



PUBLIC WORKS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC WORKS COVID-19 RESPONSE

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – MARCH 16, 2020 - The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following changes to Department operations due to the ongoing health concerns associated with COVID-19, known as the coronavirus. While there is still uncertainty about the virus and its characteristics, the Department is implementing the following changes out of an abundance of caution to safeguard both the public and employees.

SANITATION - Residential and commercial sanitation will continue as scheduled. There are no tentative plans to modify routes or scheduled pickup days unless further challenges arise due to staffing.

Our Pride Car services are suspended effective immediately. This is a service that requires direct contact of our staff with residents, as well as potential direct contact between our staff and garbage that is placed in the Pride Car, to keep the possibility of exposure to a minimum we are halting operations. Residents currently signed up to receive Pride Cars will receive notification of cancellation and will be offered first slots once we re-initiate the service.

The Athens Recycling Center will remain operational; however, patrons will be directly responsible for properly disposing of their items. Recycling center attendants will not be aiding with directly handling the disposal of materials – they will only be on-site to direct operations and provide guidance on proper disposal. If patrons need to use the hazardous household waste container, attendants will unlock the container and review with the patron what items are being disposed of, and where to place them. Attendants will not be directly handling disposed hazardous household items.

ANIMAL SHELTER – Animal Control services will continue as scheduled for emergency response only.

Effective immediately, the Athens Animal Shelter will be closed to the public for intakes until further notice. Owner surrender pets or strays will not be accepted by Department personnel.

Effective immediately, McMinn Regional Humane Society (MRHS) will be coordinating cat and dog adoptions by appointment only. Adoption walk-ins will not be accepted until further notice.

Currently – the WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association) has stated that there is no confirmed evidence that companion animals may become infected with COVID-19, but that they do not yet know if domesticated animals can contract the coronavirus. There is limited evidence that companion animals can be infected with or spread SARS-Cov-2. Because of this, and due to the fact that this is a rapidly evolving situation, these safeguards are in place to minimize potential person-to-person and animal contact until more information is known.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at (423) 744-2700 ext. 1.

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