

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



UPDATE from the City Manager for Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Thank you for your ongoing patience, support and concern for your fellow citizens.

Creative solutions for the situation we find ourselves in:

Portsmouth Public Library reports that the day they closed, Sunday March 15, they checked out 6,000 items. On a typical Sunday they check out 600. Keep reading, everyone!

NEW SINCE LAST UPDATE:

First question and answer from: hotline@cityofportsmouth.com

Q. Is the DMV open for normal operations such as registering a vehicle/motorcycle?

NH DMV has extended the expiration date for temporary motor vehicle plates. All temporary plates issued after March 1, 2020 are now valid through April 30, 2020. For information about how vehicle registration works in NH, [click here](#).

City residents can [renew their registrations online here](#).

City Parks are open.

The intent of closing the playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts and fenced dog parks is to keep people from congregating in confined spaces and touching equipment surfaces. But residents are encouraged to enjoy our open spaces, parks and [off-leash dog areas](#). The [NH State Parks](#) are also open.

**The Small Business Administration (SBA)
Coronavirus Disaster Relief Lending Program**

Loans for up to \$2 million can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.

Eligibility: small businesses without credit available elsewhere. Interest rate 3.75% (non-profits, 2.75%).

Repayment: To keep payments affordable, loan repayment options up to a maximum of 30 years.

Get a head-start as the program is being authorized by following these steps:

1. Go to: sba.gov/disaster
2. Find the section specific to the Coronavirus Disaster Relief Lending program.
3. Create an account and upload your information so that once the formal declaration is processed by SBA, yours will one of the first applications to be considered.

Thank you to all of the restaurants, businesses and residents who have pitched in to help our neighbors, connecting food, volunteers and other assistance to those who need them. The Greater Portsmouth Chamber Collaborative is working with the City's Economic Development Department to coordinate the flow of information and assistance from these and other State and Federal offices.

Food stores are operating normally and receiving shipments daily (although some products are in short supply at their distributors). For a list of food stores and pharmacies who offer delivery, [click here](#).

- Market Basket Portsmouth locations Seniors-Only Shopping Hours, Tues-Thurs (available 3/19), 5:30-7 AM for those aged 60+.

For the latest list of Portsmouth restaurant/food takeout, pickup and delivery options, [click here](#).

The Farmers Markets are cancelled, but many participants are offering direct food sales from their farms. [Click here for the Seacoast Local directory of these resources.](#)

The City's Economic Development Department suggests the following resources that might be of use: one for [business and industry issues](#) and the other regarding [employment law](#).

For information about the stores, businesses and restaurants that are open, go to the [Chamber Collaborative's GoPortsmouthNH.com website](#).

For information about business assistance resources, go to the [Chamber Collaborative's COVID-19 website page](#).

Local businesses have also put together the following resources:

- Information about the extent to which they are still operating, doing web programming, etc.: <http://mightysmall.io/>
- An immediate way for businesses to share their webstores so consumers can support local businesses with the purchase of giftcards for use later: <http://www.seacoastgiftcards.com/>

Public utilities Eversource, Unitil and Liberty Utilities -- and the City Department of Public Works Water & Sewer Divisions -- have suspended all disconnect orders and/or late fees. An Executive Order from Governor Sununu prohibits all evictions and foreclosures until at least April 1, 2020.

Residents in Portsmouth, New Castle, Rye, Newington or Greenland who require assistance should contact the City's Welfare Department which assists Portsmouth residents unable to provide for their own documented shelter, food, medication, utility or other emergency needs. Call 603-610-7267 or email WFDept@CityofPortsmouth.com

Governor Chris Sununu, the NH Department of Health and Human Services, and NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management have also mobilized 211NH to handle all COVID-19 related calls from New Hampshire residents. ***All residents with questions or concerns surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak can call 2-1-1.***

In Case You Missed It:

Downtown Parking is free through March 31, 2020. On-street and public garage parking fees are suspended at all City parking meters.

Portsmouth Public Schools have made arrangements to provide all students with daily breakfast and lunch. Parents can pick food up at Portsmouth High School (cafeteria door #18) between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. School buses are delivering food between 11:00 and 11:45 a.m. each day, Monday through Friday, (working now on addressing those with weekend food insecurity) to the following five pickup locations:

- Wamesit/Ledgewood
- Beechstone White Cedar
- Gosling Recreation Center/ Oriental Gardens (Mr. Bubbles)
- Osprey Landing (at mailboxes)
- Patriots Park

Unless indicated otherwise, drop-off locations are at the usual bus stops. The schedule and stops are likely to change as we work to assess and meet the needs of the community.

All municipal buildings and facilities, schools and the Portsmouth Public Library are closed to the public. But services are staffed according to staggered work schedules to minimize the number of people in the same place at the same time.

- **City Hall is closed to the public.** A skeleton staff will be in place to answer the phone and perform City business. Residents are asked to use the City's [online services](#) to process their water bills, parking tickets, taxes, fees, fines, permits, etc.
- **Fire Department** has suspended scheduled fire protection inspections and the issuing of any burn permits. If you have a Class 1 or 2 permit (backyard, etc.) the permit expiration is extended to June 1, 2020.
- **Recreation Department** buildings, playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts and dog parks are all closed.
- **Senior transportation and Meals on Wheels** are operating as usual.
- **Portsmouth Housing Authority** asks citizens to restrict visits so as not to put their more-susceptible residents at greater risk.

DPW: The recycling center is open and trash pickup is on the normal schedule. Note: Please dispose of disinfectant wipes in a separate trash bag. Flush only toilet paper or tissues in the toilet (even the wipes marked "flushable" can clog pipes). Also use [Click 'n Fix](#) as needed so service requests can be logged and addressed.

All City board, commission and committee meetings scheduled for the next two weeks have been postponed until further notice.

For answers to other questions about the City's response to COVID-19, please email: hotline@cityofportsmouth.com

For more information, visit the [Health Department page on COVID-19](#)