



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 14, 2020

Contact: Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida (850) 815-4940,
ESF14@em.myflorida.com

The State of Florida Issues Updates on COVID-19

TALLAHASSEE — 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.

The Florida Department of Health has confirmed an individual who had previously tested positive for COVID-19 has died. The individual was a 77-year old male in Lee County.

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.

During a press conference at the State Emergency Operations Center Saturday, the Governor provided several additional updates on Florida's efforts to respond to COVID-19:

- Governor DeSantis requested that Health and Human Services send home the 61 Floridians that were previously aboard the Grand Princess cruise line, home from isolation from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia.
- Governor DeSantis has directed the Department of Health to hire additional epidemiologists from university health programs to help with workload.
- Governor DeSantis has directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to extend all existing nursing home and ALF licenses for 90 days to remove distraction from patient care.
- Governor DeSantis directed Director Moskowitz to expand his emergency order and prohibit all visitation to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family-care homes, long-term care facilities and adult group homes to all visitors for the next 30 days.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to suspend drivers' license renewal requirements for 30 days.
- Governor DeSantis directed all agencies to suspend for 30 days licensing and registration renewal requirements for existing professional licenses (e.g. realtors).

Governor DeSantis has recommended that local authorities strongly consider canceling mass gatherings and follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. CDC has issued [recommendations for implementation of mitigation strategies in Florida](#), including

recommendations to cancel large gatherings of more than 250 people and smaller gatherings that may bring persons together from multiple parts of the country.

Florida Department of Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran has provided strong recommendations for [extending spring break](#) following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issuing guidance specific to COVID-19 in Florida. In addition, the Department of Education announced that the start of state testing will be delayed by a minimum of two weeks.

On March 9, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-52, declaring a State of Emergency for COVID-19. By declaring a State of Emergency, Governor DeSantis is ensuring that state and local governments have the resources and flexibility they need to prepare and respond.

[COVID-19 Cases](#)

Florida Residents Diagnosed in Florida

	County	Age	Sex	Travel* Related
1	Manatee	63	Male	No
2	Hillsborough	29	Female	Yes
3	Santa Rosa	71	Male	Yes
4	Broward	75	Male	No
5	Broward	65	Male	No
6	Lee	77	Female	Yes
7	Lee	77	Male	Yes
8	Charlotte	54	Female	Yes
9	Okaloosa	61	Female	Yes
10	Volusia	66	Female	Yes
11	Manatee	81	Female	Yes
12	Broward	67	Male	No
13	Volusia	60	Female	Yes
14	Broward	69	Female	No
15	Nassau	68	Male	Yes
16	Collier	73	Male	Yes
17	Collier	68	Female	Yes
18	Collier	64	Female	Yes
19	Pinellas	67	Male	Yes
20	Pinellas	64	Male	Yes
21	Pasco	46	Male	Yes
22	Miami-Dade	56	Male	Yes
23	Broward	70	Male	Under Investigation
24	Broward	61	Male	Yes
25	Broward	65	Male	Under Investigation
26	Lee	57	Male	Yes
27	Seminole	68	Male	Yes
28	Palm Beach	73	Male	Yes
29	Palm Beach	74	Male	Yes
30	Sarasota	50	Female	Yes
31	Miami-Dade	42	Male	Under Investigation
32	Alachua	24	Male	Yes
33	Volusia	70	Female	Yes
34	Duval	83	Male	No

35	Clay	57	Male	No
36	Broward	27	Female	No
37	Broward	25	Female	Yes
38	Hillsborough	68	Female	Yes
39	Broward	36	Male	Yes
40	Broward	49	Female	Yes
41	Lee	77	Male	No
42	Orange	41	Male	Under Investigation
43	Osceola	54	Male	Under Investigation
44	Miami-Dade	51	Male	Under Investigation
45	Manatee	67	Female	Yes
46	Manatee	62	Female	No
47	Volusia	29	Male	Yes
48	Palm Beach	59	Female	Yes
49	Palm Beach	65	Male	Yes
50	Miami-Dade	42	Male	Under Investigation
51	Miami-Dade	77	Female	Under Investigation
52	Broward	59	Male	Under Investigation
53	Miami-Dade	37	Male	Yes
54	Miami-Dade	39	Female	Under Investigation
55	Broward	20	Female	Yes
56	Broward	83	Female	Under Investigation
57	Broward	41	Male	Under Investigation
58	Broward	20	Female	Yes
59	Broward	19	Female	Yes
60	Broward	22	Female	Under Investigation
61	Broward	19	Male	Yes
62	Broward	58	Male	Under Investigation
63	Miami-Dade	43	Male	Under Investigation
64	Palm Beach	37	Male	Under Investigation

*Definition of travel-related: *A known history of exposure to COVID-19 associated with travel outside of Florida.

International Travel

U.S. Department of State – Global Level 3 Health Advisory

The U.S. Department of State advises U.S. citizens to reconsider travel abroad due to the global impact of COVID-19. Many areas throughout the world are now experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions. Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas where cases have not been reported may restrict travel without notice.

CDC Guidelines

The Florida Department of Health is advising all individuals who have traveled internationally to follow **CDC guidelines**, summarized below:

- **Level 3 Travel Advisory:** CDC recommends 14-day self-isolation and social distancing upon return to the United States. Social distancing includes avoiding going out in public and close personal interactions. If you become symptomatic, immediately self-isolate and contact your County Health Department or health care provider.
- **Level 2 Travel Advisory and Cruises:** Travelers should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States. If you become symptomatic, immediately self-isolate and they should call ahead to a health care professional or their county health department before seeking treatment.
 - According to CDC, a cruise ship is defined as a passenger vessel involving the movement of large numbers of people in closed and semi-closed settings.
- For more information regarding current CDC travel advisories related to COVID-19, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

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 or local County Health Department (CHD) and mention their recent travel or close contact, unless they are experiencing an emergency.

If a person has had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from areas 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.

Nile Cruise Advisory

The Florida Department of Health is advising all individuals who traveled to Egypt for a cruise or tour on the Nile River in February or March 2020 to self-isolate for 14 days following their date of

return to the United States, and if ill, immediately contact their CHD or health care provider. Several passengers in the United States recently developed symptoms and have been confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, including over 10 positive cases in Florida.

Port Everglades Advisory

The Department, through an extensive epidemiological investigation, has identified multiple, positive COVID-19 cases that are connected and associated with Port Everglades in Broward County, Florida.

- The Department recommends all individuals experiencing symptoms who have recently traveled through Port Everglades to immediately contact their CHD or health care provider and self-isolate for 14 Days.
- The Department also recommends employees of Metro Cruise Services at Port Everglades with any association to these cases self-isolate at home.
- The Department is working to connect with all employees at Metro Cruise Services who may have come into contact with the three individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 to provide the employees with the appropriate guidance and monitoring.
- The Department is working in close consultation with the CDC on this investigation.
- CDC recommends that individuals with recent travel history on a cruise monitor their health for 14 days and, if they develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their CHD or health care provider.

COVID-19 Public Website and Call Center

Please visit the Department's dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) 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**. **The Call Center is available 24 hours a 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 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 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 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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- Governor Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order 20-52](#) declaring a State of Emergency for COVID-19.
- Governor Ron DeSantis directed the Florida Division of Emergency Management to activate to Level II to coordinate the state's response to COVID-19.
- Governor Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order 20-51](#) directing the State Surgeon General to declare a Public Health Emergency.
- State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- Established an Incident Management Team to coordinate response operations.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.

- Conducted 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 these calls.
- Participated with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) on statewide conference calls with nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospitals.
- Established a public call center for questions regarding COVID-19.
- Developed and distributed an updated COVID-19 presentation to CHDs for use at community meetings.
- Implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and coordination with the CDC regarding epidemiological activities.
- Distributed CDC Interim Guidance for public health personnel evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases at their home or non-home residential settings to CHDs.
- Distributed the updated Clinician Screening Tool for identifying PUIs for COVID-19 and 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.
 - 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.
 - 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. The Governor also directed the Florida Department of Corrections to suspend visitation at state prisons for 30 days.

AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- AHCA participated in a collaborative call with the Florida Health Care Association, Florida Hospital Association and LeadingAge Florida to discuss patient transfer arrangements between health care facilities such as nursing homes and hospitals.
- The Florida Medicaid Program announced coverage of commercial testing for COVID-19 for dates of service back to February 4.
- AHCA submitted requests to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for flexibility for Florida's program under the federal declaration of a state of emergency.

- Secretary Mayhew participated in a call with hospitals, laboratory administrators and associations regarding hospital testing.
- AHCA is working with nursing homes on recently released guidance further restricting visitor and vendor access to ensure the health and safety of facility residents.

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- APD's chief of staff sent a directive to employees following Governor Ron DeSantis' guidance on travel which restricts individuals conducting international travel and those taking cruises from immediately returning to work. They will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- APD is developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for providers and Waiver Support Coordinators related to COVID-19.
- Members of the APD Senior Leadership Team are holding daily meetings on actions, policies, procedures, and updates related to COVID-19.
- The agency's three state-run centers in Marianna, Gainesville, and Chattahoochee are working very closely with their local health departments to enhance infection control measures.
- APD sent an updated visitor questionnaire for Adult Day Training facilities and Group Homes across the state to screen visitors prior to entering a facility. This visitor questionnaire will also be used for visitors to APD Regional Offices.
- APD continues to provide an up-to-date status on COVID-19, best practices, preventative tips, and CDC guidance to APD providers, Waiver Support Coordinators, Stakeholders, and APD employees.

DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

- DOEA Secretary Prudom held a conference call with The Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-term Care Services (CARES) supervisors to discuss the suspension of face-to-face assessments. CARES assessors will provide reviews through phone or tele-technology to reduce client/staff exposure and reduce spread.
- Through Departmental Leadership and the Area Agency on Aging contract managers, we provided ongoing technical assistance to the entire Aging Network regarding allowable flexibilities within programs to ensure continuity of services and the safety of elders. For example, we provided guidance to all Executive Directors regarding the provision on completing assessments for multiple program types, specifically for clients who have chosen to self-isolate.
- DOEA provided updated information on current closures and possible future temporary closures of specific services at Congregate Meal Sites, Senior Centers, and Adult Day Care Centers on our website homepage and all corresponding program pages. Clients are guided to contact the specific location for alternative services, provided the Area Agency on Aging helpline, and directed to the DOH website with any additional questions on COVID-19.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Child Welfare sent communication about COVID-19, to licensed child care providers, directing them to follow the CDC's Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019.
- DCF Secretary Chad Poppell sent thorough communication to all DCF staff, contracted partners, and licensed facilities (including child care providers) about COVID-19, including precautionary measures (as outlined by the CDC) and temporary policy updates.
- DCF is working with AHCA, DOEA, and APD to compile and develop guidance for agency staff and stakeholders who work directly with Florida's elderly population and have a higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19.
- DCF established strategies for COVID-19 prevention at all three state mental health treatment facilities, as well as the South Florida mental health facilities run by Wellpath Recovery Solutions, a contracted partner. They are reporting daily updates to ensure compliance with virus prevention and monitor potential outbreaks.
- DCF has established a visitation protocol for all state-owned and contracted mental health treatment facilities, as well as vendors and patient families, requiring all outside parties to complete a Visitors Viral Symptoms Screening prior to entering a facility.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

- FDVA is restricting 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.
- 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.
- All VA Medical Centers in Florida are implementing enhanced screening protocols at their facilities. VA Outpatient Clinics are also implementing enhanced screening protocols. Please plan to arrive at the facility well in advance of your appointment to allow additional time for the screening process.
- Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are encouraged to contact the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center at 1-877-741-3400 (toll free). Clinical staff provide 24/7 virtual care and support, including nurse advice and triage. The service is available at no cost to veterans enrolled for care in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8).
- Currently, all U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries are open for burial and visitation by the public. Florida has nine National Cemeteries. To schedule a burial, please call 800-535-1117, option 1. In light of concerns regarding COVID-19, some families may prefer to proceed with direct interment of their loved ones and postpone the formal committal services to a later date. Cemetery administrators will work to accommodate these preferences.

- All FDVA and VA facilities remain fully operational.

VOLUNTEER FLORIDA

- Volunteer Florida is having preliminary conversations on the anticipated needs of volunteers. We are working together to plan for needed volunteers and develop volunteer safety guidelines to ensure the protection of our service providers (volunteers and clients).
- Volunteer Florida has asked all Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) partners to review their continuity of operations so that there is no service delivery disruption.
- Volunteer Florida participated in a statewide call with Supervisors of Elections to discuss Volunteer Connect (Florida's official volunteer opportunities) and how it can be used by offices to help recruit volunteers for Tuesday's primary.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education Richard Corcoran provided strong recommendations for extending spring break following [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) issuing guidance specific to COVID-19 in Florida](#). As all Florida school districts and public charter schools have different schedules, please click [here](#) to see the recommended spring break changes for each district. In addition, the department also announced that the start of state testing will be delayed by a minimum of two weeks. To stay up to date on school closure information, visit: [org/em-response](#).
- FDOE sent updated guidance to school districts and superintendents ahead of spring break. To view that memo, visit: [fldoe.org/em-response](#).
- At this time, no Florida student has contracted COVID-19.
- In an effort to be proactive, and only as a precautionary measure if COVID-19 evolves in Florida, [Florida Virtual School \(FLVS\) has partnered with the Florida Department of Education to offer all school districts student support and teacher professional development tailored to the online learning environment](#). The Florida Department of Education in partnership with FLVS is training an additional 10,000 teachers statewide on the Virtual Teacher Training for COVID-19. Superintendents who are interested in offering their teachers the Virtual Teacher Training for COVID-19 should work with their County Virtual Principals to provide a list of teachers to FLVS through: <https://www.flvs.net/FLVSTeacherTraining>.
- 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 weekly calls to update districts on preparation efforts.
- FDOE has sent weekly memos providing updates to school districts, superintendents, Florida Colleges, parents, teachers and stakeholders.

- FDOE launched a survey to school districts and public charter schools about their preparations, policies, their capacity to serve their students virtually to help meet and determine any preparedness needs.

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

- Effective immediately, all universities will make plans to transition to remote instruction as soon as possible.
- State universities with students who have returned from spring break, which includes Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, Florida Polytechnic University, and the University of Florida, should implement a process to transition to remote instruction immediately and encourage students to return home for at least 2 weeks. Each university will provide detailed information to their students, faculty, and staff at the earliest possible time regarding this transition.
- State universities with students who are currently on spring break or about to be on break should direct their students to NOT return to campus for at least 2 weeks following the conclusion of spring break. This includes students at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida State University, New College of Florida, the University of North Florida, the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida, and the University of West Florida. Each university will provide detailed information to their students, faculty, and staff at the earliest possible time regarding this transition.
- All universities will continue to provide essential services, such as dining, counseling, health services, library services, etc., potentially on a limited basis or remotely. Each university with clinical and other non-classroom based programs will communicate directly with those students.
- All universities will continue to provide essential services, such as dining, counseling, health services, library services, etc., potentially on a limited basis or remotely. Each university with clinical and other non-classroom based programs will communicate directly with those students.
- RESIDENTIAL HOUSING - While students are encouraged to remain off-campus, each university should develop a plan for providing residential accommodations for students who need assistance or must remain in place.
- All state universities have implemented campus-wide critical incident or emergency management teams that are meeting regularly to prepare for the impacts of the COVID-19 virus.
- All universities are preparing to transition to remote instructional delivery for a two-week period during March and early April, depending on each institution's Spring Break, and are informing students not to return to campus during this period.
- The Board of Governors will be conducting its March meeting via conference call and will not have a face-to-face meeting at USF as was originally scheduled.
- For more information visit: <https://www.flbog.edu/2020/03/11/state-university-system-statement-on-covid-19/>.

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.
- Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened, and entrance will be restricted if they:
 - Have traveled and returned from China, Iran, Italy or South Korea 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.
- 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 this potential threat.
- 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.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- The Florida Department of State's museum properties are taking precautions to ensure the health of visitors amid concerns of COVID-19. The Museum of Florida History has removed the guest sign in book; education staff members now record the visitor information. Museum staff members are cleaning all push buttons for life casts, dioramas, and other touchable exhibits as identified; sanitizing wheelchairs after every use; and wiping bench surfaces and survey podium with disinfecting wipes. Additional hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance and exit of The Museum of Florida History. Further, the Museum has turned off touchscreen survey and is offering paper surveys. Finally, in an effort to ensure the continued health of our employees, Museum staff members are using disinfecting wipes

on phones and keyboards and COVID-19 general prevention signs from the Florida Department of Health have been posted in shared staff spaces.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- At the direction of Governor Ron 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.
- FDOT Secretary Thibault and staff from the department will 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 Ron 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 are being posted in FDOT facilities, which include welcome centers, service plazas and rest areas across the state.
- COVID-19 materials are being posted at all FDOT work sites across the state to help educate contractors, vendors, and stakeholders.
- FDOT toll collectors have been given additional training and are required to wear gloves as well as continue with enhanced cleansing.
- SunRail has posted COVID-19 educational materials inside all trains and on all platforms, focusing on areas near entrances and bathrooms.
- SunRail trains are being cleaned and sanitized daily and SunRail staff have been provided sanitizing towelettes and encouraged to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.
- FDOT is providing hand sanitizer and posting COVID-19 educational materials at its public meetings across the state.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

- FLHSMV continues to encourage Floridians through social media and other channels to use convenient online options, rather than visiting an office location, to renew or replace a driver license, ID card, motor vehicle or vessel registration, and more.
- FLHSMV has been in regular communication with the Florida Tax Collectors Association to provide the latest COVID-19 information and guidance from the Florida Department of Health and other state partners.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Governor Ron DeSantis announced the activation of the Business Damage Assessment survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business

operations. The survey, managed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (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/>.

VISIT FLORIDA

- 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 assessing and reevaluating all tourism promotion messaging, both international and domestic, and is developing long-term strategies to keep Florida top-of-mind for potential vacationers.
- VISIT FLORIDA is planning for future marketing campaigns to ensure that Florida's tourism industry has a strong, unified voice following COVID-19.
- VISIT FLORIDA ceased all Florida tourism marketing in China. VISIT FLORIDA redirected the savings from China and invested this funding into a domestic campaign that launched on March 2.
- 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 is temporarily pausing all marketing efforts in Germany in accordance with federal travel restrictions. This is the only European country besides the United Kingdom where VISIT FLORIDA has active campaigns.
- VISIT FLORIDA remains in close contact with industry partners and travel organizations and is communicating all new information as it becomes available.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- The Department of Revenue's Child Support Program is working to reduce when customers are required to visit a local child support office and is providing new connect/customer service options.
- Efforts include rescheduling genetic testing sample collection appointments and postponing other types of appointments. The Program will soon be implementing the ability for parents to enter into written agreements over the phone, and the Program will be providing new fax, email and form drop-off processes.
- 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.
- GTA is closely monitoring any future guidance issued by the Internal Revenue Service for potential corporate income tax due date extensions.
- 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 our public areas of our service centers.

OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION

- OIR has published a [resource page](#) on its website emphasizing its direction to insurers and will continuously update the page with important insurance resources.
- The Office of Insurance Regulation (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 Department of Health 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 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 activated its incident management team and has met to review disaster response procedures.
- 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.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen sent directions to all supervisors with information about sick or at-risk members, use of leave, telecommuting, business and personal travel followed by a message to all members.
- At the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, FDLE is identifying conferences, meetings and other travel to be cancelled or postponed and working to receive reimbursements.
- FDLE is coordinating ESF-16 providing updates and securing staffing while 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 during a quarantine.
- FDLE has reviewed its COOP and identified members who can work from home. We ordered an increase in bandwidth and additional VPN licenses creating additional capacity for members to work remotely.

- 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 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 our screening protocols and procedures for youth taken into custody by law enforcement who are brought to our juvenile assessment centers and detention screening units to now include precautionary coronavirus screening questions and protocols. This modified screening protocol was shared with our law enforcement partners statewide.
- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has developed a visitor screening tool which is now mandatory to use inside of our juvenile detention centers and residential commitment programs to ensure both the safety of the youth and staff in these programs. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is in the process of sending a notice to parents and guardians of youth in programs regarding the new visitor screening requirements.
- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has sent a notice to the vendors, guests, volunteers and business partners that come into our juvenile detention centers and residential commitment programs asking that they limit visiting any of these facilities if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms or have traveled outside of the U.S., including cruise ship travel. The department will work with these entities on alternatives to visiting programs to ensure critical services are not interrupted.

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's Emergency Coordinating Officer and State Mass Care Coordinator is supporting the initiation of FDOH's joint information center and providing assistance as requested of State Emergency Support Function 6.
- DBPR added a web banner with information on COVID-19 and link to the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/COVID-19>.

- DBPR's Emergency Coordinating Officer and State Mass Care Coordinator is supporting the initiation of FDOH's joint information center and providing assistance as requested of State Emergency Support Function 6.
- 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.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- 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 that may be 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 (REDM) 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 vendor of the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) vendors 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 in staffing resources.

###

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, 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.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEM/bulletins/2813625>

Update your subscriptions, modify your password or email address, or stop subscriptions at any time on your [Subscriber Preferences Page](#). You will need to use your email address to log in. If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please visit subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com.

This service is provided to you at no charge by the [Florida Division of Emergency Management](#).

This email was sent to dlchdpio's@flhealth.gov using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Florida Division of Emergency Management · 2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard · Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

