

Town of Middlebury
STATEMENT ON Novel COVID-19 Virus
12 March 2020 3:00p.m.

Town officials are continually monitoring the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Municipal services are reviewing continuity-of-operations plans should this virus affect town staff.

WHAT WE KNOW

- Of the 600,000 + people residing in Vermont, two (2) have presumptively tested positive for the virus. Health officials are awaiting confirmation.
- A person who attended a Middlebury College sporting event LATER tested positive for the virus, however the VT Dept of Health has determined, through their investigation, that this person was not a risk to the community when the person was here.
- Municipal services are staffed and operating unabatedly at this time.

HOW THIS VIRUS SPREADS

- Primarily spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes.
- As far as we know, this is NOT an airborne disease

The droplets, when coughed or sneezed, can land in the mouth, noses or eyes of people nearby or be inhaled into the lungs.

The droplets can land or be deposited on objects. It has not been determined how long the virus can remain active outside the body.

Touching or coming in contact with an infected surface can be a mode of transmission when then touching another surface.

Touching the eyes, mouth or nose after contacting an infected surface or receiving an exhaled droplet can cause the infection.

Updated information from the CDC on how the virus is spread:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

PREVENTION

Understanding how this virus is spread can go a long way to limiting its spread.

- Protect your eyes, nose and mouth from contact, inhaling, or ingestion.
- Clean your hands often with soap and water and/or disinfectant hand sanitizer/ cleaner

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Use tissues that can be disposed of. If you use a handkerchief or object of clothing, wash in soap and hot water and avoid having the article of clothing touch other objects, to prevent transmission of the virus to other surfaces.
- Clean common surfaces in public areas often with disinfectant - including toilet flush handles, counters, door knobs.
- Disinfectant and hand sanitizer are in short supply – but you can make your own. Place isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol in a container. Lay in strips of clean cloths or even paper towels. These will suffice as wipes/hand cleaner if necessary.
- ASSUME THAT SURFACES HAVE BEEN CONTAMINATED AND TAKE PRECAUTIONS
- DO NOT ASSUME THAT THE PERSON IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH YOU IS FREE FROM THE ILLNESS. THEY MAY BE ASYMPTOMATIC. Use common sense and take appropriate precautions.

PEOPLE AT RISK

Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions — like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example — seem to be at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness. In these cases the illness can lead to pneumonia or other complications.

OTHERS

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully known. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death. While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness are mild, [a report out of China](#) suggests serious illness occurs in 16% of cases.

Learn more about the [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#).

SHOULD I SEQUESTOR MYSELF?

Life must go on, government must operate, provisions must be obtained. Do not fear the virus so that it controls your life. However, respect it and reduce your susceptibility to it.

The choice is yours.

If you are in one of the higher-risk groups, minimize your exposure. Staying home is a good choice.

If you are feeling ill, you may have COVID-19, another type of flu or ailment, or a bacterial infection. Don't infect others. Stay out of circulation, stay home. And use procedures to reduce the chance of infecting others while there. Call your doctor with concerns.

If you decide to go about, understand how the virus is transmitted and take precautions.

Tom Hanley
 Middlebury Police Chief
 Local Emergency Management Director