paid to employees.
- Governor DeSantis' request to the federal U.S. Small Business Administration to make the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program available for Florida's small businesses impacted by COVID-19 has been granted. Small businesses are eligible to apply for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans that offer up to \$2 million in economic assistance to help small businesses overcome the temporary loss of revenue resulting from COVID-19.
- The DEO has created a Frequently Asked Questions document for individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by mitigation efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Governor Ron DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program, managed by DEO, provides short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit [FloridaDisaster.Biz](https://floridadisaster.biz) for more information.
- The Business Damage Assessment survey is activated to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations. The survey, managed by DEO, will evaluate businesses affected by COVID-19 and the impacts the virus has had on the local economy so actions to implement appropriate relief programs can begin. The survey can be taken online at <https://floridadisaster.biz/>.

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran directed public and private K-12 and career and technical center campuses to closed through April 15, 2020, and institute distance learning by March 30th.
- Schools are encouraged to operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based means to the greatest extent possible to implement distance learning.
- School districts should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through June 30, 2020, to the extent feasible and necessary.
- For Collier, Duval, Sumter and Union county school districts, which are all completing their extended spring break on March 20, 2020, school campuses will remain closed through April 15, 2020, although they will begin instruction virtually on March 23.
- To support students with identified IEP-related services who may have a disruption in services, school districts are given flexibility for the remainder of the school year to provide alternative services or delay services until later in the summer months, in coordination with a student's parents and IEP team.
- Duval, Union, Sumter and Collier school districts have implemented distance learning which will begin on March 23rd upon the conclusion of extended spring break. All other school districts will begin distance learning on March 30th.

- Governor Ron DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran cancelled all remaining assessments for school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten and K-12 assessments for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Requirements for graduation and promotion, and final course grades will be evaluated as though those assessments which were cancelled did not exist.
- K-12 school grades will not be calculated for 2019-2020 and schools in turnaround may continue their current status for 2020-2021 to avoid disruption to school leadership and operations.
- Eligibility for Florida Bright Futures scholarships shall be based on available data and results. Tests that were not available to be taken shall not be counted.
- The Commissioner of Education may reduce required instructional hours as necessary to accommodate for closures.
- The Florida Department of Education and K-12 school districts were instructed to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from Reading Scholarship Accounts, the Reading Instruction Allocation, the Digital Classroom Allocation and the Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- In order to facilitate the remote connection between teachers and students, K-12 school districts are further permitted to redirect unspent Title 2 funds to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- K-12 school districts are permitted to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from the Safe Schools and Mental Health allocations to virtual and telephonic mental health counseling services for students who need emotional support due to COVID-19.
- All school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, K-12, career and technical centers and state college programs will receive their full allocation of funding, and therefore staff and contractors can be paid fully, through June 30, 2020, as though there was no disruption in education.
- For the next 120 days, exam fees for teacher certification-related examinations will be waived, and test takers who were unable to take an exam due to test site locations closing will be granted an extension to meet these requirements.
- Commissioner Corcoran urged adherence to the CDC's guidance for higher-risk populations by cancelling any mass gatherings, community events and extracurricular activities, including sports of more than 10 people in a single occupied space at any educational program, school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, public and private K-12, career and technical centers, and public and private colleges and universities.
- Commissioner Corcoran strongly recommend school readiness and voluntary prekindergarten programs adhere to the CDC's guidance for higher-risk populations by limiting students and employees to no more than 10 people convening in a single occupied space, therefore breaking students into groups as necessary, maintaining social distancing best practices and proper hygiene.
- All services provided by the divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services to clients shall be provided solely through virtual and telephonic methods to the extent possible.
- The Department will work with appropriate federal authorities to seek waivers for any federal requirements that may be impacted.
- All public state colleges, and private college and campuses and buildings are closed for the remainder of the spring semester.
- Colleges are encouraged to operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based means to the greatest extent possible.
- Colleges should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through June 30, 2020, to the extent feasible and necessary.
- Education Commissioner Corcoran is in constant communication with Florida Superintendents and districts to provide guidance on COVID-19 preparedness and response and will be holding daily calls to update districts on preparation efforts.

- FDOE has established a resource website for educators, parents, and students to utilize free resources that help students during distance learning at <http://www.fldoe.org/em-response>.

## **DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS**

- Participated in a conference call with the Executive Director from The Area Agency on Aging in Southwest Florida to assist in food procurement and meal services through local Emergency Operations Centers and additional community food bank resources in three counties. All needs also communicated at the state EOC level.
- Received information on USDA waiver request allowing non-congregate meals and meals outside of set hours to be provided to clients in the Adult Care Food Programs. The process may start immediately and allows providers to offer meals for pick-up, drive thru, or delivery to clients. This is especially important in the light of Adult Day Care closures throughout the state.
- Provided ongoing technical assistance to the all eleven Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) regarding meal procurement, distribution, telephone reassurance, and feeding elders not currently enrolled in food programs.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- Most Florida State Parks remain open for day use; however, all Florida State Parks have changed day-use visitation hours to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- DEP will continue to keep the public updated on park operational status through the Florida State Parks web page and social media channels.
- In order to address staffing shortages and balance necessary resources, the following two (2) parks are currently closed, effective March 21:
  - Florida State Caverns State Park
  - Fanning Springs State Park
- Following the Governor's direction and CDC guidance, effective March 21, the Department is closing state beach parks as crowds continue to gather in large groups along the beaches of Florida. While these beach parks will be closed, we have many other state parks currently open for day-use recreation, including hiking and biking. It is extremely important that visitors continue practicing social distancing while enjoying the beautiful nature outside. To locate other state parks in their region, visitors can use the "Find A Park" feature at [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org). This is a rapidly evolving situation, and the Department will continue to provide daily updates on social media and the state parks webpage.
- The 42 beach parks currently closed include:
  - Amelia Island State Park
  - Anastasia State Park
  - Anclote Key State Park
  - Avalon State Park
  - Bahia Honda State Park
  - Bald Point State Park
  - Big Talbot Island State Park
  - Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
  - Caladesi Island State Park
  - Camp Helen State Park
  - Cayo Costa State Park
  - Curry Hammock State Park
  - Deer Lake State Park
  - Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park
  - Don Pedro Island State Park
  - Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park

- Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park
- Egmont Key State Park State Park
- Fort Pierce Inlet (includes Jack Island) State Park
- Fort Clinch State Park
- Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park
- Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach
- Gasparilla Island State Park
- Grayton Beach State Park
- Henderson Beach State Park
- Honeymoon Island State Park
- Hugh Taylor Birch State Park
- John D. MacArthur Beach State Park
- John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
- Little Talbot Island State Park
- Long Key State Park
- Lovers Key State Park
- North Peninsula State Park
- Oleta River State Park
- Perdido Key State Park
- Sebastian Inlet State Park
- Andrews State Park
- Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park
- Stump Pass Beach State Park
- H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park
- Topsail Hill Preserve State Park
- Washington Oaks Gardens State Park
- All DEP administrative offices remain open and operational from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Based on guidance from the Department of Management Services to help protect our visitors and employees, DEP will temporarily close all DMS-managed facilities to the public beginning March 19 until Sunday, April 19. We look forward to continuing to assist residents by phone or email. DEP Regulatory District Office contact information can be found here: <https://floridadep.gov/districts>.
- DEP continues to work to identify ways to develop a safe and sustainable work environment for all of our employees that will also ensure we are able to perform all of our core functions and meet our agency's mission. DEP has developed initial plans that will enable staff to begin teleworking beginning March 20, 2020. These plans are designed, and are expected to be, adaptive to meet any new guidance or circumstances that may arise, as well as ensure that unique staffing needs are appropriately addressed.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES**

- At the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor has issued an [Emergency Order](#) extending all Florida driver licenses, commercial driver licenses and identification cards that will expire now through April 15, 2020.
- FLHSMV continues to encourage Floridians through social media and other channels to use convenient [online options](#) to complete transactions for driver licenses, ID cards, motor vehicle or vessel registrations, and more.
- FLHSMV has been in regular communication with the Florida Tax Collectors Association as well as Tax Collectors across the state to provide the latest COVID-19 information and guidance from the Florida Department of Health and other state partners.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor Ron DeSantis, FLHSMV Executive Director Rhodes has waived commercial truck hours of service regulations and other related

regulations so that emergency supplies, equipment, commodities and resources can be moved more quickly and efficiently throughout the state.

- FLHSMV has been in close communication with the Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association, and all other state law enforcement partners regarding the department's emergency orders impacting Florida driver licenses and commercial vehicles.
- The Florida Highway Patrol has deployed personnel and equipment to assist ongoing drive-thru testing efforts in Pembroke Pines and Jacksonville.
- The Florida Highway Patrol is mobilizing personnel and equipment to assist with upcoming drive-thru testing efforts in Miami and Orlando.

## **OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION**

- OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-03M](#) directing all insurers and other entities regulated by OIR to review and update their business continuity and/or continuity of operations plans. Companies are directed to immediately contact OIR if their continuity plans are activated and/or if business operations become compromised so it can work with insurers to avoid any disruption in consumer services.
- OIR Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier is actively engaged with insurers and key partners at the state and national level regarding COVID-19. Commissioner Altmaier is collaborating with other state insurance commissioners and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to share information and resources.
- OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-01M](#) to all health insurers and health maintenance organizations, directing them to:
  - Use every channel available to them to communicate with their policyholders and share official CDC and DOH information;
  - Devote resources to inform consumers of available benefits, quickly respond to inquiries, and avoid and dispel misinformation;
  - Work with public health officials to do everything possible to prepare and respond; and
- Consider all practicable options to reduce the barriers of cost-sharing for testing and treatment of COVID-19. OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-02M](#) as a reminder to all health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and other health entities to allow for early prescription refills following the Governor's Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in Florida.
- OIR has spoken with multiple insurers who are voluntarily waiving cost-sharing for consumers in an effort to remove barriers to testing for COVID-19.
- OIR is reaching out to insurers regarding their response to COVID-19 and working with insurers to make sure they are properly communicating to consumers.
- OIR has issued notices to all of its employees providing resources regarding COVID-19 and outlining the steps recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Florida Department of Health to take preventative health measures.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's Office of Health Services developed COVID-19 guidance for all facilities serving DJJ youth. This guidance included Center for Disease Control criteria on how to assess and care for youth who are exhibiting fever and respiratory symptoms and environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has modified screening protocols and procedures for youth taken into custody by law enforcement who are brought to juvenile assessment centers and detention screening units to now include precautionary coronavirus screening questions and protocols. This modified screening protocol was shared with law enforcement partners statewide.

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has issued an emergency order that will suspend visitation at all state-operated juvenile detention centers and juvenile residential commitment programs until April 15, 2020 and then will evaluate the health and safety of resuming normal visitation protocols. DJJ has also instituted additional screening measures for outside vendors who work within juvenile facilities. Clinical personnel are still permitted to visit youth for treatment purposes, instructional personnel are permitted to provide educational services, and attorneys are permitted to conduct legal visits with youth.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- FDLE is coordinating with the FBI and the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Council to obtain a federal rule and establish a process to perform name-based criminal history record checks. This will enable regulatory agencies the ability to quickly background screen critical occupations such as nurses and doctors that are coming out of retirement to support the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FDLE is working with state and local agencies and the Florida National Guard to set up testing collection sites in multiple locations across Florida.
- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Regional Operations Centers are working with Regional Domestic Security Task Forces to prepare for any responses needed.
- FDLE's Office of Mutual Aid prepared and distributed a law enforcement guide on COVID-19 for law enforcement partners and state agencies and FDLE's General Counsel prepared a law enforcement guide for protocols in a quarantine.
- FDLE has distributed a COVID-19 legal guidance document to all its law enforcement partners in reference to Governor DeSantis' Executive Order and continues regular communication with them.
- FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen sent an email to all members outlining simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as links to the Florida Department of Health and CDC websites. Signs have been posted in all FDLE Regions and at Headquarters with prevention information.

## **FLORIDA LOTTERY**

- As of today, all Florida Lottery offices remain open to the public. We are continuing to limit public access to a maximum of 10 people at a time in accordance with the CDC's social distancing recommendations.
  - Security Agents at each office are screening anyone who does attempt to enter, mirroring the screening questions required to gain entry into the EOC.
  - We have also reduced the seating in district office lobbies to ensure at least 6 feet of space is between each chair.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, DMS Secretary Jonathan Satter issued an emergency order that waived rules to allow for state employees to use any type of accrued leave for instances related to COVID-19, including self-isolation after potential exposure, staying home with children due to child care or school closures, and time needed to take care of dependents like an elder parent. The order also waived rules to expand the ability for employees to donate leave to fellow employees.
- DMS' Emergency Support Function-7 (ESF-7) Logistics team continues to coordinate with the Department of Health and the Division of Emergency Management on identifying the equipment or supplies necessary for a mass response to COVID-19.

- DMS' Division of Human Resource Management has provided guidance to agencies on implementing preventive actions in the workplace, reporting symptoms, using leave, utilizing health insurance benefits, and applying travel restrictions and telework policies.
- DMS' Division of State Group Insurance continues to coordinate with health plan providers to ensure that state employee health plan members receive the health benefits that can assist them and their dependents if needed.
- DMS' Division of Real Estate Development and Management-continues to provide guidance to agency facility managers across the state on steps to take to prevent workplace contamination and to pre-position environmental vendors to mobilize in the event a viricidal cleaning is needed.
- DMS' Division of Real Estate Development and Management continues to identify, purchase, and distribute additional hand sanitizing gel and cleaning supplies to state-maintained facilities.
- DMS' Division of State Technology-Public Safety Unit continues to coordinate with users and vendors of the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) to ensure the continuation of mission critical services if a reduction of staffing resources occurs.
- DMS' Division of State Technology-Public Safety Unit continues to coordinate with statewide public safety communications personnel on their plans to ensure emergency communications systems are not impacted by potential reductions to staffing.

## **DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS**

- There are 1026 Florida National Guardsmen activated in support of COVID-19.
- The Florida National Guard continues to support the State's COVID19 response as we expand our operational support in coming days with Community Based Testing Sites augmentation in Broward, Orlando, and Miami. The CBTS in Broward continues public testing assisting in the sampling of 1446 patients in the last two days. Development of CBTS operations in Miami-Dade and Orange counties continue to progress. Today Miami will initiate limited operations for first responders and medical professionals. The Florida National Guard will conduct rehearsals and operational checks in Orange county, with a projected opening date for Wednesday, 25 March.
- The Florida National Guard has activated our medical professionals, Army Combat Medic Specialists and Air Force Medical Technicians in support of the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Community Based Testing Sites. Our Guardsmen have reported in and formed Task Force Medical.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Logistics Readiness Center, the State's Logistics Branch, as well as facilitate state wide logistics needs of the Florida National Guard formations on mission.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Emergency Operations Center and local emergency management offices across the state.

## **AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

- APD posted Provider Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on its website, [apdcares.org](http://apdcares.org), to provide guidance during this state of emergency.
- APD and AHCA sent information to all Providers on provider payment flexibility due to adjustments being made as a result of COVID-19.
- APD is implementing telework for employees throughout the state as directed by Governor DeSantis to reduce possible exposure to COVID-19.
- The agency's three state-run centers in Marianna, Gainesville, and Chattahoochee, as well as APD-licensed group homes, are restricting all visitors in compliance with the Executive Order to protect the health and safety of our customers.

- APD continues to provide an up-to-date status on COVID-19, best practices, preventative tips, and CDC guidance, in addition to CMS guidance, to APD providers, Waiver Support Coordinators, Stakeholders, and APD employees.

## **DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

- The Property Tax Oversight (PTO) program is reminding county property appraisers of their existing statutory authority to grant a 30-day extension beyond the April 1 deadline for taxpayers to file tangible personal property tax returns. PTO is also advising taxpayers who contact the Department about this deadline to contact their county property appraisers' offices for more information about requesting the extension.
- The Department of Revenue has temporarily closed all offices in Florida to the general public. The Department is encouraging taxpayers and child support customers to use the alternative electronic options detailed below while in-person services are suspended.
- The Department has added a dedicated COVID-19 webpage for child support customers at [com/childsupport/coronavirus](https://com/childsupport/coronavirus). The new page provides comprehensive information for alternative options for handling many routine child support case activities without visiting a local child support office. Efforts also include rescheduling genetic testing sample collection appointments and postponing other types of appointments.
- The Department of Revenue is advising child support customers who are scheduled for court hearings related to their child support cases to check with the local courts where the hearings are scheduled in case the courts have new requirements, such as appearing telephonically.
- The Department of Revenue has established a dedicated team to address tax-related issues pertaining to COVID-19 and has created an email address, [COVID19TAXHELP@floridarevenue.com](mailto:COVID19TAXHELP@floridarevenue.com), where taxpayers can send questions and concerns. The Department encourages all taxpayers to use our e-services applications to [file and pay taxes](#) or contact the call center at (850) 488-6800.
- The Department of Revenue's General Tax Administration (GTA) program is working with its tax processing vendor to ensure continuity in tax data and payment processing.
- The Department has increased messaging on preventative measures through the deployment of DOH/CDC posters, ensured hand sanitizer is available, and increased cleaning of high-traffic areas in the public areas of service centers.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

- The Florida Department of State is working to solidify its telework policy and to identify essential employees. Additionally, with the closures of building to the public, we are continuing plans to develop and share valuable resources to the public digitally via social media, email, and online.

## **CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA**

- Email communication from Board Chairman Kevin Doyle and President and CEO Michelle Dennard to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors with a status update on state workforce system issues related to COVID-19 March 20 and on a recurring basis.
- In collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity, survey to be distributed March 20 to local workforce development board leaders requesting information on needs related to Reemployment Assistance processing and other COVID-19 related issues.
- Weekly (or more frequently as needed) email message to LWDB chief executives, board chairs, COOs and communications professionals with messaging appropriate for business partners, links to the most current digital tools and resources provided by state partners.

- Development and distribution March 19 of digital toolkit with a list of social media accounts to follow and draft social media posts to support local partners in expanding messaging to local employers and career seekers as well as sample email copy to draft broader messages to stakeholders.
- A mobile-friendly landing page ([com/covid-19/](http://com/covid-19/)) with links to the Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program managed by DEO in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network, the Florida Business Damage Assessment survey and other state and federal programs as they become available. This resource is to complement existing websites that may not be mobile responsive.
- CareerSource Florida is adjusting its board-approved outreach budget for digital advertising to direct employers and career seekers, when appropriate, in hardest-hit counties to this landing page, as we did after Hurricane Michael and other recent hurricanes. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, this outreach can quickly be expanded statewide and updated in real time with appropriate messaging depending on programs that may become available.
- Outreach will be digital and will direct to online resources.

## **STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

- The SUS has directed all state universities to continue remote instruction through the end of the Spring semester.
- All students who can return home should return home.
- The SUS has directed that traditional on-campus commencement ceremonies will not be held in May. Instead, each university is directed to develop an alternate schedule or method of delivery.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

- FDOT has provided roadway equipment and is coordinating with other state and local agencies to help ensure mobility around the temporary testing site in Orange County. FDOT will continue publicizing testing site information regularly on its social media channels.
- In accordance with Executive Order 20-71 issued by Governor DeSantis, FDOT has discontinued food services at all of its service plazas. Fuel stations, public restrooms, dog walks and convenience stores will remain open at this time.
- Effective Monday, March 23, FDOT is closing its SunPass Customer Service Walk-In Centers located throughout the state, including:
  - Snapper Creek, Milepost 19, Florida Turnpike, Miami
  - Miami, 7902 NW 36th Street, Unit 203, Doral
  - Boca Raton, 7941 Glades Road, Boca Raton
  - Tampa, 10137 E. Adamo Drive, Suite 800A, Tampa
  - Pinellas Bayway Administration Center, 4501 54th Avenue S, St. Petersburg
  - Ocoee Walk-In Center, 9405 W. Colonial Drive, Ocoee
  - Mid-Bay Bridge, 1200 White Point Road, Niceville
  - Garcon Point Bridge, 555 Avalon Boulevard, Milton
- FDOT is coordinating with USDOT, the Florida Trucking Association, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Florida Highway Patrol to help mitigate the impacts on the transportation and logistics industries.
- To help keep toll collectors safe and distanced from customers, FDOT is not accepting cash payments for tolls temporarily. Toll collection will be conducted via SunPass or Toll-By-Plate until further notice.
- FDOT coordinated with transit agencies throughout the state to ensure the safe return of the Florida residents who were quarantined in Georgia and had previously been aboard the Grand Princess voyage outside of California.

- FDOT has provided portable roadway signage and is coordinating with other state and local agencies to help ensure mobility around the temporary testing site in Broward County. FDOT is publicizing testing site information regularly on its social media channels.
- FDOT has worked with Pinellas County and provided signage to assist with temporary closure messages within the county.
- FDOT completed a request to provide necessary supplies to harbor pilots working at seaports.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, along with Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, hosted a conference call with all Florida ports and their governing bodies as well as all public use airports to discuss Florida's ongoing response to the COVID-19 virus.
- Staff from the department continue to host weekly conference calls with all passenger seaports and public use airports to provide updates related to COVID-19.
- FDOT is monitoring temporary lane closures near hospitals and Department of Health facilities. If congestion near these facilities and lane closures occur, FDOT will remove lane restrictions to help ensure mobility within the area.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor DeSantis, FDOT Secretary Thibault has suspended size and weight restrictions for divisible loads on any vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services, supplies, and necessary agricultural commodities on state roads.
- COVID-19 educational materials have been posted in FDOT facilities, which include welcome centers, service plazas and rest areas across the state.
- COVID-19 materials have been posted at all FDOT work sites across the state to help educate contractors, vendors, and stakeholders.
- SunRail has posted COVID-19 educational materials inside all trains and on all platforms, focusing on areas near entrances and bathrooms.
- SunRail trains continue to be cleaned and sanitized daily and SunRail staff have been provided sanitizing towelettes and encouraged to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

- Effective March 11, 2020, FDVA restricted visitor access to its State Veterans' Nursing Homes and Domiciliary until further notice, with the exception of essential visitors, such as family members of those residents undergoing end-of-life care. In addition, we are temporarily suspending admissions in our network of state veterans' homes. Thank you for your understanding.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has also temporarily restricted access to their nursing and community living center facilities to only essential visitors until further notice.
- The VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8) is taking additional steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 to protect healthcare system's capabilities, healthcare workers and veterans. Facilities within the VISN 8 Network include the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics, Miami VA Healthcare System, North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Orlando VA Healthcare System, VA Caribbean Healthcare System, and the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. These actions include:
  - VISN 8 facilities are transitioning to virtual appointments to the fullest extent to allow veterans to stay at home, avoid exposure to others and reduce their risk; Veterans with appointments will be contacted several days beforehand to discuss virtual appointment options available to them.
  - Veterans can help with this transition by visiting the VA Video On-Demand webpage for more information: <https://mobile.va.gov/content/getting-started-0>.
  - Veterans enrolled for care within VISN 8 can continue to use the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center for 24/7 virtual urgent care by calling 1-877-741-3400 (toll free) or by

using the VA Health Chat App. Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of Coronavirus, flu or cold should contact the center first before coming to a VA facility.

- VISN 8 facilities will cease non-urgent elective procedures. Any impacted veterans will be contacted directly by their health care team to reschedule. Urgent and emergent elective procedures will continue during this period.
- VISN 8 facilities are further restricting visitations. Only one visitor will be permitted per veteran if required to provide assistance moving a patient to and from an appointment, providing support to an inpatient in a palliative or hospice care unit, or for veterans who have major procedures. Visitors who screen positive will not be granted access to the medical centers.
- These newly announced actions do not supersede or replace activities announced by VISN 8 last week. All VISN 8 facilities continue to use mandatory and enhanced screening protocols for all patients, employees and visitors, have restricted visitations to certain units, and have taken many other actions to mitigate the infection and spread of the virus.
- All VA Vet Centers in Florida, which provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to veterans and families, are open and implementing enhanced screening protocols. At this time, veterans may appear in person or opt in advance for an optional phone consultation.
- All U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries are open and will continue to provide interments for veterans and eligible individuals. However, effective March 23 — as part of the agency's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) — committal services and the rendering of military funeral honors will discontinue until further notice. Immediate family members (limited to no more than 10 individuals) of the deceased may witness the interment if requested. Families choosing to continue with interment may schedule a committal service for a later date. Families wishing to postpone an already scheduled interment to a later date should contact the cemetery as soon as possible to convey their wishes. Although VA national cemeteries remain open to visitors, guests are strongly urged to obey local travel restrictions and avoid unnecessary travel. Certain portions of a cemetery typically open to the public, such as public information centers or chapels, may be closed to the public. Contact your [local cemetery](#) for updates regarding closures. For more information, contact NCA at 202-891-9987. Veterans can call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 or [schedule a burial arrangement online](#).
- All Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices are closed to the public. The St. Petersburg Regional Office will close to staff on March 23 and employees will be asked to telework. Veterans can continue to get information about benefits or file a claim for benefits by visiting our website at [va.gov](#). Veterans with claims specific or other questions may request information via [Inquiry Routing & Information System \(IRIS\)](#) or telephone at 1-800-827-1000. VBA benefits and services provided to veterans, families and survivors will continue to be delivered throughout the duration of COVID-19 impacts.
- The Board of Veterans' Appeals (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) has suspended Travel Boards until May 1, 2020, due to COVID-19 response efforts. As of March 23, the Board is suspending all video, travel board, and VA Central Office hearings through at least May 1, 2020.
- GI Bill Benefits to Continue During COVID-19 Pandemic- President Trump signed into law [3503](#), March 21, which will enable the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to continue providing the same level of education benefits to students having to take courses online due to the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). The law gives VA temporary authority to continue GI Bill payments uninterrupted in the event of national emergencies, allowing for continued payment of benefits even if the program has changed from resident training to online training. Thanks to the law, GI Bill students will continue receiving the same monthly housing allowance payments they received for resident training until Dec. 21, or until the school resumes in-person classes. Students receiving [GI Bill benefits](#) are not required to take any

action. Benefits will continue automatically. VA will work closely with schools to ensure enrollments are accurately certified and processed timely. Students with specific questions can contact the Education Call Center at: 888-442-4551 between 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday-Friday.

- To contact a VA Homeless Veteran Coordinator in Florida, call toll free 1-800-827-1000.
- All Honor Flights have been postponed nationwide until May 31, 2020.
- All FDVA and VA facilities remain fully operational. Visit [FloridaVets.org](http://FloridaVets.org) for the latest information.

## **VISIT FLORIDA**

- VISIT FLORIDA is wholly focused on providing health and safety information to travelers and Floridians. This includes the activation of Florida Now, which includes the latest updates from state emergency response professionals hosted on VisitFlorida.com. All promotional media has been paused.
- VISIT FLORIDA is planning for future marketing campaigns to ensure that Florida's tourism industry has a strong, unified voice following COVID-19
- To protect the health and safety of the traveling public and staff, VISIT FLORIDA's four welcome centers will be closed until further notice.
- VISIT FLORIDA is tracking traveler sentiment across online platforms and social media to monitor how COVID-19 may impact travel and travel booking to Florida. VISIT FLORIDA remains in close contact with industry partners and travel organizations and is communicating all new information as it becomes available.

## **VOLUNTEER FLORIDA**

- As the lead agency for volunteerism and service, Volunteer Florida is working to support voluntary organizations across the state and nation by pushing resources, surveying needs and requesting that continuity of operations plans be created to avoid any service delivery disruption.
- Volunteer Florida is continuing to work with Mass Care on the anticipated need of volunteers and safety guidelines that should be taken to protect volunteers and clients.
- Volunteer Florida is having preliminary conversations with warehousing partners (should the need arise).
- Volunteer Florida encourages volunteers to screen themselves for COVID-19 (per CDC and Florida Department of Health guidelines) before volunteering/serving.
- Volunteer Florida is asking service organizations to track volunteer hours.

## **FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONVERSATION COMMISSION**

- FWC officers are assisting Bay County SO with beach patrol related to social distancing (EO 20-68).

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