



EMERGENCY RESPONSE: CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

UPDATED: 5:00 P.M., FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020

OVERVIEW

Your health and safety are our top priority. Senior staff and the emergency management team for the City of Myrtle Beach are meeting via conference call daily to assess and update the situation in light of the reported cases of coronavirus in Horry County. The city is NOT setting up checkpoints to restrict access to the city.

The City of Myrtle Beach initiated OpCon 2 (Operation Conditions 2) on Saturday, March 14, 2020, which elevates our response to a state of emergency for the ongoing coronavirus health threat. Mayor Brenda Bethune issued the following directive: "Upon the advice of the State and Horry County, the City of Myrtle Beach hereby declares that we will operate at 'OpCon 2' until further notice."

The city looks to state and federal leadership regarding restrictions and guidance, and we are taking the necessary health precautions to make sure that our residents and visitors are safe. Please continue to practice safe habits and limit contact with others. The city has placed a "hiring freeze" in place, effective immediately. The city organization is also taking proactive steps to minimize and limit spending, with additional restrictions in place. Updates to the information below are likely.

FACILITIES, MEETINGS & EVENTS

All indoor city offices and facilities are closed to the public until further notice. All outdoor playgrounds are closed until further notice. However, city parks, the beach itself and open spaces remain open. As of March 19, 2020, city personnel continue daily operations. City team members practice social distancing and take the necessary health precautions to ensure a clean and safe work environment.

To answer your city-related questions, we have established **843-918-INFO** as a point of contact. This INFORMATION LINE is available daily, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., until further notice.

All city meetings and events scheduled for the coming weeks will be postponed to a later date. Municipal Court, including the new Quality of Life Court, will be rescheduled to a later date. Announcements about meetings and events for subsequent weeks will be provided in a timely manner.

The City of Myrtle Beach has implemented both a hiring freeze and a spending freeze during this emergency period. New personnel positions will be filled if deemed critical to the city's operation. Any new spending is curtailed and must be specifically authorized.

SERVICES & UPDATED PROTOCOLS

Here's a helpful list of city services, with information regarding the city's updated protocols....

Police, Fire & EMS Services

Police, Fire and EMS services continue, and the Police and Fire Departments will respond to emergency events. Our 911 dispatchers are pre-screening emergency calls to determine whether any respiratory distress is involved. For non-emergency calls and routine reports, call the Police Department's non-emergency dispatch line at 843-918-1382. *Or, visit the Police Department's P2C website to report an incident.* Myrtle Beach police officers are still conducting patrols. The beach wheelchair service and fingerprinting services are both suspended until further notice.

Utility Services

The city's water system is safe, thanks to the treatment and disinfectant processes. Water service will continue without interruption. New water service applications and water service termination requests can be processed via phone or email. Call 843-918-1212 or email mbutilpay@cityofmyrtlebeach.com for information. Or, water service application forms and payment envelopes are also available for pick-up in the vestibule of the City Services Building, 921 North Oak Street.

Utility Payments

Remember, utility payment drop boxes are available at the City Services Building, 921 North Oak Street. Payments and paperwork deposited into the night drop boxes will be processed after 48 hours. You also may pay utility bills online. See the links below for more information. We will suspend water cutoffs during this emergency period. Questions? Call 843-918-1212 or send an email to mbutilpay@cityofmyrtlebeach.com for information.

- [Utility Billing: Learn More](#)
- [Pay Utility Bill - IVR Customer Portal](#)
- [Pay Utility Bill - Utility E-Service](#)

Solid Waste Collection

Solid waste services will be on their usual schedule this week.

Business Licenses

Business license application forms are available for pick-up in the vestibule of the City Services Building, 921 North Oak Street. Questions? Call 843-918-1200 or email buslic@cityofmyrtlebeach.com.

Building Permits

The Construction Services Department is issuing building permits via email or fax. If customers cannot submit new construction plans or plans revisions digitally, the documents can be delivered to the drop box of the Construction Services Building, 921 North Oak Street. Note that any paperwork, plans, or plan revisions that are dropped off will not be processed or reviewed for at least 48 hours from the time it is dropped off. City employees continue to perform inspections on all permitted projects. Questions? Call 843-918-1111.

Chauffer Permits

New chauffeur permit applications will be processed each Thursday at 10:00 a.m. at the north entrance of the Police Annex, 3340 Mustang Street. Chauffeur Permits that expire between March 1, 2020, and March 31, 2020, will be extended until April 30, 2020.

Recreation Services

With the closure of recreation centers and rental facilities, the city understands the negative effects on patrons who have financially invested in these services. In the near future, the city plans to make the appropriate adjustments to those who have paid memberships, league fees and facility rentals to correct this issue.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Public Health organizations encourage everyone to practice “social distancing” to help limit the spread of COVID-19. Distance yourself from others by six feet, or more. Avoid public places by ordering take out foods and utilize pick-up grocery services. Accordingly, City of Myrtle Beach offices will be closed for over-the-counter services until further notice.

On Monday, March 16, 2020, the federal government asks everyone to cancel all in-person gatherings with 10 or more people. In the news conference, President Trump asked that all Americans, including those who are young and healthy, avoid the following: gathering in groups of more than 10 people; all non-essential travel; and, eating in bars, restaurants and public food courts. On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster placed a mandatory order closing dine-in service at bars and restaurants (effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020). The governor also announced a ban on gatherings of 50 or more individuals. These actions slow the spread of the coronavirus.

BUSINESSES WITHIN CITY LIMITS

On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster placed a mandatory order closing dine-in service at bars and restaurants (effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020). The governor also announced a ban on gatherings of 50 or more individuals. These actions slow the spread of the coronavirus. To verify the status of privately owned businesses, hotels and restaurants, please contact the business directly. Unless directed by the Governor of South Carolina to close, each privately owned business makes the independent decision regarding operations. Note: The City of Myrtle Beach is not responsible for

cancellation policies.

To support local businesses and view a helpful list of restaurants offering curbside pickup, takeout or delivery options, visit the [Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce's Dining Options](#) webpage. To view a list of postponed events, including business and attraction closures, see the [Chamber's Closures & Cancellations](#) webpage. For answers to frequently asked questions about accommodation cancellations, visit the [MBACC's Healthy Travel Information](#) webpage. For information on air travel, visit Myrtle Beach International Airport's website at <https://www.flymyrtlebeach.com>.

The South Carolina Price Gouging Law is now in effect. The law protects against price gouging and scams, namely the action or attempted action of renting or selling a commodity at “an unconscionable price.” [To learn more, click here.](#) To report price gouging, send an email with supporting documentation and contact information to the South Carolina Attorney General at pricegouging@scag.gov. Or, call 803-737-3953.

SIGNAGE FLEXIBILITY FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

The City of Myrtle Beach is giving restaurants more flexibility for additional signs and tents during the coronavirus emergency. The governor this week ordered restaurants to stop “dining in,” but allowed them to provide “take-out” and “to-go” service. On March 18, 2020, City Manager John Pedersen has signed an order allowing temporary signage and operational rules to help restaurants cope. Pursuant to provisions of Chapter 8 of the Myrtle Beach Code of Ordinances and the Declaration of Civil Emergency by Mayor Brenda Bethune (March 14, 2020), here are the temporary operational rules and procedures for restaurants, effective immediately.

This order will remain in effect until modified or rescinded by a subsequent order or until City Council has approved the end of the Civil Emergency. The temporary special operational rules and procedures for restaurants inside the City of Myrtle Beach are:

1. Notwithstanding other zoning regulations governing signs, the following temporary signage is allowed:
 - Temporary freestanding signage not to exceed 32 square feet total, which may include banners and “A” frame signs.
 - May have up to four temporary directional signs not to exceed four (4) square feet each.
 - Temporary wall signage not to exceed 32 square feet total.
 - Balloons are prohibited.
 - Through end of Sunday, March 29, 2020, the use of restaurant “mascots” is permitted. This provision may be extended on a week-by-week basis thereafter.
2. Restaurants may have up to three temporary tents, not to exceed 300 square feet in total.
3. Sign/tent placement:

- Any temporary tents and/or signage may only be placed on the property in which the restaurant is located unless such property has a zero front setback.
- Signs may not be placed in a public right of way unless the restaurant has a zero lot line. In such cases, the restaurant may submit a site plan showing the placement of signage only (no tents) on the adjacent sidewalk. The plan must maintain a minimum of four feet clear passage so as not to obstruct pedestrian use of the sidewalk. In such instances signage is limited to eight square feet in the public rights-of-way. Such cases must be specifically approved by the City Manager and shall include an assumption of liability by the restaurant for any claims arising from the placement of signage in the rights-of-way.
- Signs may not be placed in such a way to cause a sight hazard (subject to the city's sole determination).

4. Public parking spaces may be temporarily designated and/or marked for the following uses:

- Curbside Pickup
- Delivery

5. The temporary rules and procedures above are subject to modification, in whole or in part, upon public notice thereof.

DO YOUR PART: "FOLLOW THE FIVE" AND HELP SAVE LIVES

The coronavirus illness is more severe among the elderly or those with pre-existing health conditions and compromised immune systems. However, public health is a shared responsibility! Follow the five steps below to ensure we protect our community, state and country from the coronavirus.



1. **Keep yourself healthy...** The best defense against respiratory illness – the common cold, flu or the coronavirus – is to keep yourself healthy. Practice cleanliness, stay hydrated and eat healthy foods that contain Vitamin C and Vitamin D.
2. **Feeling unwell? Stay home!** Keep away from others and contact your healthcare provider immediately to receive instructions.
3. **Care for your hands and face...** Wash your hands, and often, for 20 seconds with warm water and soap. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Do not touch your face! And, disinfect surfaces touched within your home and work space as often as possible.
4. **Cover coughs and sneezes...** Always cough or sneeze into an elbow, and immediately sanitize the area affected. When possible, cough or sneeze into tissues and discard in secure trash can straightaway.
5. **Distance yourself from others...** Maintain a distance of six feet, or more. Avoid public places by ordering take out foods and utilize pick-up grocery services.

COVID-19 INFO & HELPFUL LINKS

What are the symptoms of this disease? Coronavirus infection in humans can result in respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more serious diseases such as pneumonia. The symptoms are similar to those caused by other respiratory viruses, such as the flu, and include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

How does the virus spread? The virus is spread by direct contact with respiratory droplets that are sneezed or coughed from people who are ill. At this time, there is no specific treatment for the illness. Instead, treatment involves supportive care for symptoms. Efforts are underway to develop a vaccine. Currently, it is thought that the novel coronavirus virus spreads from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet). Based on other coronaviruses, symptoms may appear anywhere from two to 14 days after someone is exposed.

Choose information sources wisely... Information about this new illness is still developing, but be aware of the “infodemic” which often accompanies such a topic. False information already exists online about the coronavirus, so stick to reliable websites for your information and updates. Here are several sites to consider.

- [SCDHEC's Coronavirus Information Page](#)
- [CDC's 2019 Novel Coronavirus page](#)
- [CDC Information on Coronaviruses](#)
- [CDC Cases in the United States](#)
- [World Health Organization, Coronavirus](#)