

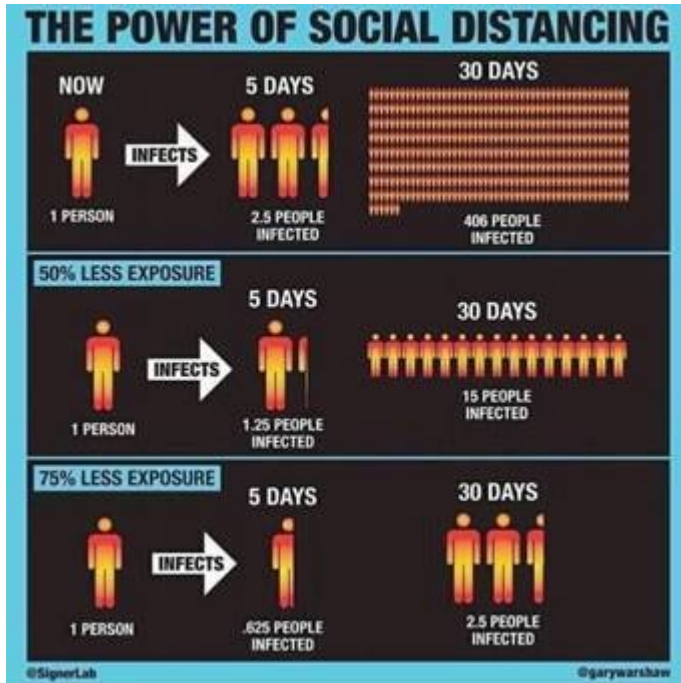
Tuesday, March 24, 2020 – 3:15 pm

Today, March 24th, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) identified a 2nd person in IOW with COVID-19. The person's exposure is likely related to their recent travel history and they self-isolated as soon as they became symptomatic. VDH has investigated the case and reports he had very limited contacts with others and all high-risk contacts have been notified and given guidance.

We are officially seeing community spread across the US now. While it sounds scary to hear of another case in IOW, it's important now that we worry less about who might be infected and if someone can give it to us, but instead assume we could potentially be infected and change our behavior to avoid transmitting COVID-19 to others. Current advice on the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is exactly the same advice to prevent the spread of colds and flu. **Practice social distancing, good hand hygiene and cough etiquette** (Chicken Wing!). **Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers regularly. Those that develop a cough, or a sneeze should do so into a tissue or the inside of their elbow** (Chicken Wing!), **washing their hands afterwards.**

March 23rd, Governor Northam issued Executive Order 53, which includes additional directives relative to Virginia's COVID-19 response to protect the health and safety of Virginians and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Executive Order (EO) 53 orders the closure of K-12 schools for the remainder of the academic school year, bans **ALL** non-essential gatherings of 10 or more people and orders the closure of some non-essential businesses. The Governor is also urging Virginians to **avoid all non-essential travel outside of the home**, if and when possible.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and flattening the transmission curve is critical to our systems (health care and food supply systems, for example) having the resources to deal with the impacts of the virus and to limit significant illnesses, deaths and other disruptions caused by COVID-19. Changing up the graphics today, here's why it is SO important that we all practice good social distancing and limit our activities away from our homes as much as absolutely possible. The less diligent and successful we are at social distancing the further and more rapidly the virus will spread and the greater the impacts to both our health and the economy.



We urge you to review the further specifics of Executive Order 53 at [https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-53-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-53-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf) and the press release summary of the EO 53 at <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/march/headline-855292-en.html> for a more full understanding of the additional directives that the Governor put in place yesterday.

Heres' a quick summary of some of the highlights: (again, I encourage you to Executive Order 53 for additional information if you have questions).

Public Gatherings

All gatherings of more than 10 people are banned statewide, beginning at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. This does not include gatherings that involve the provision of health care or medical services, access to essential services for low-income residents, such as food banks; operations of the media; law enforcement agencies; or operations of government. This ban DOES include private as well as public gatherings of 10 or more individuals.

K-12 Schools

All schools will remain closed through the end of this academic year. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will issue guidance to help divisions execute plans to continue instruction. VDOE will submit a waiver to the federal government to lift end-of-year testing requirements and is exploring options to waive state mandated tests.

Recreation and Entertainment Businesses

Most recreation, personal services/spas and entertainment business considered are non-essential and must close to the public beginning at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. EO 53 contains a list of examples.

Retail Businesses

EO 53 provides a listing of retail businesses, including grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, auto mechanics, home improvement stores, banks and laundromats, are considered essential and may remain open during normal business hours. (A more extensive list of essential retail businesses is listed in EO 53.) All essential retail establishments must, to the extent possible, adhere to social distancing recommendations, enhanced sanitizing practices on common surfaces, and other appropriate workplace guidance from state and federal authorities. Any brick-and-mortar retail business not listed in EO 53 must limit all in-person shopping to no more than 10 patrons per establishment, adhere to social distancing recommendations, sanitize common surfaces, and apply relevant workplace guidance from state and federal authorities.

If you are a retail business impacted by COVID-19, some resources may be available via the Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program. More information is available at https://www.insidetheisle.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/VA_16359-EIDL-Fact-Sheet.pdf. You can also find additional information about the programs available to impacted businesses on the county's Economic Development webpage at <https://www.insidetheisle.com/2020/03/17/covid-19-business-resources/>.

Additional Guidance for businesses

Professional businesses not listed above must utilize telework as much as possible. Where telework is not feasible, such businesses must adhere to social distancing recommendations, enhanced sanitizing procedures, and apply relevant workplace guidance from state and federal authorities, including [CDC](#), [OSHA](#), and the [Virginia Department of Labor and Industry](#).

Nothing in Executive Order Fifty-Three limits the provision of health care or medical services, access to essential services for low-income residents, such as food banks; the operations of the media; law enforcement agencies; or operations of government.

If you think you may have COVID-19: **CALL your healthcare professional** if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Stay HOME except for getting medical care.

If you have questions about COVID-19 or what actions you should take, visit the VDH (www.vdh.virginia.gov) or Center for Disease Control (CDC) (www.cdc.gov) websites. The VDH also has a information hotline – 877-ASK-VDH3 that you can call to get answers to your COVID-19 questions.