



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

UPDATES & GUIDANCE

Summary (updates highlighted in yellow)

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Number of confirmed cases in Prince George's County - **20**

Number of confirmed cases in Maryland - **85**

(Includes presumptive cases. Figures may decrease if a presumptive case is negative.)

New Federal Actions

The President and members of the Coronavirus Task Force spoke at a press conference today about the various actions being taken at the federal level to combat the coronavirus. **The latest White House guidance (Coronavirus Guidelines for America) can be viewed at www.whitehouse.gov.**

As the processing of tests accelerates, officials expect the number of positive cases to increase dramatically over the next 4-5 days, but the spike may not be an accurate depiction of how quickly the disease is spreading. Once the backlog is eliminated, the rate will be a more realistic reflection of the current state of the spread.

Administration officials report that the overall risk of serious illness remains low for the average American, but the disease is three times more infectious than the flu and it is very serious for the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. The social distancing guidelines apply to Americans of all ages, because asymptomatic individuals can be passing the virus on to those in the more vulnerable categories.

The White House is also recommending that all elective surgeries, including dental procedures, be postponed so that personal protective equipment can be conserved to protect those who need it.

City of Bowie Declares Public Health Emergency

Mayor Timothy Adams signed a Declaration of Public Health Emergency on March 17, 2020. The City Council approved this declaration so that it may take additional steps to address the pandemic if needed and to make sure that the City is in a position to seek all emergency reimbursements that it may be eligible to receive.

Governor's Orders

Governor Hogan has recently issued the following orders/guidance to Marylanders:

- Avoid unnecessary travel
- Maintain social distancing and stay home as much as possible
- Don't "panic buy" or hoard supplies, but instead share supplies with neighbors
- The April election is postponed to June 2 and the Preakness is postponed to September
- Restaurants, bars, gyms, and movie theaters are closed, except for pickup and delivery of food
- Gatherings of any kind of more than 50 people are also banned
- State transportation services (MTA, MARC, etc.) are reduced

At the March 17 press conference, the Governor shared his intention to possibly use Vehicle Emissions Testing sites as COVID-19 testing sites. However, nothing is being set up yet because they do not have the tests or the lab capacity to process the tests.

Warning

Beware of scams and criminals. There are a lot of people trying to sell coronavirus cures, protective equipment, and prevention solutions. There are no cures for the virus at this time and the best way to prevent it is to follow CDC guidance on hand washing, not touching your face, social distancing, staying home when sick, etc.

Police continue to investigate the two incidents on March 17 involving the same individual. In the first instance the suspect approached a resident's door claiming to be from the city and saying they needed to enter the home to inspect for coronavirus. **The city will absolutely not be knocking on doors inspecting for coronavirus or anything else. Do not let anyone in your home unless you know them or have arranged for them to be there.** In the second incident the suspect unlawfully entered a home in Old Town Bowie. See Police Department page on our website for more information.

City Government is Open; Buildings are Closed to Public

Per federal and state mandates and CDC guidance all City facilities are now closed to the public. City services will continue with some modifications for social distancing. City government is instituting alternate work schedules and teleworking for employees wherever possible.

Emergency Operations Center – Partial activation (7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., M-F) began March 16.

STATUS OF CITY OF BOWIE PUBLIC FACILITIES		
City Hall	City offices are closed to the public. Comcast office is also closed. Call 1-800-934-6489 for assistance.	Please call a specific office if you have an urgent need to conduct business. Remember you can pay bills & conduct some city business online or by telephone. Water bills can also be dropped off in the slot next to the front door at City Hall.
Senior Center	Closed	Homebound meals and essential transportation for doctor's appointments continue.
City Gymnasium	Closed 3/16-3/27	Will follow PGCPSS schools
Ice Arena	Closed 3/16-3/27	Will follow PGCPSS schools
Kenhill Center	Closed to the public	No in-person counseling services will be provided by Bowie Youth & Family Services. Arrangements are being made for tele-therapy. Call 301-809-3033 for assistance.
Kenhill Center - Bowie TV Studio	Closed 3/16-4/3	Closed to producers & public
Historic Properties	Closed 3/16-3/27	Will follow PGCPSS schools. Includes City museums, Radio & TV Museum and Genealogy Library.
City Parks	Open	Games & practices on ballfields are canceled. Playgrounds, picnic areas & fitness equipment are not being sanitized. Use at your own risk.
Playhouse	Closed	
Police Department	No public access	See note below

Meeting Rooms	Canceled through 3/31	Meeting rooms at City Hall & the Kenhill Center are closed.
Trash and other Public Works collections	Continuing as scheduled	
SPECIAL INFORMATION		
Lunches for School Children		
<p>Grab & Go lunches are being distributed to Prince George’s School System students weekdays at Benjamin Tasker Middle School and several other schools; list of schools at www.pgcps.org.</p> <p>Beginning Tuesday, March 17, any student, with or without a parent/guardian, may go to any one of these sites to pick up meals and a snack between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Adults may not pick up meals for children.</p>		
Park Usage		
<p>City parks are open for all to enjoy. However, please understand that playground equipment, picnic areas, and fitness equipment are not being sanitized. Use at your own risk and avoid pickup games or group play involving large groups of people in close contact (as per the White House Coronavirus Guidelines).</p>		
Senior Center Transportation		
<p>Non-essential trips are canceled. Transportation continues for essential medical appointments. Call the Senior Center at 301-809-2300 for more information.</p>		
Senior Meals Nutrition Program		
<p>Homebound meals will continue to be delivered.</p>		
Bowie Police Department		
<p>The door leading to the Police Department lobby is locked and the lobby is closed to the public. Visitors are still welcome to enter the small vestibule area just inside the front door. Communications Center staff will be happy to assist you there utilizing the intercom system. Or, call 240-544-5700 for assistance. Speed camera bills may be paid online or by calling the Finance Department.</p> <p>Those wishing to make a police report in a non-emergency case can now do so by calling 240-544-5700. In most cases, the Police will not be responding in person to take non-emergency reports, unless there is a pressing need to do so.</p> <p>The department is currently waiving any late fees on speed camera tickets until we are back to normal operations. If a resident has a flag on their registration due to non-payment of a speed camera ticket it will not be enforced until the State of Emergency has passed.</p>		
City Council Meetings Closed to the Public (in-person)		
<p>The public may not attend Council meetings. Those wishing to submit testimony for public hearings or comments for the Citizen Participation portion of an upcoming Council meeting can send a text message (240-335-3282) or email written or video testimony/comments to cityclerk@cityofbowie.org. Or mail the comments to City Hall. For assistance, contact City Clerk Awilda Hernandez at 301-809-3029.</p>		
Bowie Pantry & Emergency Aid Fund		
<p>The Pantry is open, but w/some changes in operations. Visit the Pantry website for details at www.bowiefoodpantry.org. (Note: website url has been corrected)</p>		
City Rental Inspections Canceled		
<p>Rental inspections conducted by the Code Compliance Office are canceled until 3/31.</p>		
Utilities		
<p>Per the Governor’s order, public utilities are prohibited from charging late fees or shutting off service</p>		

during this emergency. The Bowie Water & Sewer System instituted this policy more than a week ago. See information regarding other utilities below.

EVENTS & MEETINGS

City Council Meetings	Closed to the public	Residents can view City Council meetings on the web at (www.cityofbowie.org/viewmeetings) or on the government channel. See note above about testimony and comments.
City Committee Meetings	Canceled through 3/31	Will re-evaluate alternatives for April and beyond.
All city events are canceled for the remainder of March.		There is also the potential that all events will be canceled in April as well, depending on the state of the current health emergency.

GUIDANCE

When you have food delivered or purchase carryout from a Bowie restaurant, you are helping to support a local business that employ people in our community.

Follow CDC recommendations about hand washing hygiene, social distancing, and what to do if you suspect you may have COVID-19 (www.cdc.gov)

Consider using delivery or curb side pickup services for groceries and prescriptions

Prince George's County Health Department COVID-19 Hotline number: 301-883-6627

Maryland Department of Health Hotline number: 410-767-6871

The State of Maryland has issued the following FAQ documents

Testing - https://pha.health.maryland.gov/Documents/coronavirus_testing_FAQ.pdf

For Older Adults - https://pha.health.maryland.gov/Documents/FAQ_covid19_older_adults.pdf

More information is available on the City's coronavirus page at www.cityofbowie.org/corona.

MORE RESOURCES /INFORMATION

BGE

Suspending service disconnection and waiving late payment fees through May 1. Conduct business 24/7 using www.bge.com ; Customer Care team available by phone 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to help with business that can't be completed online.

- Electric outages and emergencies, 1-877-778-2222
- Gas odors and emergencies, 1-877-778-7798
- Payment and credit issues, 1-800-685-0123

Hearing and speech impaired customers should call 1-800-735-2258

City of Bowie Water & Sewer System

Shutoffs are suspended and no late fees are being assessed. For more information, call 301-809-3016.

WSSC

Suspending all water shutoffs and waiving late fees. Information: 301-206-4001 or 1-800-828-6439

Washington Gas

Temporarily suspending disconnections and waiving late fees. Will continue to respond to emergency leaks 24/7. Information: 844-927-4427 or www.washingtongas.com

Maryland Health Connection

Uninsured Maryland residents may enroll in a health plan through April 15, 2020. Coverage begins April 1, 2020, regardless of enrollment date. Visit www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov, select "Coronavirus Special Enrollment Period". Information: 855-642-8571, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., weekdays.

Metro

Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess will all continue to operate with reduced service, during normal hours. Metro emphasizes that customers must not use MetroAccess to travel to healthcare appointments if they are showing signs of illness. Information: www.wmata.com