

## City Hall response to COVID-19

1 message

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## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Updated March 13, 2020

One trusted source with updated information: The Northern Kentucky Health Department.

## City Hall lobby closed

*Mayor: Follow experts' guidance on avoiding gatherings*

COVINGTON, Ky. - The City of Covington today announced aggressive new steps - including closing the lobby of City Hall - to protect residents and employees by limiting face-to-face contact in response to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic.

Saying "health experts know what they're doing," Mayor Joe Meyer urged residents, businesses, and visitors to follow state-recommended guidelines advising people to avoid large gatherings.

"We need to take this seriously," Meyer said. "Things are evolving around us in an unprecedented way, and we need to respond with caution and good sense."

Also Friday, City Manager David Johnston:

- Ordered that the lobby of the city building at [20 W. Pike St.](#) be closed to the public starting Monday.
- Instructed City-appointed boards, committees, panels and task forces to cancel meetings for the immediate future (weekly meetings of the Board of Commissioners will continue).
- Directed City staff to severely limit face-to-face meetings and instead do business via phone, email, and web-based meetings.

The directives on public gatherings and City Hall interaction are practical implementations of a health-care strategy called "social distancing," which in this instance is designed to slow down the spread of the new strain of coronavirus that is causing a potentially fatal acute respiratory disease around the world.

### **City Hall**

The closing of the lobby to City Hall will be in place for the immediate future.

Payment for bills, fees, and fines can be placed in the after-hours drop box on the side of the building. Payment can also be made by mail, phone, and online, as described [HERE](#).

Questions can be directed to [info@covingtonky.gov](mailto:info@covingtonky.gov) or (859) 292-2127.

"We are still open for business," Johnston stressed. "The only real change is that people should use the phone and email, rather than dropping by in person."

### **Meetings**

City-appointed boards, committees, panels and task forces should cancel or postpone meetings until directed otherwise. Those with time-sensitive and mandated business should contact the Mayor or City Manager for instruction.

For now, the Board of Commissioners will continue to meet on Tuesday nights. At this Tuesday's meeting, a caucus meeting at which public comments are not part of the agenda, the Commission will discuss how to handle meetings going forward.

People can watch Commission meetings live from home on TBNK cable or watch video of old meetings on their computer, [HERE](#).

### **City staff**

City staff have been instructed to limit face-to-face meetings with the public as much as possible and have been encouraged to do business by phone, email, and web-based meetings, Johnston said.

The City is also preparing work-at-home protocols should that need arise, he said.

The City has also intensified the disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces in City Hall and other public buildings.

### **Public gatherings**

Already, across the state and Northern Kentucky, organizers have decided on their own to cancel or postpone their events, following the lead of everything from the NBA to Broadway shows to the Kentucky Sweet Sixteen basketball tournament.

But Covington officials emphasized additional caution.

The Northern Kentucky Health Department reminded local officials in an email this morning that the Office of Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear was recommending that "all community events and gatherings be postponed, and that senior citizens cancel in-person activities."

Among the Governor's recommendations:

- Prisons, senior care, and long-term care facilities prohibit visitors.
- All schools close.
- Places of worship cancel services.
- The public avoid "densely attended public gatherings" (such as sporting events, senior centers, movies, rallies, and concerts).

"We agree with the Governor: For the time being, people should not be taking unnecessary risks," Meyer said. "By cooperating, we can get through this."

The City urged residents to rely on trusted sources for updated information about COVID-19 and its public impact:

- The Northern Kentucky Health Department, [HERE](#).
- The Commonwealth of Kentucky, [HERE](#), with a hotline (800) 722-5725.
- And the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [HERE](#).

**What people can do**

The Health Department is preaching commonsense tips, especially for high-risk groups like adults over age 60 and people with chronic medical conditions:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (*for 20 seconds is the usual rule*).
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Cover your hand and fingers with a sleeve or tissue when you must touch "high-touch" surfaces in public places like elevator buttons, door handles, and handrails.
- Avoid huge crowds when possible.
- Stay home if you're sick.

People who are showing symptoms like a fever, cough and trouble breathing should call their doctor or other health-care provider for advice on what to do next, health officials said. Officials said residents should NOT show up unexpectedly at a hospital emergency room or urgent treatment facility expecting to be tested for COVID-19, unless they have a medical emergency.

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