

Town of Acton

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

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Town of Acton Postpones Annual Town Meeting and Provides Updates on Services and Resources Related to Coronavirus

Residents Encouraged to Practice Social Distancing to Limit Spread of Disease

ACTON -- The Town of Acton has announced several closures and cancellations designed to mitigate the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on the community.

These notices, as well as other important information, include the following:

General Government

- The Board of Selectmen met Tuesday, March 17, and issued a Declaration of Local Emergency consistent with local and state laws. The Acton Board of Health

will consider the Declaration when they meet later this week. The Board of Selectmen plan to meet frequently during this time. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 24 at 7 p.m.

- Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 39 Section 9, the Selectmen voted to delay Acton's Annual Town Meeting until a date when the Town has a better sense of when the social distancing prohibitions are lifted and the threat of the COVID-19 virus has waned to a safe level.
- The Board voted to postpone or cancel in-person board and committee meetings other than the Board of Selectmen and Board of Health until a further determination by the Board of Selectmen. Boards with time sensitive, statutory and contractual obligations may consider meeting remotely and virtually.
- The Board ratified the decision of Town Manager John Mangiaratti to close public buildings and public playgrounds. The closings will continue until such time as the Town Manager, in consultation with the chair and vice chair of the Board of Selectmen, determine the buildings and playgrounds should be re-opened.
- The Human Services and Senior Center Facility, Acton Memorial Library, West Acton Citizens Library, Recreation Offices and Town Hall will be closed to the public until further notice.
- Government operations for the Town of Acton will continue while all offices in the above mentioned buildings will be closed to the public. Residents are encouraged to utilize the Town of Acton's website, <http://www.actonma.gov>, to access Town services.
- Board and Committee meetings other than Selectmen, Board of Health, and certain other urgent matters are cancelled or postponed until further notice.
- Building inspections will continue on a limited basis. More information can be found [here](#).

Community Resources

- A new guide to available food resources is available [here](#).
- Questions around fuel assistance eligibility and utility shut-off prevention should be directed to the Community Resources Office at 978-929-6651 or lducharme@acton-ma.gov.

Acton Nursing Services

- Appointments within the Acton Nursing Services office will be rescheduled for a later date as information and the COVID-19 situation continues to update. For concerns or questions call 978-929-6650.
- Home Health Care visits will continue with current clients as well as new clients who are referred to Acton Nursing Services. Be advised that per guidance for Home Health Agencies, all clients will receive a call prior to a home visit to assess their and any household members' health status related to COVID-19. If you are a current client of Acton Nursing Services or if anyone within your household has a fever, cough or shortness of breath, call our office number at 978-929-6650 to report these or other concerning symptoms.

Libraries

- While the Acton Memorial Library remains temporarily closed to the public, all fines will be waived for items that become due while the building is closed. Do not return items until the library reopens.
- All physical items, including museum passes, will not be available to check out while the facility is closed. Residents are encouraged to explore the digital content available through the library. Visit actonmemoriallibrary.org/eresources for more information on borrowing e-books, audiobooks, video and more.
- If you have any questions about these services, contact a library representative on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 978-929-6655 or by emailing reference@actonma.gov.

Public Safety

- We are actively practicing social distancing at the Public Safety Facility. While the building will remain open for emergencies, we ask that you call our business line 978-929-7711 for all police matters. For general questions regarding COVID-19, call the state's hotline at 211.
- We are taking more reports over the phone and if we do respond to your home we will try to keep our distance for everyone's safety.
- The MedReturn bin has been temporarily removed from the lobby of the PSF.

Public Works

- The Transfer Station facility will remain open, but residents are encouraged to practice appropriate social distancing at the facility, as the virus is believed to

spread when those who have the virus come into close contact, within six feet, of other people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- The Transfer Station office building will be open for staff only as one measure to ensure appropriate social distancing.
- We would like to ask residents to delay bringing their bulky items and other materials that will require monetary transactions. We want to limit potential exposure to the public and staff that would normally have to handle these items.

Schools

- Acton-Boxborough schools will offer bag lunches to individuals and families on Thursday, March 19 and Friday, March 20 for pick-up outside the main entrance of the High School. Pick up times will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Individuals picking up bag lunches should not enter the school and practice appropriate social distancing measures. All residents are welcome to pick up a meal regardless if you have a child enrolled in the school system.
- The Board of Health is contacting daycares to confirm if facilities are open or closed, with information to be obtained and discussed at the next Board meeting on Thursday, March 19.
- The Board has also discussed whether other private after-school programs, including dance schools, tutor-type schools, karate, etc. should be closed. The Health Division is currently reaching out to these businesses, and most are currently closed. The Health Division will continue with follow-ups to these local businesses to ensure compliance with recommended CDC and DPH guidelines if they intend to remain open.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center will remain closed to the public until further notice.
- Meals on Wheels operations will continue along with limited meal take-out service. Call 781-221-7085 to reserve a meal.
- Seniors in need of assistance with food, grocery shopping, etc. should call the Senior Center at 978-929-6652.

Transportation

- All of Acton's fixed-route services, including the Rail Shuttle and Cross-Acton Transit (CAT), will be suspended until further notice.

- Door-to-door services remain in operation; however, riders are encouraged to utilize alternative modes of transportation if possible. To schedule rides, continue using CrossTown Connect dispatch by calling 978-844-6809 during normal business hours.
- Any additional questions can be forwarded to Austin Cyganiewicz by phone at 978-929-6513 or email acyganiewicz@actonma.gov.
- The MBTA and Keolis Commuter Services (Keolis), the agency's operating partner for Commuter Rail, has announced a Reduced Service Schedule effective Tuesday, March 17. The Commuter Rail Reduced Service Schedule is available at www.MBTA.com/coronavirus.

Veterans Services Office

- Urgent/emergency issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by calling James MacRae at 978-929- 6614.

Other business

- The Health Division contacted all hair salons on Tuesday, March 17 and will be sending guidelines to all establishments, to include:
 - Request to reschedule high risk customers only.
 - Allow no more than 10 people at one time.
 - Arrange work stations so they are at least six feet apart.
 - Asking customers and staff to remain home if they are sick.
 - Avoid use of common items, but if required utilize disinfection methods approved by the EPA after each customer.

General Public Health Notes

- The Board of Health has banned the use of cold bars, hot bars, buffets or self-service type foods at all grocery and convenience stores. The Health Division staff notified all establishments of this change on Tuesday, March 17.
- The Board of Health wants to remind residents to wash reusable bags after each use, as the virus can live within the bag.
- COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on Wednesday, March 11. Additionally, President Donald Trump declared a National Emergency on Friday, March 13, and Gov. Baker declared a State of Emergency on Tuesday, March 10.

- If anyone displays symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should not come to work and they are advised to contact their primary care physician.
- Put distance between yourself and other people where COVID-19 has been confirmed in the surrounding communities. This is especially important for anyone over 60 years old and anyone with an underlying disease process that puts them at higher risk of getting COVID-19.
- There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person, including:
 - Between people who are in close contact with others (within about six feet)
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs.

Limit the Spread of COVID-19

Residents are encouraged to take the following steps to protect against COVID-19:

- Clean hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eye, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Practice social distancing between yourself and other people of at least six feet. Avoid social gatherings consisting of more than 10 people within a closed space.
- Cover your sneezes and coughs with a tissue or using the inside of your elbow, and promptly discard tissue and wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks.

Stay connected

For the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 virus, visit the [DPH website](#) or the [CDC website](#).

Additional updates will be published regularly on the Town of Acton website, and residents are encouraged to sign up to receive notifications directly to their email inbox by [clicking here](#).

###



**Know the facts.
Protect yourself.
Stay well.**

COVID-19 Prevention

Wash hands with
soap and water for
20 seconds



Use hand
sanitizer



Avoid touching
eyes, nose and
mouth



How COVID-19 Spreads

Respiratory
droplets



Contaminated
surfaces



People in close
contact (6 feet)



People are thought to be at their most contagious when they are at their most symptomatic. Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus is spread.

**If you come into close contact with someone
with COVID-19 for a prolonged period:**

- Monitor your health. If you develop symptoms call ahead to your doctor.
- Call your local health department for further instructions.

Acton Health Department: 978-929-6632

COVID-19 Symptoms

Fever



Cough



Shortness of breath



Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

If you develop COVID-19 Symptoms

- Self-quarantine
- Call ahead to your doctor
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Notify your local health department
- Wear a facemask
- Avoid others
- Avoid contact with those in your home including pets

Information compiled from:



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