

March 13, 2020

THE COMMUNITY IS URGED TO PROTECT THOSE AT HIGHEST RISK OF SERIOUS ILLNESS FROM COVID-19 BY FOLLOWING DEM ORDER NO. 20-002



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FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla.—To protect the people at highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19, the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) is urging the community to follow DEM Order 20-002. DEM Order No. 20-002 prohibits certain individuals from entering facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family care homes, long-term care facilities and adult group homes. This order applies to anyone including visitors, staff and contractors. Older adults (60 and older), anyone with a serious chronic medical condition or anyone who is immune compromised are most at risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Following DEM 20-002 limits exposure of COVID-19 to this vulnerable group. People who are prohibited include:

- Any person infected with COVID-19 who has not had two consecutive negative test results separated by 24 hours.
- Any person showing or presenting signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, including cough, fever, shortness of breath or sore throat.
- Any person who has or may have been in close contact with a person(s) infected with COVID-19 who has not tested negative for COVID-19 is prohibited from visiting a facility until 14 days after their interaction with the person(s) who is infected with COVID-19.
- Any person who traveled internationally is prohibited from visiting a facility until 14 days after their return to the United States.
- Any person who traveled on a cruise ship is prohibited from visiting a facility until 14 days after their return to the United States.
- Any person who has been in a community with confirmed community spread of COVID-19, as identified by the CDC or a state public health agency within 14 days of their presence in the community with community spread.
- Any person who resides in a community with confirmed community spread of COVID-19, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or a state public health agency

Governor DeSantis directed the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Agency for Health Care Administration to take action to restrict access to vulnerable populations for those who may have been exposed to COVID-19. [DEM Order NO. 20-002](#) became effective on March 11, 2020.

Everyday preventative actions can prevent the spread of COVID-19 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 sneeze with 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).

Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19. This remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For more questions about COVID-19 in Okaloosa County, please call the DOH-Okaloosa Public Information line at 850-344-0566 Monday-Friday 7 a.m.- 5p.m. FDOH COVID-19 Call Center is available 24/7 at 1-866-779-6121 or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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