

Call 211 with questions about COVID-19

**News & Updates for the Windham - Bennington Vermont House District
Dover | Readsboro | Searsburg | Somerset | Stamford | Wardsboro | Whitingham**

December 27th 2020

VERMONT STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Laura Sibilila



Bookmark for updates:

Vermont Department of Health [2019 Novel Coronavirus Current Status in Vermont Webpage](#) for updates.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control [Coronavirus Disease page](#)

World Health Organization [Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[State of Vermont Vaccination Plan](#)

Department of Labor
[FAQ for Employers and Employees](#)

Government Operation

Governor Phil Scott
[Executive Orders](#)

[Number 01-20](#)
declaring a State of Emergency in Vermont & National Guard Call Out

[Amendment to 01-02](#)
Declaration of State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19 and National Guard Call-Out - Amended and Restated

[ADDENDUM 1 to 01-20](#)
prohibits all non-essential mass gatherings to the lesser of fifty (50) people or fifty percent (50%) of the occupancy of a facility



My Christmas morning walk was beautiful

Good afternoon all,

I hope you have found moments of joy and peace during the Hanukkah and Christmas seasons.

I'm working to get a more comprehensive legislative update and survey out to you all prior to the session, but wanted to update you all on some local, state and national developments and provide some tools for coping. I am aware that several local establishments including the Valley View Saloon, The Dover Forge and

ADDENDUM 2 to 01-20

Prohibits on-premises consumption of food or drink

ADDENDUM 3 to 01-20

Suspension of all Non-Essential Adult Elective Surgery and Medical and Surgical Procedures

ADDENDUM 4 to 01-20

Closure of Close-Contact Businesses and Further Restrictions of the Size of Mass Gatherings

ADDENDUM 5 to 01-20

Work from Home Order

ADDENDUM 6 to 01-20

Stay Home to Stay Safe Order

ADDENDUM 7 to 01-20 Requirement to quarantine

ADDENDUM 8 to 01-20

Non-Congregate Sheltering in Vermont; Extension of Certain Deadlines Relating to Closures of DMV and Bars and Restaurants

ADDENDUM 9 to 01-20 Extension of State of Emergency Declared March 13, 2020; Other COVID-19 Related Directives and Clarifications

ADDENDUM 10 to 01-20

Work Smart & Stay Safe - Restart VT: Phase I

ADDENDUM 11 to 01-20

Work Smart & Stay Safe --Restart VT: Phase II

ADDENDUM 12 to 01-20

Work Smart & Stay Safe -Restart VT: Phase III

ADDENDUM 13 to 01-20

Play Smart and Play Safe: Restart Phase V

ADDENDUM 14 to 01-20

Be Smart, Stay Safe

ADDENDUM 15 to 01-20

Outdoor Restaurants, Bars and Other Establishments that Offer Food and Drink

ADDENDUM 16 to 01-20

Close Contact Businesses; Large Social Gatherings

Addendum 17 to 01-20

Modified Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in Vermont; Municipal Regulation of Bars and Restaurants

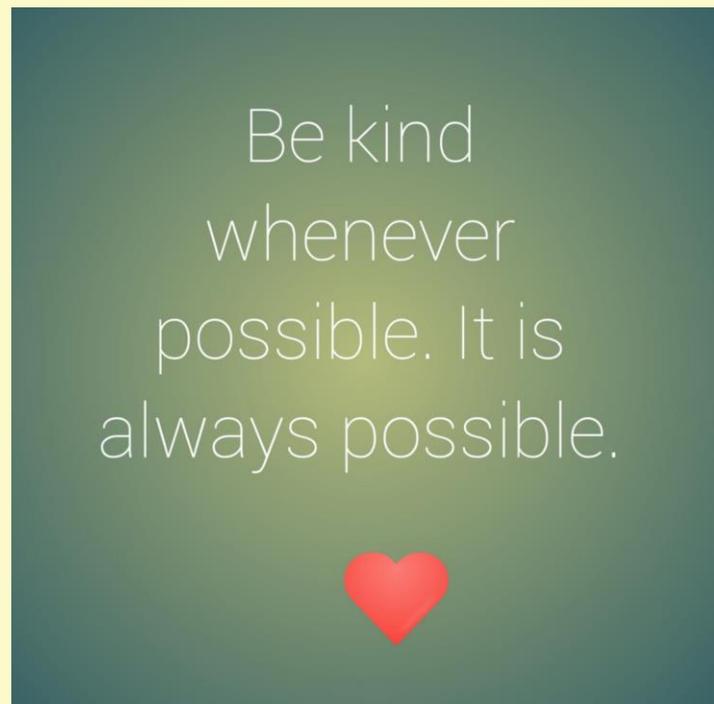
Racial Equity Task Force (Executive Order 02-20)

the River Valley Market have closed amidst reports of increasing cases in the Valley and an influx of holiday traffic.

Please be kind to one another out there.

Remember that we do not know the circumstances of an individual with out of state plates, including whether or not they are a local resident, a traveling healthcare professional, an out of state family member who has followed quarantining guidelines or a second homeowner who has been here for 6 months. We have more than a few locals who are – often aggressively – denying the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and openly challenging and disregarding the health and safety guidelines from the medical professionals and scientists hired by the governor the majority of Vermonters elected to lead our state.

Personal responsibility goes a long way my friends. If you wear a mask when you can't social distance, wash your hands, don't gather unmasked to socialize with multiple other groups in confined spaces – you've done a lot to protect yourself, protect our healthcare workers, keep kids in school and help businesses stay open – no matter how many people are in the Valley.



As of today, a federal recovery bill that was passed by Congress which will extend unemployment benefits and add a \$300 benefit to Vermont's unemployment benefit has still not been signed into law by the President. He has 10 days to either sign the legislation or veto it. The relief included in this bill is welcome news for workers in our hospitality industry in particular which continues to

[Amended and Restated Executive Order No. 01-20](#)

Declaration of State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19 and National Guard Call-Out - Amended and Restated

[ADDENDUM 1 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency Declared March 13, 2020

[ADDENDUM 2 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 01-20](#)

Strengthening the Use of Facial Covering

[ADDENDUM 3 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency

[ADDENDUM 4 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 03-20](#)

Governor's Public Safety Reform Initiative

[ADDENDUM 5 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency

[ADDENDUM 6 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency

[ADDENDUM 7 TO AMENDED AND RESTATED EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Limiting Skating Facility

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 05-20](#)

Emergency Guard Call-Out for Hospital Systems Restoration

[ADDENDUM TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 05-20](#)

Emergency Guard Call-Out for Hospital Systems Restoration

[ADDENDUM 8 TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-20](#)

Extension of State of Emergency Declared March 13, 2020; Stay Safe/Stay Working/Stay in School

Directives

[Directive 1 - Continuity of Education Planning.pdf](#)

[Directive 2 - Childcare For Essential Service Providers.pdf](#)

have to operate at diminished capacity during the state of emergency. The [federal extended unemployment benefits have currently ended for the approximately 800 Vermonters](#) who were utilizing them. This bill must pass for those benefits to be reinstated.

If you or a neighbor or family member are in need of food or shelter, please have them [contact 211](#) and also let me know so I can assist. [FARMERS TO FAMILIES FOOD BOX DISTRIBUTIONS](#) are ongoing. I welcome hearing from employers looking for full time workers and workers looking for full time employment and trying to provide connections to those in need for work or help.

Vermonters have been working hard to keep our schools open, keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed and keeping our businesses open. Like so many of your family members who are also working with the public daily to keep our critical services and functions going, all three of my children hold jobs that require them to interact repeatedly with the public as a healthcare worker, restaurant worker and retail worker. Thank you for all you are doing to protect, share kindnesses and employ patience with those who are working to serve our communities.

Having a problem reaching 211?

If you are experiencing an issue dialing 211 from your cellphone, **please turn off your wi-fi and try dialing again.** This is a national issue and is being addressed at that level. **If you still cannot connect to a live person,**

Please try calling:

802-652-4636 or 866-652-4636

**You are not alone
We are here to help**



Call one of our COVID Support Counselors at 2-1-1.

During these difficult times, you may need:

- Emotional support and a listening ear
- Connections to community resources

Call 2-1-1 today!

- All supports are anonymous and free
- Available Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm



If you experience difficulty reaching 2-1-1, try 866-652-4636.

[@COVIDSupportVT](#) | Find more resources at COVIDSupportVT.org.

[Directive 3 - Department of Motor Vehicles
Suspension of In-Person Transactions.pdf](#)

AMENDMENT TO DIRECTIVE 3

[Directive 4 - Department of Liquor and Lottery
- Delivery and Take-Out of Beverage Alcohol -
Amended March 20, 2020.pdf](#)

[Directive 5 – Continuity of Learning Planning
.pdf](#)

[Directive No. 6 - Uniform School Reopening](#)



[Watch legislative committees](#)



How to contact me:

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email: lsibilia@leg.state.vt.us

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**Follow my work in the Vermont
House of Representatives:**

**SMALL MODIFICATION MADE TO COVID-19
GATHERING RESTRICTIONS FOR HOLIDAYS**
Restrictions on outdoor recreation and youth sports reduced

Montpelier, Vt. – As COVID-19 [case growth in Vermont](#) has stabilized, Governor Phil Scott today announced a small, temporary modification to [restrictions on multi-household gatherings](#) during the holidays, a phased restart of youth sports and restoration of earlier guidance allowing outdoor activities.

[Between December 23 and January 2](#), households may gather with one other trusted household. State officials stress that, while gathering with one other household is allowed, anyone over the age of 65, those with pre-existing conditions and those who work with vulnerable populations should avoid gatherings.

It is strongly recommended that everyone who participates in a multi-household gathering be tested seven days after the gathering. If a Vermont household gathers with a trusted household from outside of Vermont, all participants from both households must quarantine for seven days followed by a negative test (or a 14-day quarantine) after the gathering. The [cross-state travel policy](#) remains in place and anyone traveling to Vermont must follow the quarantine requirements.

“While we’re providing a narrow path to very small holiday gatherings, we’d rather you not do it at all,” said Governor Scott. “But we’ve improved our numbers in Vermont, all other prevention measures will remain in place, and we understand that mental health has to be considered alongside physical health.”

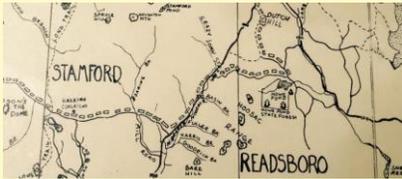
Governor Scott also announced youth sports may resume with no-contact practices and Vermonters may resume outdoor activities with those outside their household, as long as physical distancing, masking and other precautions are observed.

Effective [December 26](#), school-based and youth recreational programs may begin practices with individual skills, strength and conditioning. No contact between athletes is permitted at this time, and physically distanced and masking are required. Adult recreational sports and spectators at sporting events remain suspended.

“I’m grateful for the work Vermonters have done to level out our number of cases and I believe these are the right steps at this time, but it’s important to remember that the gains we’ve made are fragile and we’ll only hold them steady if we remain smart,” said Governor Scott.

For more information on:

[Vermont Legislature Website](#)
[My Voting Record](#)



Town Websites

[Dover](#)
[Readsboro](#)
[Searsburg](#)
[Stamford](#)
[Wardsboro](#)
[Whitingham](#)

Regional Resources

Bennington County
[BCIC - Regional Development](#)
[BCRC - Regional Planning](#)

Windham County
[BDCC - Regional Development](#)
[WRC - Regional Planning](#)

Businesses are invited to join BDCC for this week's Resiliency Webinar Friday at 2:15. Please send questions in advance by emailing bdcc-covid-questions@brattleborodevelopment.com Direct link: <https://zoom.us/j/781064798>



State Resources for COVID-19
[Department of Health](#)
[Department of Labor](#)
[Agency of Commerce](#)
[Department of Motor Vehicles](#)
[Department of Taxes](#)
[Department of Public Service](#)
[Secretary of State](#)
[Veterans Affairs](#)
[Department of Children & Families](#)



VT Helplink
Alcohol & drug support center

- COVID-19 health information, guidance and case data, visit www.healthvermont.gov/covid19.
 - The Governor's actions, visit governor.vermont.gov/covid19response.
 - The state's modeling, visit dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling.
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The Year in Good News

FIRST SHIPMENTS OF COVID-19 VACCINE ARRIVE IN VERMONT

Burlington, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott today announced the arrival in Vermont of the first 1,950 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. This is the first portion of the 5,850 doses coming to Vermont this week. The State Vaccine Depot and the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington each received 975 doses at approximately 8:00 a.m. today. The doses were sent as part of the initial nationwide shipments that followed the [Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine issued by the FDA](#) on December 12.

The Vermont Department of Health was allocated weekly shipments of 5,850 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine through December. **On Tuesday, December 15**, the Health Department will receive an additional 1,950 doses, and another 1,950 doses will ship later this week directly to pharmacies that have contracted with the federal government to administer vaccines at long-term care facilities. The Health Department, in coordination with the State Emergency Operations Center, will distribute vaccine to hospitals throughout the state.

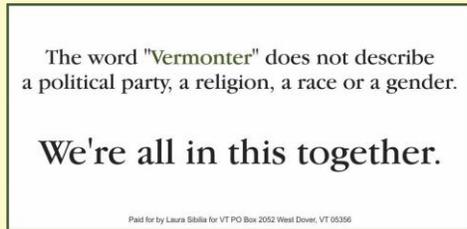
Initial doses will go to the groups identified as priority populations in Phase 1a by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). These include high-risk health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities. These priority populations were also recommended by Vermont's COVID-19 Advisory Committee and approved by Health Commissioner Levine.

The Health Department will announce more information about vaccine availability as the next priority groups are determined. Dr. Levine affirmed that the State is committed to ensuring access across Vermont, and will work closely with the health care providers, pharmacies and others who will provide the vaccine to Vermonters: "We are working with community organizations and other

You aren't alone <https://vthelplink.org/>



Need help paying your Medicare premiums?
Need help paying for prescription drugs? If you have lost income you may get more help with Medicare costs and drug costs. Contact the Vermont Legal Aid Health Care Advocate at 800-917-7787 or HCA@vtlegalaid.org for free help. More info here: www.vtlawhelp.org/health



2021 Reapportionment meetings now on the SOS website

Reapportionment occurs during the biennial legislative session following each Federal decennial census. The process primarily—but not exclusively—relies on the population figures gathered during the most recent census. Legislative districts are drawn and House and Senate seats are allocated to ensure that the populations of each district have relatively equal representation in both chambers of the State House. [Read about the process at the apportionment website](#)



Time to get your flu shot! [Similarities and Differences between Flu and COVID-19](#)

partners to make sure people who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, including Black, Indigenous and people of color, have equitable access to the vaccine.”

Information about the vaccine, its distribution, and updates about getting vaccinated will be regularly updated at healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine.

The cases here are largely connected to Thanksgiving. Dover, Wilmington and Whitingham have been rising.

COVID Conversations: How to Speak Up and Stay Friends

COVID-19 has caused considerable behavioral shifts, with “everyday” activities being called into question. Handshakes and hugs are now recognized as risky greetings. Mask-wearing has morphed from seemingly standoffish to being generally accepted as community stewardship.

Many of us are still struggling to navigate this new existence. Neighbors may have differing opinions about safety measures. Family members might disagree with certain protocols, causing a rift within those relationships.

5 Strategies for Positive Social Interactions

Below are 5 strategies for positive social interactions from two University of Vermont Medical Center physicians whose jobs involve navigating difficult conversations.

Tim Lahey, MD, Director of Clinical Ethics at the UVM Medical Center and Professor of Medicine at The University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine, shares that the key to overcoming the challenging encounters we’re all facing is to ground yourself with patience and understanding.

“It’s easy for us to leap to conclusions about behavior having bad motivations. When, in fact, it’s normal human behavior to forget, or to be confused, or to have been misinformed. That person is just trying to get through the day and do the best they can. If we have a forgiving, compassionate framing, I think it’s easier to remember to communicate in a way that’s more approachable and less likely to lead to conflict.”

Robert Gramling, MD, Holly and Bob Miller Chair in Palliative Medicine at the Larner College of Medicine and Chief of the Palliative Medicine Division, concurs with this approach.

1) ACKNOWLEDGE ANY AWKWARDNESS WITH A HUMOROUS ANGLE.



Mount Snow is excited to welcome skiers and riders back this season for an Experience of a Lifetime. Safety is the cornerstone of that experience and, this season, Mount Snow is requiring face coverings to access the mountain and in all parts of the operations. To allow for physical distancing, Mount Snow is managing access through a reservation system that prioritizes pass holders and limits lift ticket sales. Both the on-mountain dining and ski and ride school have been re-imagined to help keep guests safe. Bag check is not available this season so please boot up and keep your belongings in your vehicle. Rest assured that Mount Snow is committed to the historical practice of working to open as many lifts and as much terrain as soon as possible, and keeping that terrain open – all to allow for the amazing experience guests have come to expect. For more information, visit mountsnow.com or call 802-464-3333.

Are the courts in Vermont open?

Yes, Vermont's courts are open, but they are operating differently than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic began. For example, while criminal jury trials are now resuming, civil jury trials will not begin until January 1, 2021. Many court hearings continue to be held online or over the phone.

You will have to go through a health screening before you are allowed to enter a courthouse. Once in a courthouse, you must wear a mask or face covering and stay at least six feet away from other people.

Finding a bit of comedy in the situation, while conjuring internal compassion for the person you're talking with, goes a long way.

"That person is probably trying to deal with something totally new as well," notes Dr. Gramling. "Some of what we're dealing with really is odd and even funny, so [it's important] to find that space in yourself to say, 'I'm really trying to do something I've never done before,' and cut yourself and others some slack."

2) FREE YOURSELF FROM THE MISCONCEPTION THAT YOU HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S BEHAVIOR.

No one knows what anyone is really going through at any given moment. For example, someone may have just received bad news. This doesn't mean you have to absolve others' behavior, but it helps to put the situation in a more forgiving light.

3) DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS AND VOICE YOUR CONCERNS.

If you're attending a gathering, it's OK to inquire about the host's proposed social distancing guidelines. Also, be upfront about your expectations.

"Anticipate that possible moment and say something like, 'If it turns out there are lots of people, I hope you won't take it personally if I leave a bit early.' Just so it's a little easier for you in the moment to react the way that's most appropriate, without feeling uncomfortable about it," says Dr. Lahey.

4) GET CREATIVE WITH SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.

Face coverings and social distancing make it difficult to have clear conversations—particularly for anyone living with a hearing or vision impairment. Dr. Gramling shares a personal example of when he and a friend were sitting comfortably six feet apart and actually conversing via their mobile devices.

"It was a lovely conversation. We could talk in a regular voice. We could hear each other's emotion. We felt connected, and it worked."

5) CLARIFY YOUR POSITION IN A NON-JUDGMENTAL WAY.

If you're looking out for a neighbor or elderly family member who is staunch about not taking necessary precautions, it's perfectly appropriate to shape your own behavior in response to that attitude.

"You don't need to do it in an angry way or feel like you can't [speak up]. I'd say, for instance, 'I respect your point of view, but I hope you understand that since I'm really worried about this virus, and I want to make sure I'm a good neighbor, I'm going to have to leave.' They may realize they could experience a consequence, but they experienced it at the hands of somebody they can

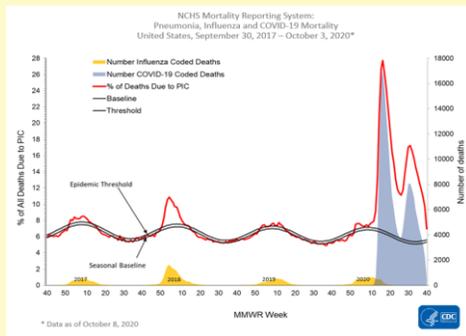
These and other guidelines help keep you and court staff safe. The Judiciary may change these policies over time. These changes will be based on guidance from the Vermont Health Department.

Where can I get information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the courts?

[This webpage](#) will be updated with the latest information about COVID-19 and court operations.

Where can I get information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on my case?

If you have a question about your case you should check with your attorney or call the Judiciary's Information Center at 802-652-1900.



[Flu vs Covid mortality from the CDC](#) – flu deaths in yellow, COVID-19 in blue

only see as being pleasant and respectful,” explains Dr. Lahey.

It All Comes Down to Positive, Transparent Communication

Ultimately, the best advice Drs. Lahey and Gramling can pass along is communication—and not the negative kind. “I think sometimes in COVID-19, when people feel anxious or even fearful for their own safety, it’s easy to lapse into those finger-pointing kind of communications. ‘You should know better,’ or ‘You have to do this, don’t you care?’ That [approach] is incredibly important to avoid,” cautions Dr. Lahey.

“Giving [someone] the benefit of the doubt is going to get you off on far better footing. It won’t solve everything. There will be some conflicts; we totally understand that. But, there are going to be lots of avoidable ones,” adds Dr. Gramling.

To read more COVID-19 resources and information, visit <https://www.uvmhealth.org/coronavirus>

Having convenient access to up-to-date COVID-19 guidance can help you and your family stay safe. To ensure you have the latest information on the pandemic, sign up for text, email, or phone alerts through VT-alerts. Register today by visiting vtalert.gov.

Click to access [the latest Vermont COVID-19 modeling](#)

Better Places Grants

The [Better Places pilot program](#) provides “placemaking” grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 that improve the vitality of [state designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas](#). The Better Places partnership is a place-based economic development program that:

- Revitalizes and improves public spaces in support of local economic and community development efforts
- Empowers residents to play an active role in shaping their communities, building social capital, and local pride
- Supports local COVID-19 response and recovery efforts
- Advances “quick build” projects that boost confidence, builds partnerships and sparks momentum
- Improves public health, reduces social isolation, and increases physical activity
- Stimulates the creative economy and supports public art projects

Learn more about placemaking efforts in Vermont communities on our [blog post](#) and sign-up for AARP’s

monthly virtual placemaking [meet ups](#) to connect with other Vermont placemakers.

As always, if you have suggestions, concerns or critiques please be in touch so we can schedule time to discuss.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, or if you need assistance navigating government services at (802) 384-0233 or lsibilia@leg.state.vt.us. Follow my regular posts online at <http://www.laurasibiliavt.com>

Kind regards,

**Rep. Laura Sibilia
Dover, Readsboro, Searsburg, Somerset, Stamford,
Wardsboro, Whitingham**

