



COVID-19 Vinalhaven Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

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COVID-19 Daily Update 4-2-20

This evening the Public Health Team had a live streamed conversation on Facebook. Andy, Jen, Marc, and Kerry answered questions that have come in over the past few days, with many focusing on understanding Governor Mills' Stay Healthy at Home mandate issued on 03-31-2020.

Some questions have no clear answer at this time, and questions directed to the governor's office are not yet answered. The following was shared during this evening's conversation.

Questions about "Staying at Home"

Does "stay at home" mean I can't go outside? Walk, be outside, get fresh air? Can I still walk/run/bike with friends?

If you or the people you live with want to go out for a walk, that is okay. If you want to walk with a friend, you must keep at least 6 feet apart.

Can I still meet with my buddies at the fishhouse? None of us are sick....

Simple answer—NO.

My buddies and I like to ride around the island. None of us are sick—we're young and healthy. Why are you saying we can't do that?

New reports from the CDC suggest that as many as 20% of infected people may show no signs or symptoms of the disease at all, yet they are still capable of transmitting the disease. Your friends may give it to you or get it from you, which then goes home with whoever gets infected and passed to family members.

Questions about Going to Work

Is working construction OK if it isn't considered an "emergency" (like preventing a building from falling down)?

Is it OK if the crew is one person? Is it OK if the crew is more than one, but they keep their distances? What is all the work is outside? Is it OK if the work is inside, but the owners are not there? Is it OK for work crews to come from the mainland?

Is it OK to burn brush?

I work alone in non-essential retail—can I go to my shop/place of business? What about fishing? I have a crew of three...

We do not have a clear answer from the State at this time about non essential construction or non essential retail. You can email business.answers@maine.gov to ask for a clarification. The State has confirmed that Burn permits may still be issued. Fishing is an essential service (food production), but it still must be conducted in a safe manner, with 6' distance maintained. It may not be possible to work with a crew of three.

If you are unclear if you are working in an essential service, you can ask the state for a decision by emailing business.answers@maine.gov.

Questions about Transportation

What's happening with the ferry? They've already cut runs from the schedule. Are they limiting walk on passengers? Does freight get a priority? Are they stopping people from traveling if they say the travel is nonessential?

Mark Higgins of the MSFS has stated “The MSFS will be operating on the published Reduced Maine State Ferry Schedule. We are not an enforcement agency, but we will ask the question when selling tickets if travel is for ‘essential activities’ as outlined. They are working with all the towns on solutions as the pandemic has created a fluid situation. We’ll direct the terminals to change the outdoor message boards. Dave just sent me the directive from the Governor’s office. We’ll be posting: ‘SAVE LIVES, STAY HOME’ We’ll also post the executive order and listing of essential businesses. I expect more changes to come over the next few days. As soon as I have any new information or decisions, they will be communicated immediately.”

Will Bunkers - UPS - Post Office continue to deliver? Will PIA continue to fly? Is it OK to go to the dump?

At this time, Bunkers is continuing to deliver, and the Post Office is deemed an essential service. PIA is flying. Yes, you can go to the dump but check the Town website; hours may be cut to meet the Governor’s Stay at Home mandate.

Questions about Covid-19

I work in an essential service. Are there some steps to take to protect my family when I come home from work?

It’s important to change your clothes (including shoes) when arriving at home. Create a plan for disinfecting or laundering those clothes without exposing your family. Shower. Don’t forget to clean your glasses, cell phone, keys, work tools, computers, etc. Be diligent in self-checking your own health.

Many islanders have prescription medicines that have ordinarily been picked up at mainland pharmacies and brought over to the island by friends and neighbors. I feel that this is a big issue, given restrictions on travel and recommendations esp for older islanders to stay home as much as possible. Is there a way that this group could address this issue?

ICMS has been doing a great job of making sure prescriptions are arriving. Some pharmacies are mailing prescriptions and many have opted to work with insurance companies to accommodate and modify to 90 day prescriptions when they are able. There are also a few options for taxiing or delivery that may be possible. If you need help getting your prescriptions, please contact your care provider or ICMS for assistance.

Will we know if there is someone on the island with confirmed COVID-19?

Yes. The Public Health Officer is notified by the Maine CDC if there is a positive Covid-19, test it will not be kept “secret”. This may appear awkward to some, as the ICMS providers will also receive results for their patients, and Jen may be both the provider and the Public Health Officer. Of course, the name of the patient will not be given. However, a confirmed COVID-19 should not change any of our behaviors—we are already practicing social distancing, and that is what we must continue to do. “How you live your life today can affect how the people in your community live their life tomorrow.”

If I have to self quarantine, what's different about that than staying at home?

When you quarantine, you and your family members cannot go to Town or anywhere for essentials. If you need something, you will have to get things delivered to your home.

What will happen if a lot of people get very sick here, all at the same time?

We have plans in place to help patients care for themselves at home, as well as assisting with care at home. If a patient became too sick for home care we will transfer the patient to a mainland hospital. Worst case scenario, if more people

are critically sick than we can individually treat at home and/or mainland hospitals are unable to take patients (they are full), we will modify how and where we provide care. We are close to completion in an alternative care plan. We likely will open an emergency site so our ICMS and EMS providers will care for patients until they can be transferred to a hospital.

I know this is in the future. What basis will be used to decide when it is safe to stop self isolation?

We will rely on the guidance of the CDC to help determine when the virus is no longer a threat to our community. Even more than that, today we are under a state mandated stay healthy at home mandate, and that will have to be lifted before resuming normal lives.

Questions about Managing Stress and Anxiety

Being with my family all day is driving me nuts! I used to have tea with a friend in the afternoon—can't do that anymore. What can I do?

You could have a virtual cup of tea on Zoom or a nice chat on the phone. You can go for a walk on your own or with your friend as long as you maintain a distance of at least 6 feet and abide by the CDC safety guidelines. Maybe there's a place in your house or on your property where you can "hide away" from your family to give yourself some private time.

Who can we reach out to if we are anxious and need someone to talk to?

Here are some resources:

Maine Statewide Crisis Hotline 24/7 for immediate crisis-oriented help **1-888-568-1112**

Maine Warm Line 24/7 for connecting with someone if you need mental and emotional support **1-866-771-9276**

ICMS offers behavioral health services. Contact Dan Keniston at ICMS at **1-207-863-9959, Option 3**

There are also many online Anonymous Peer Recovery Programs:

Narcotics Anonymous – namaine.org

Alcoholics Anonymous – csoaamaine.org

Nar-Anon – nar-anon.org and [Al-Anon – mainefg.org](http://Al-Anon-mainefg.org)

Also, This Saturday at 4:30pm, we will have a Live Facebook conversation to talk about Managing Stress and Anxiety. Our guests will be Avrum Weiss, ICMS Psychologist and Kelly Richards, who teaches stress relief to adults and kids. Watch the Town's Facebook Page and Public Poster for details.

If you have any questions for the EOC Team and/or Public Health Team, please email

VHEOC@townofvinalhaven.org

or call **1-207-863-2168**