



# COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CITY OF BUFFALO FAQ

### BUFFALERT

the City of Buffalo, Text - **Join BuffAlert** to **30890**.

For immediate updates and information regarding emergencies, public service announcements or events in

### WHAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ARE CLOSED?

- All municipal buildings, including City Hall, are closed to the general public;
- City Court is closed until further notice, however arraignments, warrant returns and other emergency matters will continue to be conducted at the County Court Building Part 27, at 25 Delaware Avenue ([www.nycourts.gov](http://www.nycourts.gov));
- All City-owned and operated senior centers (Richmond-Summer, Autumnwood and Broadway Market) are closed. Seniors who receive meals at these locations will still be able to receive a meal by calling 311;
- All City-owned Community Centers (Tosh Collins, Lincoln, Machnica, Hennepin, JFK and Schiller Park) are closed;
- The Cazenovia, Marcy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Park casinos are closed;
- All City and Olmsted park events and facilities are closed ([bfloparks.org](http://bfloparks.org)). Only Olmsted Conservancy and City of Buffalo personnel will be allowed in Olmsted Parks buildings as necessary. Any current facility renters for the remainder of March should contact the Conservancy for steps on reimbursement or rescheduling (contact information in the link above)
- The City's indoor pools and ice rinks are closed;
- Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries are closed until further notice.

### HAS THE MAYOR SUSPENDED ANY RULES OR ORDINANCES TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY THE EMERGENCY?

- All 9am to 4 pm alternate parking zones can park on either side of the street, 24/7, until further notice. 6am to 6pm zones will remain in effect for the purpose of access for emergency vehicles.
- If your car has been impounded you can retrieve it by

appointment only, by calling 851-5369 or 851-5832 or by emailing [parking@buffalony.gov](mailto:parking@buffalony.gov).

- We will help restaurants establish "On-street Drive-Throughs." Establishment owners can contact the Parking Department for guidance on establishing parking zones for pickups and its deliveries by emailing [parking@buffalony.gov](mailto:parking@buffalony.gov).
- Enforcement of the School Speed Zone camera program is suspended and police traffic details in school zones have been suspended;
- Water shut-offs are suspended at this time ([buffalowater.org](http://buffalowater.org)).

### HOW WILL THE CLOSURES IMPACT SERVICES OR BUSINESS PENDING WITH THE CITY?

- All Emergency, Sanitation and critical services are operating normally;
- The City is complying with the Governor's request to reduce our local Government workforce by 50%;
- Late fees or interest on accounts including Tax, Sewer, Water, User Fee, Parking, Traffic, and other departmental citations are suspended until further notice;
- The City will refund all special event fees or deposits made for public-permitted events which have been canceled;
- Design professionals should file building permit plans digitally. The link is: <https://buffalo.idtplans.com/secure/>. The link for the dynamic portal for online payments is: <https://epermits.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Views/Login.aspx>;
- All public meetings have been postponed until further notice.

### WHAT CITY EVENTS AND PROGRAMS ARE CANCELED OR POSTPONED?

- Local media outlets have a complete list of all postponements and cancellations of events, festivals, meetings and other public gatherings, please check them frequently for up to date information;
- Buffalo Public Schools are closed until April 20th;
- Any Buffalo Traffic Court matters currently scheduled for trial or conference will be automatically adjourned to a later date and no additional fees or penalties will be assessed for these automatic adjournments;

- Mayor Byron W. Brown's Civic Innovation Challenge, which was launched last week, has been postponed;
- The Buffalo Employment and Training Center's March 26th Spring Job Fair is canceled ([workforcebuffalo.org](http://workforcebuffalo.org));
- All youth activities provided by the Buffalo Police Athletic League are canceled ([www.BuffaloPAL.com](http://www.BuffaloPAL.com)).

### IS THE BROADWAY MARKET OPEN?

- The Broadway Market's year-round, full-time, permanent tenants will remain open to provide essential services, below are additional guidelines relating to Easter operations and other vendor activities:
  - The Broadway Market will keep regular hours, Monday through Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm
  - Save-A-Lot is open Monday through Sunday 8:00am – 7:00pm
  - The Broadway Market's restaurants will only be open for take-out meals only. No congregant dining will be allowed anywhere in the Broadway Market
  - Saturday-only vendors will be closed effective this Saturday 3/21
  - This weekend's Sneak Peek canceled (3/21 and 3/22)
  - The Broadway Market's Easter Ribbon Cutting, scheduled for March 26th, is canceled
  - Easter-only vendors will not be open, however, permanent Broadway Market tenants will be open for food essentials;

### WILL CITY AND OLMSTED PARKS REMAIN OPEN?

- The parks remain open for passive uses. Playgrounds remain open and as standard will be routinely inspected along with park seating, play equipment or furnishings. Park users are asked to observe proper hygiene, and to take appropriate precautions with wipes, hand sanitizer, social distancing, etc.
- All public park facilities and buildings including restrooms, concessions, etc. will be closed immediately through the end of March. A reassessment of facility access and room rentals will be made by April 1st. As part of the Governor's requirement for restaurant closures the Terrace restaurant and banquet facilities at the Marcy Casino are suspended until further notice
- To increase sanitary measures in the parks, there will be no portable toilets available until further notice
- Trash and garbage collection in the parks will continue as normal, however as a measure to reduce risks to park workers, patrons are asked to dispose of

trash in totes found along park roads and trails, or if trash is brought in, to please take it back out with you and dispose of it at home. Per City ordinance, please keep pets on a leash and remove/dispose of all pet excrement in proper receptacles

- Golf, sports and major park events, festivals or gatherings (over 50 people) in the parks are not allowed and access will be reassessed after April 1st
- Golf is currently slated to be opened for the season on April 25th and turf preparations will proceed. Season passes may be purchased by calling the Conservancy at 838-1249, any modifications to retail operations will be updated on April 1st. Public schools, sports clubs and leagues will be notified after April 1st regarding any further decisions for access to park fields or scheduling
- The public should call 311 or the Conservancy to notify the City of any hazards in the parks or trees with damaged limbs near pathways or roads.

## ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FAQ

### WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. For the latest information, go to CDC COVID-19 website.

### HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

### WHAT ARE SEVERE COMPLICATIONS FROM THIS VIRUS?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

## IS THERE A VACCINE OR TREATMENT?

There is currently no vaccine and no specific treatment for this disease. People infected with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

## HOW CAN I HELP PROTECT MYSELF?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, you should follow these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

- Wash your hands often and correctly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Watch this excellent video and share these great materials.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue use your elbow not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- See the CDC Checklist for Individuals and Families

## WHAT CLEANING PRODUCTS SHOULD I USE?

Community members can practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks) with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product. See CDC's Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for more information.

## CAN PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES GET COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

## SHOULD I CANCEL MY TRIP WITHIN THE UNITED STATES?

At this time, the ECDOH recommends consulting the

Johns Hopkins University & Medicine COVID-19 Global Cases Map when planning a trip within the United States. People with compromised immune system and the elderly should stay away from these areas. Others will need to weigh the benefits and risks of traveling to areas with confirmed cases. Also, please keep in mind that this is a rapidly changing situation and other areas may be added and numbers may increase at any given time.

## SHOULD I CANCEL MY TRIP OUT OF THE COUNTRY?

This is a rapidly changing situation. Currently, the ECDOH is quarantining individuals for up to 14 days who travel from countries designated by the CDC as "Level 3." Individuals who have travel plans outside the United States should consult the CDC Travel Information website for the most recent guidance. Travelers who return from these areas are subject to quarantine for 14 days following their return to Erie County.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE TRAVELED FROM A CDC "LEVEL 3" COUNTRY WITHIN THE LAST 14 DAYS?

Countries that have a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission):

- China
- Iran
- Japan
- South Korea
- Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City

## If you traveled to these areas you should take the following steps:

- Call your doctor and tell them about your travel history.
- Stay home for 14 days from the time you left the CDC Level 3 area.
- Take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing:
- Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
- Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period. Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work.
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing.
- Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.

- Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK

If you get sick with fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing:

- First, call your healthcare provider and explain your symptoms
- Avoid contact with others.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue use your elbow not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Before seeking health care call ahead to the facility and tell them your situation. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness.

### HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

For testing information please call your healthcare provider. Communications have been sent to healthcare providers regarding testing guidelines. Your healthcare provider will need to determine whether or not you need to be tested. If your healthcare provider approves your testing, your provider, NOT YOU, will contact the ECDOH.

### HOW DO I KNOW IF I CAME IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO TESTED POSITIVE IN ERIE COUNTY?

You will be notified by the Erie County Department of Health.

### WHAT ARE THE NYS AND ECDOH SOCIAL DISTANCING RECOMMENDATIONS AND REGULATIONS? (AS OF 3/12/2020)

CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States.

#### NY State Mass Gatherings Regulations

In addition to the NY State Mass Gatherings Regulations, the ECDOH:

- STRONGLY recommends cancelling all events with 250 or more people in attendance.
- Recommends that people seriously consider avoid attending any event or location with 50 or more, especially if it involves individuals from outside of Erie County and we STRONGLY recommend that all

people over the age of 60 and those with chronic medical conditions do not attend such events.

- Length: for the next 2 weeks; reevaluate as needed.

### WHAT IS A PERSON UNDER INVESTIGATION (PUI)?

PUI is a person that has met specific criteria set by the CDC and is being monitored for disease.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE?

First, both Isolation and Quarantine are similar in that they are both imposed to limit the spread of communicable disease. The differences are as follows.

#### ISOLATION

To separate ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who do not have that disease

Restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases

Example: Isolation for patients with infectious tuberculosis (TB)

There is no such thing as "self-isolation" or "self-quarantine". Both of these tactics are imposed and enforced by the Erie County Department of Health. *Source: hhs.gov*

#### QUARANTINE

To separate and restrict the movement of well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease

Monitor to see if they become ill

These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms

### WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Use reliable, fact-based sources when seeking out information about COVID-19 and other public health topics. We recommend the following sites:

- ECDOH COVID-19 Website
- ECDOH Press Releases
- CDC COVID-19 Website
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Website
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Hotline: 1-888-364-3065
- WHO COVID-19 Website
- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) COVID-19 Website