

COVID-19 Update

Talbot County Emergency Services
Clay Stamp, Director, Asst. County Manager
www.talbotdes.org



Talbot County Health Department
Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer
www.health.marylandg.gov/talbotcounty

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2020

Talbot County Prepares for Coronavirus Closures

The Talbot County community is now turning its attention to serving the needs of area residents during the current State of Emergency and emerging COVID-19 health crisis.

“We still just have one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Talbot County,” says County Health Officer Dr. Fredia Wadley. “We are forbidden by law to release specific information about this patient, but we have every reason to believe that this person will recover completely.”

Gov. Larry Hogan announced further restrictions today as part of Maryland’s State of Emergency. Restaurants, bars, movie theatres, and gyms join the list of places closed to the public, and gatherings of 50 or more people are banned.

“These precautions are designed to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus,” says Dr. Wadley. “Now we are committed to providing sheltering for the children of essential workers and continuing services to our most vulnerable residents.”

Talbot County Public Schools are providing breakfasts and lunches to students for pick up. Senior Centers across the state are closed, but Brookletts Place is providing meal delivery to area seniors in need. University of Maryland Shore Regional Health is planning to launch a call-in line staffed by medical professionals.

The Talbot County Emergency Operations Center continues to support stakeholders working to address a myriad of issues through working groups as well as to gather information daily for release to the public. Clay Stamp, Director of Emergency Services and Assistant County Manager states, “We recognize the importance of gathering and rapidly disseminating information to the public to both allay fears and to support informed decision making.” He further stated appreciation to the private sector and nonprofit organizations in the community who are stepping up to address challenges. “It is refreshing to see our community coming together to support each other for what may be a prolonged period of time.”

Following is a summary of measures Talbot County’s community partners are taking in response to this developing situation.

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Easton Utilities

Easton Utilities understands the importance of supporting our community efforts during this unprecedented time. While we continue to provide the essential services our customers rely on every day, we want to follow the recommendations of our state and local agencies to protect the health of the public and our employees.

In addition to the recommended precautions we are currently following, Easton Utilities is instituting the following changes as of Monday, March 16:

- The Customer Service Center and Lobby are CLOSED to all customers and visitors
 - The drive-thru will remain open
- Customers are encouraged to utilize online bill pay, phone or mail for transactions
- We are limiting visits to customer homes and have implemented a screening protocol to determine the potential health risk of the residence
- As always, we remain flexible and willing to work with customers facing financial hardships during this time

We will continuously monitor and update our policies to ensure we are providing the best possible service to our customers. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Customer Service at 410-822-6110.

Neighborhood Service Center

According to Marilyn M. Neal, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Service Center, Inc., located at 126 Port Street in Easton, "As Talbot County's designated Community Action Agency, NSC works with crisis situations on a daily basis. Moreover, we will give our utmost attention to our seniors during this State of Emergency."

- The Dorothy W. Black After-School Program will follow the system put in place by the Talbot County Public Schools and is closed through March 27th.
- NSC will disseminate up-to-date safety information from its partners.
- The daily food giveaway will provide packages Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. Note: This does not affect the Food Pantry program.
- The daily clothing giveaway will be cancelled during this period. Should clothing be needed in the event of an emergency, please call NSC at (410) 822-5015.
- Senior Mobile Food Service will offer "drops to the door," no deliveries. Any senior without food should contact NSC at (410) 822-5015.
- Applications for Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) will be mailed. Return applications can be mailed back to MSC. To protect our seniors, all home visits will be cancelled.

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Talbot County District Court

The District Court is open on Monday, March 16, 2020. Pursuant to Chief Judge Barbera's Administrative Order of March 13, 2020, closing state courthouses to the public on an emergency basis, the following information is provided:

- In accord with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), this court seeks to limit the level, duration and quality of contact among persons who frequent this Court. To that end, all persons who enter this Courthouse are encouraged to practice good hygiene, by frequently washing their hands, keeping an appropriate distance from others and – in the case of employees – keeping workstations, keyboards and phones clean. Commonly used surfaces should be cleaned on a regular basis.
- The concept of “social distancing” in the Courthouse is encouraged, but normal human interaction is inevitable. Thus all courthouse users should be prudent and exercise good judgment during those interactions.
- Only the following case types will be heard, either in-person or remotely, beginning March 16, 2020: (A) bail reviews, (B) emergency evaluation petitions, (C) emergency risk protective order petitions, (D) domestic violence protective petitions, (E) peace order petitions, (F) quarantine and isolation violations, (G) initial appearances, (H) search warrants, (I) applications for statement of charges, (J) acceptance of bail bonds, (K) bench warrant satisfactions, (L) body attachments, and (M) contempt.
- Only the parties, attorneys, and testifying witnesses are permitted to attend these proceedings, with no exceptions, unless permission is expressly granted by the Administrative Judge to do so. Members of the news media shall be admitted to the Courthouse upon display of proper credentials.
- All other trials, motions or hearings scheduled between March 16, 2020 through April 3, 2020 are continued. You will receive notice of any new dates by mail.
- The Clerks' office will not be interacting with members of the public or attorneys, except by telephone. All court filings shall be mailed or placed in the court's dropbox, located inside the Courthouse during the court's hours of operation. The clerks' office telephone number is 410-819-5850.
- Other than judges and employees of the courthouse, and those entities having office space in the courthouse, the only persons who may access the District Court are litigants, attorneys or testifying witnesses in a case scheduled for hearing on that day; State's Attorneys, Public Defenders; probation agents; the Office of Child Support; Pretrial Services employees; and Department of Health employees. Any other user of the courthouse who frequently appears on behalf of a government agency who is not on the list above should contact the Administrative Judge.
- Please check back frequently for updates or revisions. For additional information, call 410-819-5850.

Talbot County Free Library

- To help protect against the spread of the Coronavirus, all Talbot County Free Library branches will be closed effective Monday, March 16 – Saturday, March 28. The library plans to reopen on Monday, March 30.

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- The health and well-being of our community is the library's top priority. We understand the uncertainty surrounding Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the concern about how it will affect our community. We have been closely monitoring the situation and adhering to the recommendations of experts from the Talbot County Health Department, local and state government officials, and the CDC.
- In addition, the library is cancelling all story times at both branches through Wednesday, April 15. The Library Board of Trustees has made this decision as a precautionary measure to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, with the health and safety of Talbot County residents as our primary goal.
- Any materials currently checked out from the library may be returned after we reopen. No overdue fees will accrue for library materials between March 16 and 28.
- Library meeting rooms will not be available during this period. AARP Tax Aide appointments are cancelled for Saturday, March 21, and Saturday, March 28. Electronic library services will continue to be available, including access to eBooks, audiobooks, streaming movies, TV shows, and music.
- Please check the library's website, or Facebook page for updates. You can also find updated information about the library and other county organizations on the Talbot County EMS Facebook page.
- Once again, during this enforced interruption in many of the library's regular services, patrons are encouraged to take advantage of the library's eLearning opportunities and downloadable and streaming eBooks, audiobooks, music, magazines, and movies—all of which are available free of charge, 24/7. For more information, please visit www.tcfl.org.
- Press Contact: Dana Newman, telephone: 410-822-1626

Talbot County Public Schools

- Talbot County Public Schools will provide breakfast and lunch for children ages 2 through 18 during the two-week school shutdown beginning Monday, March 16.
 - Drive-by or walk-up meal pickup will be at Easton Middle (at the side cafeteria entrance) and St. Michaels Middle High from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday.
 - Each child will be provided **breakfast and lunch free of charge each day**. Children must be between the ages of 2 and 18, but do not have to be eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Adults cannot accept meals on behalf of children.
 - CarePacks will be at St. Michaels Middle High and Easton Middle on Fridays to provide weekend meals. If families are unable to get to one of the schools to pick up CarePacks, please email Ms. Emily Moody at emoody@talbotschools.org to set up a CarePacks delivery for Friday March 20.
- All 12-month staff will be working or telecommuting during the shutdown until further notice.
- All school buildings are closed to the public. The Talbot County Education Center will remain open with limited staffing until further notice.

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- At this point the impact on the school calendar has not been determined pending further guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education.

Talbot County Government Offices

- The Talbot County Council will hold a special meeting today at 4:00 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room for the consideration of an Emergency Declaration for Talbot County regarding COVID-19.
- Talbot County Government offices will be closed to the public as of Tuesday, March 17, 2020 until further notice. County staff are accessible by phone and/or e-mail.

Talbot County Department of Social Services

- Talbot County Department of Social Services is currently providing all services.
- Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
- We encourage those with questions that could be answered by phone to call 410-770-4848. Child support customers should start with the DHS Call Center at 1-800-332-6347.
- We encourage customers to use the DHS online portal (MyDHR) when possible to apply for SNAP (Food Stamps) and all emergency cash assistance programs (<https://mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us/>)
- We encourage customers to use the Maryland Health Connection to apply for Medical Assistance or health insurance. The Maryland Health Connection has opened an emergency enrollment period. Information and online application access can be found on the Maryland Health Connection website (<https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/>).
- We encourage child support payments to be made by mail, phone or online. If making payment by mail, include your name and child support case number on the payment and mail to:

Maryland Child Support Account
P.O. Box 17396
Baltimore, MD 21297-1396

- To make a one-time credit card child support payment over the phone, call 1-844-324-3855.
- Child Support payments may be made online at <http://dhs.maryland.gov/child-support-services/paying-support/>. At this link, you can establish a one-time or recurring automatic draft from your savings account or pay using Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express.

Town of Easton

- Public access to buildings will be closed effective Monday, March 16, 2020, at 12:00 pm.
- Monday's Council meeting will be closed to public access. The meeting is televised for live viewing on MCTV Channel 98 local access.
- Public comments can be submitted to the Town until the close of business on Friday.

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- Operations and services will continue to be provided, including building permit issuance and certain inspections.
- Telephone payment options are available at 410-822-2525.
- Parks and Recreational activities have been cancelled with the cooperation of each organization.
- Certain Public Assembly and Park Permits may be altered or cancelled to comply with size of gatherings limits.

Town of Oxford

- Normal services will continue, but staff are reducing direct interaction with public to reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus.
- For more information, call the Town Office at 410-226-5152.

Where to Find More Information

- **CDC COVID-2019 Website:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Talbot County COVID-19 Information** www.talbotdes.org/covid19.asp
- **Maryland Department of Health Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx>
- **Talbot County Health Department Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/talbotcounty/Pages/home.aspx>
- **Talbot County Health Department Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/TalbotHealthMaryland/>
- **Talbot County Department of Emergency Services Website:** <http://www.talbotdes.org/default.asp>
- **Talbot County Department of Emergency Services Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/talbotdes>