

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**4/05/2020 COVID-19 UPDATE:**

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus). There is ONE confirmed case in Gulf County and TWO confirmed cases in Franklin County. Click [HERE](#) to see the latest press release.

For daily Franklin County COVID-19 updates straight to your phone: text FranklinCV19 to 888777.

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276

There is also a hotline available at 866-779-6121 or email [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov).

Follow the CDC.gov website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out Floridahealth.gov to keep up with state-specific updates

**MENTAL HEALTH**

COVID-19 have you feeling...STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue, in partnership with New Directions Behavioral Health, is providing a free emotional support resource for all Floridians even if not covered by Florida Blue insurance. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call 833-848-1762 for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK**

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. It is important to note that these face coverings:

1. Are not surgical or N-95 respirators, which continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and medical first responders, and
2. The use of cloth face coverings does not mean we can remove previously set social distancing measures.

For information on how you can make a facemask at home, visit <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>.

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**Florida Department of Health in Gulf County**

2475 Garrison Avenue • Port St. Joe, Florida 32456  
PHONE: 850-227-1276 • FAX 850-227-7587

**Florida Department of Health in Franklin County**

139-12<sup>th</sup> Street • Apalachicola, Florida 32320  
PHONE: 850-653-2111 • FAX 850-653-1727

**FloridaHealth.gov**



**Accredited Health Department**  
Public Health Accreditation Board

## TESTING

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your provider is going to evaluate you for possible causes and rule out other respiratory illnesses (ex. Flu) before testing for COVID-19. If testing is required the provider will contact the county health department to coordinate COVID-19 testing. If you do not have a provider, the health department can help you coordinate this care.

- To be prioritized for testing, patients must meet the **state's criteria**, which evaluates a combination of symptoms and risk factors. Their samples will be sent to the closest laboratory.
- If you don't meet priority criteria, you can discuss with your provider about possibly getting tested at a commercial laboratory (e.g. LabCorp or Quest).
- State lab results are generally available within 24-48 hours. Commercial labs can take 5 – 6 days. Turnaround time for testing may be affected by demand.
- A person who thinks they were exposed and has no symptoms can self-isolate in their home for 14 days. Follow the CDC steps to help protect other people in your home and community:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

## LOCAL & STATE ISSUED ORDERS:

### ~~LOCAL ORDINANCES~~

#### **CITY OF APALACHICOLA**

The City of Apalachicola issued a State of Emergency Proclamation for public boat ramps. Ramps will only be open for use by Franklin County residents or property owners, any vehicle or trailer with out-of-county or out-of-state license plates shall be forbidden from using City of Apalachicola Public Boat ramps, unless they can show proof that they have been in the city for more than two weeks, at either a long-term rental or temporary residence with family or friend. This order does not apply to those engaged in formal business or government business in Apalachicola or Franklin County are exempt from this rule.

#### **BOCC VISITOR UPDATES**

On Friday, March 27, 2020 the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners signed and resolution in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the resolution, visitors (day trips or extended stays) are remain in their home in their primary communities. It also advises and directs a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine for visitors entering Franklin County from highly affected areas. Additionally, beach closures were extended 14 days (through April 9<sup>th</sup>).

Keep in mind Florida also has defined areas popping up around the state. Examples like Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and more. CDC Guidance for Travelers from Countries with widespread Sustained (Ongoing) transmission can be found at <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/travelers/>

#### **BEACHES**

On March 27, 2020 the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners issued Emergency Ordinance 2020-08, extending all beach and beach accesses closures to the public. It is unlawful for members of the public to access, use or recreate for traditional purposes on Franklin County beaches.

## **HOTELS & OTHER RENTAL UNITS**

The City of Apalachicola has issued State of Emergency Proclamation stating the city is closing lodging to all tourist and leisure visitors, effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at noon. The proclamation also has several other orders regarding recreational rental units. For more information, visit <http://www.cityofapalachicola.com/uploads/pdf/Apalach%20-%20Emergency%20Procla%20%203-24-20.pdf> to read the proclamation, or call the City of Apalachicola at (850) 653-9319.

## **~~STATE ISSUED ORDERS~~**

To see all of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: <https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/>

## **FORECLOSURES & EVICTION RELIEF**

On April 2, the Governor also issued Executive Order 20-94, providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and evictions for 45 days, without relieving an individual's obligation to make mortgage payments and rent payments.

## **REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

On April 2, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-93, directing the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and other executive agencies to take necessary actions to improve DEO's Reemployment Assistance Program.

## **SAFER AT HOME**

On April 1, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-91 requiring all persons in Florida to limit their movements and personal interactions outside of their home to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities for 30 days. The stay-at-home order was issued after consultation with federal officials and in accordance with the recent 30-day extension of national social distancing guidelines for curbing the spread of COVID-19. The order will go into effect midnight Friday, April 3, 2020. For more information visit: [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-91.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-91.pdf) For a more extensive list of essential services visit [https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO\\_20-89.pdf](https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-89.pdf). To view frequently asked questions about Executive Order 20-91 visit <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Exec%20Order%2020-91%20FAQs.pdf>.

## **TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS**

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-87, ordering all parties engaged in rental of vacation rental properties to suspend vacation rental operations. Vacation rentals are prohibited from making new reservations or bookings and shall not accept new guests for check-in for the duration of this order.

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-86, directing all persons who enter the State of Florida from an area with substantial community spread, to include the State of Louisiana, inclusive of those entering the State of Florida by roadways, to isolate or quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry into the State of Florida or the duration of the person's presence in the State of Florida, whichever is shorter.

## **RESTAURANTS**

On March 20, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-71, directing all restaurants and food establishments to suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers. The kitchens may continue to operate for take-out and delivery services for both food and alcohol, as long as alcohol is accompanied by food and is in a sealed container.

## **CLOSURES & RESTRICTIONS:**

### **CITY GOVERNMENTS**

The City of Carrabelle will be closed to the public until further notice. Use our Dropbox for Water & Sewer bill payments. Call 850-697-2727 for more details. All Carrabelle parks, playgrounds, and public restrooms are closed until further notice.

The City of Apalachicola will limit contact with the public until further notice. Use our Dropbox for Water & Sewer bill payments. Call 850-653-9319 for more details and 850-653-6845 for after hours Water & Sewer information.

### **COUNTY CLERK & COURTHOUSE OFFICES**

Franklin County will restrict public access to all county offices and buildings in order to promote and protect the common good. Visit [www.franklincountyflorida.com](http://www.franklincountyflorida.com) or call the Planning and Building office at (850) 653-9783 for more details. Offices within the main courthouse will remain open to the public for critical, essential services only. Call 850-653-8861 before you visit the courthouse to see how they may help you remotely.

### **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

The Sheriff's office is no longer allowing visitors in the lobby. Office staff will remain at work and will be accessible by telephone and email. If you must meet with a staff member, please call to make an appointment. Call (850) 670-8519 for more information.

### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

In order to promote social distancing and discourage gatherings of 10 or more people, the health department lobby will no longer receive visitors. Clients are arriving at the health department for appointments or birth/death certificates are encouraged to call the front desk at (850) 653-2111 ext. 2, before entering the lobby. A clerk or nurse will come to assist the client. Anyone seeking additional services should also call the front desk before attempting to enter the lobby.

### **PHARMACY**

Buy-Rite Drugs lobby will be closed to customers until further notice. Customers will need to call in medication refills and pay over the telephone. Call (850) 653-8825 for more information.

### **SCHOOLS**

All schools including Early Head Start and Head Start will be closed until May 1st. For a list of feeding program sites near you dial 2-1-1 and a representative will assist you or visit <https://www.franklincountyschools.org/cms/lib/FL01803254/Centricity/Domain/36/03.18.2020%20Press%20Release%20UPDATED%20MEAL%20PICK%20UP%20LOCATIONS.pdf> for more details. **UPDATE: The Lanark Market, located at 2348 Hwy 98, Carrabelle, FL is a recently added food distribution site.**

### **LIBRARIES**

All libraries are closed until further notice. The Wi-Fi services for both the Eastpoint and Carrabelle branches will remain on 24/7 and is accessible from the parking lot.

### **SMALL BUSINESS LOANS**

On March 17, Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program provides short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit [FloridaDisasterLoan.org](http://FloridaDisasterLoan.org) for more information.

### **ABOUT COVID-19**

COVID-19 transmission is more commonly spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. This is why social distancing and keeping at least 6 feet between you and other people is so important. A person can get COVID-19 by touching droplets that can land on objects and surfaces and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth, although, this is a less common mode of transmission. The vast majority of cases have come from close, sustained contact with an individual with COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Most people recover from the COVID-19 without needing special treatment. The elderly and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, and those with compromised immune systems are more likely to develop serious illness. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. As a reminder, the Department always recommends everyday preventive actions to help impede the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then disposing of the tissue;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty; and
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

#### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECENTLY TRAVELED TO AN AREA WITH AN OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?**

If you are returning from an area with an outbreak of COVID-19, the CDC is recommending you self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon returning from your travels, even if asymptomatic (no symptoms). Follow the CDC steps to help protect other people in your home and community: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath during those 14 days, contact your health care professional and mention your recent travel. Your provider will work with the health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from an impacted area, you should call a health care professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel.

#### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECOVER FROM COVID-19?**

Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Individuals will be asked to remain at home, except to get medical care. Stay in touch with your doctor if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency. People with COVID-19 who have stayed home can stop home isolation after meeting ALL of the following conditions:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers)
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

A test-based strategy is preferred for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions for patients who are hospitalized or severely immunocompromised or being transferred to a long-term care or assisted living facility.

**STAYING INFORMED:**

To get the latest information, visit [FloridaHealth.gov](https://www.floridahealth.gov) and follow on Social Media:

Florida Department of Health: [Twitter @HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) -or- [Facebook Florida Department of Health \(DOH\)](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaDepartmentofHealth)

Franklin County Florida Emergency Management: [Facebook Franklin County Florida Emergency Management](https://www.facebook.com/franklincountyfloridaemergencymanagement)

Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: [Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners](https://www.facebook.com/gulffranklincountycommunityhealthimprovementpartners)