

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

03.10.20



Okaloosa County COVID-19 Update

Niceville– COVID-19 concerns have been front and center for Florida residents as of late, and Okaloosa County is no exception. The Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center is actively monitoring this on-going event using an approach which follows best practices as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the Florida Department of Health, in an effort to limit the spread of respiratory disease.

Our Incident Management Team is working closely with our local and State partners, including the Florida Department of Health, and following our Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to best serve our residents, visitors, staff and partners. We are conducting conference calls with our Incident Management Team and using our WebEOC virtual operations center to track missions and fill resource requests to provide premier safety services for our community.

As the situation evolves, and new guidance emerges, the EOC is flexible can expand or contract to meet the needs of the overall mission and our residents. Response to any spreading illness requires a total community response to mitigate effectively, and we know we can count on the residents of Okaloosa County to partner with us in that manner. Remember that basic, healthy habits to limit the spread of respiratory illness like influenza are very effective against COVID-19. (insert links to DOH healthy habits and EPA approved cleaning chemical effective for COVID-19)

- EPA list of cleaning agents effective against COVID-19
 - <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-list-disinfectants-use-against-covid-19>
- DOH Healthy Habits
 - <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/>

Thanks for being a great partner in our community response!

Health Information from the Florida Department of Health

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 the 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.

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There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. As a reminder, the Department always recommends everyday preventive actions to help impede 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 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).

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 China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan and any other destination under [CDC travel advisory](#) should call ahead to their health care provider and local county health department (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, they should call ahead to a health care professional and the county health department. The health care professional will work with the Department to determine if the person should be tested for COVID-19.

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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 any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling 1-866-779-6121 or emailing COVID-19@flhealth.gov. The Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition, please visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/all-county-locations.html> to locate and obtain contact information for your local CHD.

The CDC also has a website with information related to COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

By Authority,

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT CHRISTOPHER SAUL AT
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