

Call 211 with questions about COVID-19

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

May 1st, 2020



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](#)

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

[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

[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



Good evening,

It's May 1st and it has been 47 days since Governor Scott declared a state of emergency in Vermont. In the past two weeks, Vermont's emergency orders have slowly begun to be rolled back. Tomorrow the Governor will have another press conference, and I expect to hear more roll backs, though I do not know what they may be. Information on that press conference is further below.

Yesterday morning I talked a bit about the tourism industry with some of our local hospitality business owners. Understandably, they are expressing a need to understand some of the timelines as well as the health and safety regulations that will be required for reopening. Today I spent some time talking with the House Tourism Caucus and ski area legislators who are also having these conversations across the state. Understanding not only when and how we will be able to open, but also what Vermonters and visitors comfort levels will be for traveling is a focus across the hospitality sector and we are hoping to talk more in depth with the leadership from the Commerce Agency about the near term future. As we know in the Valley, tourism is a major economic driver in Vermont, and particularly in rural Vermont. I am paying attention to what is happening here...

There was some good news today from Senator Leahy's office for some seasonal businesses that accessed PPP loans. The Federal Treasury changed the calculation rules for PPP eligibility. It now allows a business to look at payroll they would have in the time frame going forward (May – September) rather than having to look at Jan – March which doesn't work for summer seasonal businesses. Unfortunately, if you have already closed a loan with a bank you can't recalculate. Here's

[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

Directives

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

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

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

[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](#)



[Watch legislative committees](#)

a link to the seasonal business calculation
: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Interim-Final-Rule-Additional-Criterion-for-Seasonal-Employers.pdf>

[Vermont records zero new coronavirus cases for first time
in nearly 7 weeks](#)

[National Guard emergency food distribution](#)

[Vermont State Colleges select new interim chancellor](#)

Thank you to all who have reached out to me for assistance with unemployment or pandemic assistance for self employed. I have submitted more than 30 sets of information through the link legislators have been given which may help sort through the problems. As a reminder, we need this information:

- Name
- email
- last 4 SS #
- phone
- date you filed first claim
- Unemployment (UI) or Pandemic Assistance for self employed (PUA)

New Frequently Asked Questions faq documents below may provide some assistance in accessing unemployment benefits and so are being provided to help explain some of the troubleshooting tips.

[Pandemic Unemployment Assistance-04-28-2020
Download](#)

[Unemployment Insurance-04-20-2020 Download](#)

Please reach out to me right away if you or a family or neighbor is in danger of not having food or shelter. Too many of our neighbors are experiencing serious hardships, and programs are available to help.

I hope to talk with some of you tomorrow morning.

Governor Scott Press Conference:

Following remarks, the Governor and administration officials will be available for questions from members of the media. Friday May 1st at 11:00 a.m.

GENERAL PUBLIC VIEWING: Most Vermont TV and radio stations live broadcast the briefings. The Governor's media briefing will be available to stream through ORCA Media's youtube channel, linked here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-xsDpLCa0iRMj4dQrqum7uoXaQmqeGvT>



How to contact me:

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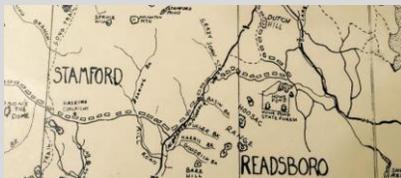
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Follow my work in the Vermont House of Representatives:

[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](#)

Vermont League of Cities & Towns: [COVID-19 VOSHA Employee Training Required May 2020](#)

[Grace Cottage Update](#)

I hope to see some of you tomorrow morning at my coffee hour at 7 am.

Coffee with Laura call at 7 am Monday, Wednesday and Friday. You can join that call here:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/734376857?pwd=Z1BmNmliwcWxJMWxVZTFaZE96MmlQQT09>

Meeting ID: 734 376 857 Password: 003089 or by calling mobile
+16465588656,,734376857# US (New York)
+13126266799,,734376857# US (Chicago)

Brattleboro Reformer & Bennington Banner: [A note to our readers: What you should know](#)

Many thanks to Representative Dylan Giambatista for putting together this video on how to follow the legislature while we are quarantining.

GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ANNOUNCES ENHANCED TESTING AND CONTACT TRACING PROGRAMS

Increases Capacity to Identify, Contain & Suppress COVID-19

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott and members of his administration [today announced](#) the state is significantly increasing and strengthening its testing and contact tracing programs in order to quickly identify, contain and suppress outbreaks of COVID-19.

In mid-April, the Governor began taking steps to restart Vermont’s economy under several guiding principles, including a goal to increase testing and tracing. Today, the administration laid out that strategy, detailing how even more testing and tracing – coupled with technology – will be used to quickly identify and isolate outbreaks, and better understand COVID-19 in Vermont.

“We have a strong and effective testing and contact tracing program in Vermont, but as we work to keep Vermonters healthy, and slowly and safely restart our economy, doing even more will be critical,” said Governor Scott. “This expansion of testing and tracing will help make sure that as we slowly ease public health restrictions and put more people back to work,

[WRC - Regional Planning](#)

Businesses are invited to join BDCC for this week's Resiliency Webinar (Friday April 17) 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](#)

[Dover commercial businesses program](#)

The intent of the 2020 Commercial Emergency Assistance Program (Emergency Assistance) is to provide monthly economic assistance to businesses located within the Town of Dover impacted by the 2020 COVID-19 State of Emergency declaration by the State of Vermont.

Increase in violence against women being reported

If you don't feel safe at home due to domestic or sexual violence threats, please call VT Domestic Violence Hotline 800-228-7395

[100 Activities for Coronavirus Quarantine](#)



VT Helplink
Alcohol & drug support center

we're able to identify cases quickly and better contain the virus so we don't lose ground on our progress."

Over the last several weeks, the state has expanded testing beyond federal recommendations, and built a robust program and strong supply chain. Currently, Vermont provides testing for symptomatic patients referred by healthcare providers, for pediatric patients, and universal testing of residents and staff at some congregate living facilities that had a single positive test reported. On average, the state has been conducting about 2,000 tests per week.

Governor Scott, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD and State Epidemiologist Patsy Kelso, PhD today detailed a phased-in approach to have the state conduct up to about 7,500 tests per week. The increase will take place in stages over the next month, each expanding on the targeted populations to be tested.

The first expansion will bolster testing for vulnerable populations and health care workers in group settings where outbreaks have been most prevalent. Long-term care and other facilities housing vulnerable populations, and which have had a positive test result for COVID-19, will receive expanded, facility-wide testing. This will include universal re-testing of residents and staff who test negative at day three, seven, and then weekly after the initial tests. The program will also now include testing of all intakes and discharges, in addition to residents who are regularly treated outside of the facility.

While symptomatic health care workers currently receive priority testing, the enhanced testing program will now test asymptomatic workers who have contact with COVID-19 patients and additional personnel in preparation for potential health care re-openings. All Department of Corrections staff will also be tested over the next two weeks, bolstering the testing protocols already in place.

The second phase will include populations that are key to restarting priority sectors, further focusing on health care and home health workers, as well as child care providers. And as the Governor considers allowing more health procedures, testing would be expanded to many of these patients as well.

The final phase would further expand testing to these populations and allow for testing of some Vermonters who are under a mandatory 14-day quarantine as an option to reduce the quarantine period.

Dr. Levine also outlined the principles of the state's testing strategy, noting: "Throughout our pandemic response, our strategic planning and actions have been evidence-based and science driven. In developing this expanded program, we have sought to focus on Vermonters most vulnerable to serious impact of the virus, to improve on lengthy quarantines for asymptomatic people, and strive to suppress outbreaks whenever they might arise. The health of Vermonters is critical to our Restart VT efforts."

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

Municipalities:

Vermont has received a federal disaster declaration DR5342 which opens up federal disaster funds to assist State agencies, municipalities and critical private non-profits in Emergency response costs related to COVID-19.

The declaration will provide 75% federal funds to qualified applicants for emergency protective measures including; Emergency Operations Center operations, medical sheltering, medical supplies, provisions of food/water/ice/medicine, security and law enforcement for temporary facilities, and communications of general health and safety information to public.

COVID-19 FEMA PUBLIC
ASSISTANCE
FACTS <https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster/faq>



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

[Windham Regional Commission
Resource Guide for Individuals](#)

The state's contact tracing program will also be enhanced to accommodate this new level of testing. Tracing will be expanded to include the 14 days prior to symptoms for COVID-positive individuals, to try to identify their source of infection. The Department of Health will engage with cases and their contacts using SARA Alert technology, a text-based monitoring system. The state is able to handle 300-900 cases and their contacts per week under this new strategy. The state currently has 53 trained contact tracers who could handle up to 500 cases and their contacts per week and is implementing a plan to train additional tracers as needed.

"It's important to understand that as more testing is performed, and as people engage in greater activities, we will see an uptick in the number of positive cases – perhaps by a lot," said Dr. Kelso. "This program is designed to provide the data that will inform state decisions and help us to respond more quickly to what the data tells us about COVID-19 activity in our communities."

The Governor emphasized the need to be nimble and responsive during this ramp-up, and established the Vermont Enhanced Testing and Tracing Task Force, comprised of experts from the Department of Health and agencies of Human Services and Digital Services to help monitor new developments and recommend new strategies.

To view today's press conference, visit <https://www.orcamedia.net/series/press-conference>. For more information on the Governor's actions, visit governor.vermont.gov/covid19response. For the latest information and guidance relating to COVID-19, visit <http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, or if you need assistance navigating government services at (802) 384-0233 or Isibilia@leg.state.vt.us

Kind regards,

Rep. Laura Sibilila
Dover, Readsboro, Searsburg, Somerset, Stamford,
Wardsboro, Whitingham

VERMONT COUNTS



2020 CENSUS

Have you taken the Census?

If you have not completed your census yet, now is a great time. You can complete it without leaving home or coming in contact with another person. There are three simple ways to complete the Census:

- Online: Go to www.2020census.gov. Can't find your 12-digit code that you received in the mail? No problem. Just follow the instructions and you will still be able to complete the questionnaire on-line.
- By Phone: Call 844-330-2020 to get started in English. The 2020 Census can be completed by phone in 14 different languages.
- By Mail: All homes that do not respond online or by phone will receive a paper questionnaire. Simply respond using a blue or black ink pen, and return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.

Regardless of how you respond, your answers will be kept confidential. Every employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life and the U.S. Census Bureau cannot release any information that identifies you individually.

As of Wednesday, April 8, Windham County had the second lowest census response rate (24.9%) in the state, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The results of the 2020 Census will help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding flow into our community, county, and state every year for the next decade. This money means better health care, schools, roads, job

opportunities, housing assistance, disaster assistance and more. With so much at stake for Vermonters, every response counts!

Brooks Memorial Library Staff are available to assist the public in accessing the Census questionnaire. Call 802-254-5290 ext.1206 or email info@brookslibraryvt.org for assistance. For more information on the 2020 Census, visit: www.2020census.gov.

[Special enrollment period for uninsured Vermonters extended to May 15](#)
