



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Russell Hartenstine

Public Information Officer

Martha Vineyard Regional Emergency Planning Committee

(508)-693-5380

emd@westtisbury-ma.gov

Friday, March 20, 2020

Situational Update from Martha's Vineyard Boards of Health, Emergency Managers, Police, Fire, MV Hospital, MV Community Services and Our Emergency Preparedness Teams

It's time to get serious about social distancing. It's confusing to understand what this means, so this might help. Refrain from any unnecessary travel no matter the distance. Refrain from dinner parties, playdates for your children, sleepovers and more. Make outings to the grocery store and pharmacy as quick as possible, at off-peak hours and be sure to wash your hands when you arrive home. Use the phone to call, text, Skype, FaceTime, Zoom or other means for communication. Take your kids on a trail, to the beach or out in the backyard to enjoy fresh air and nature, but for now, keep it a family only thing. Get creative on ways to be social while distancing yourself.

The local Boards of Health, Hospital, EMS and Emergency Preparedness teams have been working diligently on the prevention and the spread of COVID-19. The Island Boards of Health are monitoring and tracking the current outbreak and are working closely with state, county, and local government along with the Martha's Vineyard Hospital, Emergency Managers and more to act as your "Coronavirus Response Team." We collaborate daily via conference calls, emails, and Zoom meetings to discuss protocols, stay informed, and to proactively educate the community.

IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL CALL FIRST! (see below)

The New England Journal of Medicine states that COVID-19 can survive:

- 72 hours on hard surfaces like plastic and steel
- 24 hours on cardboard
- 30 minutes in the air (before landing on surface)

We ask that all community members be part of the solution:

- We cannot stress enough the importance of **washing your hands for 60 seconds**. It helps keep you and those around you free from germ exposure.
- **Stay home** if you are able to

- Practice **social distancing** (ensure 6 feet between you and other people)
- **Do NOT gather in groups**
- Call, Text, FaceTime, Skype, and/or Zoom to communicate with extended family, friends and work
- Refrain from dinner parties and play dates
- Remain in your vehicle on the ferry if possible

We realize this is a time of uncertainty, but be reminded that we are a strong and resilient community, filled with active volunteers here to help.

Please consider taking a break from constant news monitoring about COVID-19 and take a walk, call a friend, eat healthy, meditate, and get enough sleep.

If you are feeling poorly and believe you have COVID-19 symptoms, we urge you to **call your health care provider or the Martha's Vineyard Hospital phone-screening service at (508) 684-4500**. This service is available Monday through Friday from 8am–7pm. Outside of these hours, providers on-call will be able to assist you.

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health emergency, MVCS Emergency Services qualified behavioral health practitioners can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year at 508-693-0032.

Martha's Vineyard Community Services (<https://www.mvcommunityservices.org>) announced the launch of [Care for Community](#), a clearinghouse for organizations and volunteers during the COVID-19 crisis on the Island. If you are healthy and able to volunteer to help vulnerable Islanders with basic needs and food access, please fill out this [form](#).

Please sign up for CODERED – Our Island-wide Emergency Alert System!

We can notify you of important messages and emergency alerts. This is a voluntary system, it will not reach you unless you register. Here is the link: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/978F92D50FBE>

For information on island resources or concerns:

For current information on changes for many island organizations, we recommend consulting the Dukes County Website. We consider this the most informed and updated website that has links to most community groups and resources. Here is the link: <https://www.dukescounty.org/>

*For regular updates visit the CDC website, MDPH website, the Dukes County website, your town's website, MVH website and the MV Times and Vineyard Gazette websites. As this is an evolving situation, please check back for updates and stay informed.

Your community is here for you.

Signed,
 Martha's Vineyard Hospital
 Martha's Vineyard Community Services
 Island Boards of Health
 Police Chiefs of the Island
 Fire Department Chiefs of the Island
 MV Emergency Management Committee