



City of Beacon, New York
Office of the Mayor
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Beacon – COVID-19 Update – Monday March 16

BEACON, NY – The City of Beacon is working closely with Dutchess County and New York State to ensure public health and safety in connection with COVID-19, and wants to inform the community of the following current information and actions.

- 1. Public Information:** The City of Beacon recognizes that the best statewide health expertise is provided by New York State, and the best local health expertise lies with the Dutchess County Health Department. Accordingly, the City will where possible promptly re-communicate relevant, accurate information provided by these sources, whether electronically on the Beacon Public Access Channel (Channel 22) , the City of Beacon website (<http://www.CityofBeacon.org>), links in documents, or in printed form. The primary objective of the actions being taken by public health officials is to reduce the pace of transmission of COVID-19, to “flatten the curve” as many describe, so as to avoid exceeding the capacity of our hospital services.
- 2. City Preparedness:** The City is working closely with expert state and county governmental partners, participating in multiple daily calls and meetings involving communities throughout the region. Information is passed on to all city staff, including police, fire and other departments, and the community, and the City is taking the appropriate recommended actions to properly inform to safeguard our community, including actions and recommendations to reduce the pace of transmission of COVID-19.
- 3. Limiting Gatherings:** Today (Monday March 16), the Governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut announced a lower crowd capacity limit of 50 people for recreational and social gatherings (e.g., theaters, sporting events; but not e.g., libraries, retail establishments), effective at 8:00 PM tonight. This follows an earlier order from last Friday (March 13) with an initial limit, which was the lesser of 500 persons or 50% of venue capacity. Today the Governors also announced that restaurants and bars will close for on-premise service (but still allow take-out and delivery service), and the temporary closing of movie theaters, gyms and casinos. Dutchess County and the City of Beacon collectively have the authority to enforce this limitation through our police, fire and building departments, and will promptly begin doing so.
- 4. Schools:** All school districts in Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties were closed for regular classes starting today (Monday March 16). The Beacon City School District is closed for two weeks. The City’s school-based recreation programs are also closed.
- 5. State & Local Government Workforce:** Today (Monday March 16), the Governor announced that 50% of non-essential state employees should not report to work, and if

feasible may work from home, and called for local governments to do the same (we understand this will become an executive order by the end of the day). The City of Beacon will implement this directive beginning tomorrow. We have identified executive, police, fire, water and sewer departments, and code enforcement officers, as essential employees. Other employees will be working for the most part on an every-other-day schedule.

6. City Facilities & Services: The following changes have been made regarding city facilities, board meetings and activities.

- **Essential Services:** Beacon Police and Fire Departments are unaffected by any mandated reduction in staffing; these departments have their own protocols with respect to staffing in emergency situations and interacting with the public. Water and Sewer Departments are unaffected, and trash collection is handled by a private contractor and is on schedule. The roles of Mayor, City Council and City Administrator are unaffected.
- **City Hall:** The window in the front entrance of our Municipal Building will remain open during regular hours for in-person service. Note that this window will as needed service in-person interactions with City departments located in the lower level of the building. Municipal buildings are being cleaned twice a day, and are safe for the public. Residents are encouraged to contact the City by phone or e-mail, where you will receive excellent customer service.
- **Board Meetings:** Meetings of the Beacon City Council, as well as other regular and ad hoc board meetings will continue to meet on schedule, with a change of location on a trial basis, from the Court Room at the Municipal Building to the much larger public meeting room across Route 9D at the Lewis Tompkins Hose Meeting Room located at 13 South Avenue. This will allow for appropriate “social distancing” in a larger venue; the City will monitor and limit public attendance as necessary. The City will continue to televise City Council and other board meetings, and has installed teleconferencing for meetings. Board members are of course free to make individual choices regarding attendance specific to their individual circumstances.
- **Recreation Programs:** The City has already discontinued after-school programs consistent with the school district decision. Other City-sponsored recreational activities are already seeing reduced attendance, and the City will discontinue all recreation programming.
- **Transfer Station:** The City’s recycling and transfer facility on Dennings Avenue will be open for some services, with details to be determined.

7. Some Accurate Sources of Information: Below are some links to accurate and up-to-date local information on health and safety. Take care to find and rely on accurate official sources, and not unofficial, informal or uninformed ones.

- Dutchess County Coronavirus Information Hotline: 845-486-3555
- NYS DOH Novel Coronavirus Hotline: 1-888-364-3065

- Dutchess County State of Emergency:
<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/County-Executive/Dutchess-County-Announces-State-of-Emergency.htm>
- Dutchess County Department of Health:
<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.htm>
- Dutchess Count Mental Health Services:
<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/Mental-Health-Services.htm>
- NYS DOH
Website: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

8. Public Health Reminders: The City of Beacon wishes to repeat some official common-sense public health guidelines including personal hygiene, social distancing, and avoiding large public gatherings and events. These come from the Dutchess County Department of Health and the New York State and the New York State Department of Health.

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

Please see attached COVID-19/Coronavirus Fact Sheet.