



COVID-19 FAQ

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

***** Westchester County is recruiting doctors, nurses, physician assistants, paramedics, and other medical professionals to assist in the COVID-19 response. Please email lajc@westchestergov.com to register*****



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UPDATES APRIL 8, 2020

Testing:

Priority COVID-19 testing is being given to first responders, and those experiencing respiratory distress. If you think you have been exposed:

1. Self-quarantine
2. Use the COVID Online Assessment [here](#) or call the COVID testing hotline
3. If you receive a positive response to testing-notify those that you have been in close contact with (including your workplace)
4. Continue to self-quarantine, monitor symptoms, and follow the advice of your medical professional
5. If you are experiencing respiratory distress immediately call 911 or go to your nearest hospital.

Price Gouging:

If you suspect a business of unreasonably raising price of goods or commodities during this crisis, call CMV Consumer Protection (914) 665-2433



OPERATIONS

City workforce:

The City is being staffed with only critical personnel- those needed to ensure the life and safety of the residents in the City of Mt. Vernon. Some quality-of-life services have been suspended in favor of life-saving and preventative measures. Please call City departments via the phone numbers provided on the website to inquire about available services.

Building Department/Construction:

All non-essential construction is prohibited until further notice the City of Mt. Vernon. (Exceptions- a project necessary to protect the health and safety of occupants or to continue a project if it would be unsafe to allow it to remain undone-only until it is safe to shut down the site)

The Buildings Department and its Inspectors ARE operational and WILL SHUT DOWN all unauthorized non-essential construction.

Important Links:

- [Click Here for NYS Coronavirus Updates](#)
- [Click here to ask NYS Government COVID-19 questions](#)
- [Click here for COVID Online Assessment for symptoms](#)
- [Westchester County COVID Website/Information](#)
- [NYS COVID FAQs](#)
- [Sex and the Coronavirus](#)
- [Click here to file for unemployment, file your tax return on apply for SNAP \(food stamps\)](#)

Meetings/Hearings:

Public meetings will occur as posted by the Office of the City Clerk. In lieu of attendance, the public can provide written comments via email to wholmes@cmvny.com prior to the registration deadline (3:00 pm the day of (for City Council Meetings). Please call 914-665-2348 for more information. City of Mt. Vernon Courts are closed until further notice.

Elections/Petitions

The candidate petitioning process is suspended or the June primaries for Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly and Judicial races. The number of signatures required for ballot access have also been modified.



GATHERINGS

- ALL nonessential gatherings of individuals in New York State of ANY size and for ANY reason are cancelled. This ban applies to any party, celebration, or social event in a private or commercial space.
- All City and County events/parades/festivals/gatherings/dinners are postponed indefinitely.
- **MATILDA's LAW (for seniors over 70 and most vulnerable groups):**
 - Remain indoors
 - Can go outside for solitary exercise
 - Pre-screen visitors by taking their temperature
 - Do not visit households with multiple people
 - All vulnerable persons should wear a mask
 - Always stay six feet away from individuals
 - Do not take public transportation unless urgent

- Only medically necessary visits will be allowed to nursing homes; no non-medical staff/personnel may enter unless there are exigent circumstances.
- The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has suspended visitation at facilities statewide

Parks/Outdoor

- Westchester County parks are closed, [Click here for current info](#). CMV parks are closed until further notice.
- Residents are encouraged to practice independent exercise- e.g. jogging, golf, etc. and adhere to the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines.



MEDICAL

- Experts expect the Coronavirus to peak in about 45 days
- COVID-19 Test Scheduling Hotline: 888-364-3065 (New Rochelle and Co-Op City)
- Reduce hospital and in-person doctor's office visits for non-emergencies
- Use telehealth options if available from your primary care or specialty care providers- NYS DFS has required insurance companies to **waive co-pays for telehealth visits**
- Call the 24-hour nurse hotline located on the back of insurance card (if applicable) for assistance
- Stay current on all prescriptions and refills via automated systems with pharmacies or via telephone or mail with healthcare providers
- Call to confirm availability for in-person services prior to attending prescheduled appointments
- The Governor mandated that all hospitals cancel all elective, non-critical surgeries to help expand hospital capacity – effective Wednesday, March 25th.
- Temporary hospitals are being constructed to accommodate COVID-19 patients

The City of Mt. Vernon CANNOT and will not provide medical advice or referrals. Please call your doctor for advice, evaluations, and diagnosis and dial 911 for emergencies.



MENTAL HEALTH/ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Isolation, confinement, financial stress, and increased responsibility can have dangerous effects on your physical and mental health and increase tensions in the home. Since COVID-19, the frequency and severity of domestic violence and intimation partner violence has increased worldwide. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**
- [Click Here](#) for phone numbers and resources to help you through this time.
- If you feel stressed, take a walk (while practicing social distancing) to put some space between you and the stressor. Call the numbers on the link to speak with someone about healthy strategies.
- If you feel danger is imminent CALL 911.



NUMBERS OF CASES/DRUG TRIALS

- Numbers of diagnosed COVID cases and fatalities will be released by the Westchester County Department of Health. The City will only confirm that information released by the State.
- The State began drug trials on March 24th, and has acquired 70,000 doses of Hydroxychloroquine, 10,000 doses of Zithromax and 750,000 doses of Chloroquine.



PRECAUTIONS

- The best way to protect yourself remains to frequently wash your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water and avoid touching ports of entry (eyes, nose, mouth).
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available based on priority (i.e. hospitals, nursing homes, first responders, etc.). The City **DOES NOT** have PPE (gloves & masks) to give to residents.

- Click here for directions on making your own mask at home
- Private doctors should notify the Westchester County Dept. of Health of any positive results
- Coronavirus is primarily spread through respiratory droplets (saliva, mucous)
- Click here for information on **Sex and the Coronavirus**



FOOD

According to the CDC; currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 through food- more investigation is needed.

- [Click here for more info.](#)

Food Stamps

All displaced workers are encouraged to apply for SNAP benefits:

CLICK HERE TO APPLY

- **City Food Deliveries**
 - Scheduled food deliveries to senior citizens and persons with disabilities will continue until further notice. Call (914) 665-2420 for registration and more information.
- **School Grab and Go Food**
 - The City School District is providing grab and go breakfast and lunches at various sites throughout the City (food will continue to be provided during scheduled school breaks), click here for sites and schedule: [MVCSD Grab and Go Locations](#)
- **Restaurants**
 - Restaurants are permitted to remain open for takeout and delivery; dining-in is prohibited
 - Restaurants should operate with as few employees as possible
- **Food Delivery**
 - Food transporters should exercise caution; wash hands their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub after each delivery
 - Recipients should notify food delivery service if they are self-quarantined or have tested positive for COVID-19 to minimize risk to delivery workers
- **City Food Distribution**
 - Food distributions will be advertised on the City website or via **official CMV flyers.**



SCHOOL/LIBRARIES

- The Mt. Vernon City School District has been closed since March 16, 2020. Students, staff, and personnel have a tentative return date of April 15, 2020. Visit: www.mtvernoncsd.org/ for additional information and updates.
- **2020 New York State standardized tests have been cancelled.** . Click Here for information on New York State Annual School Testing
- **2020 NYS Regents Tests have been cancelled.** Click here for more information.
- The Mt. Vernon Public Library is closed until further notice. Click Here to apply for an e-library card for online resources or have access to the media box at the library. All State Education Department buildings are temporarily closed to the
- public, including the State Museum, State Library, and State Archives.



CHILDCARE

- Childcare for the children of first responders, ages 5-12 is being provided by the Mt. Vernon City School District at Holmes Elementary School from 8am-6pm. Call 914-358-2402 for registration

***First Responders are identified as: Nurses, PAs, LPNs, Lab Assistants, support staff for behavioral or developmental disabilities, child welfare workers, paramedics, firefighters, police officers, correction

officers, food manufactures, supermarket workers, commercial truck drivers, construction and manufacturing workers, non-profit and social service workers.



TRAVEL/ VEHICLES (TOLLS ARE CASHLESS)

- The CDC urges residents of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days effective immediately.
- The New York State Thruway Authority announced emergency toll procedures, tolls are now cashless with a bill sent in the mail to the registered owner within 30 days.
- The DMV is temporarily closed to in-office transactions. Online transactions are still available.
- All NYS vehicle inspections, all Licenses, Non Driver ID's, and Registrations with an expiration date of March 1, 2020 or later are also extended until further notice. All road tests have been suspended.
- Parking Meters in Mt. Vernon are suspended.



ECONOMIC

Taxes

- Federal and State Income Tax return deadlines moved from April 15th to July 15th
- Mt. Vernon Property Taxes are still due on April 15th until further notice

Unemployment/ Paid Leave

- Self-Employed workers and independent contractors (previously ineligible) are now eligible for Unemployment Insurance
- NYS DOL has added an additional \$600 per week on top of regular benefits to all UI recipients until July 31st
- There have been an additional 13 weeks added to UI benefits for a total of 39 weeks of coverage
 - [Click here for Unemployment Insurance questions and benefits](#)
 - [Click here to file for unemployment](#)

Paid Sick Leave During Quarantine

- New York workers are guaranteed job protection and financial compensation while they are on a mandatory or precautionary quarantine order due to COVID-19.
 - [Click Here for paid leave fact sheet for Employers](#)
 - [Click here for Paid Leave Fact Sheet for Employees](#)

Utilities:

- NYS Department of Public Service suspended public utilities from cutting off service—including power and heat to customers and will offer payment plans for customer struggling financially due to COVID-19.

Financial Fees

- NYS Department of Financial Services has instructed NY state-chartered banks to waive ATM fees, late fees, overdraft fees, and fees for credit cards for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stimulus Payments

- [What you need to know about Economic Impact Payments](#)

Student Debt

- Effective Immediately AG James temporarily halted the collection of medical and student debt owed to the State Of New York for at least a 30-day period (3/16-4/15)- extensions may be considered.
- Additionally, the OAG will accept application for suspension of all other types of debts owed to the State of New York and referred for collection.

Businesses:

- Business have been mandated by NYS to reduce the workforce by 100% effective 3/20/2020. All non-essential businesses have been ordered to close or have their employees work remotely.
- Effective Saturday, 3/21/2020 at 8 p.m., ALL barbershops, hair salons, tattoo or piercing parlors, and other personal care services (nail technicians, cosmetologists, estheticians, and the provision of electrolysis, laser hair removal services) are ordered to close. These services cannot be provided while maintaining social distance.
- Online sales and delivery are still permitted. Business owners are permitted to go visit their businesses to gather belongings, process paperwork, etc.
- [Click here for definitions of "Essential Businesses"](#)



Small Business

- The President signed into law the CARES Act, which contains \$376 billion in relief for American workers and small businesses. Programs include loans, paycheck protection, and debt relief.
- Click here for more information and to apply for the Act
- Contact your own Small Business Insurance provider to determine coverage and eligibility for any other type of relief.



Rent (Commercial & Residential):

- On March 20, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a 90-day moratorium on evictions for residential and commercial tenants, meaning no one can be evicted in New York State until at least June 20th. Vital housing court functions such as proceedings for landlord lockouts, repair orders, and serious code violations will continue.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that it will suspend all of its foreclosures and evictions through April in response to the pandemic.
*****The City interprets the announcements as written and has no further information regarding back-rent previously owed, rent accrued during this time, procedures after the 90 days, credit implications of non-payment of rent, or landlord/tenant rights. Tenants are STRONGLY encouraged to speak DIRECTLY with their landlord regarding any modifications to existing legal and financial obligations.**
- The Department of Social Services (DSS) can be contacted for financial assistance based on income and other circumstances:
<https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1673>



Mortgage:

- NYS issued an emergency regulation requiring that NYS regulated financial institutions provide residential mortgage forbearance to individuals demonstrating a financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Click Here for more details on the Executive Order; The directive includes
 - Waiving mortgage payments based on financial hardship
 - No negative reporting to credit bureaus
 - Grace period for loan modification
 - No late payment fees or online payment fees
 - Postponing or suspending foreclosures.
- Gov. Cuomo “urged” all lenders (nationwide) to suspend mortgage payments and foreclosures for 90 days for those who face financial hardships -meaning those who have become unemployed or are now working only part-time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **This request is not mandatory outside of NYS. Homeowners should call their mortgage lenders to determine eligibility and implementation.**

