



Rhode Island Department of Health

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Restaurants and Bars to Offer Delivery and Take-Out Only, Gatherings Limited to 25 People

One additional case of COVID-19 in Rhode Island

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH today announced that, effective tomorrow and continuing through March 30th, there will be no on-premise food consumption for restaurants, bars, coffee shops, or other food establishments in Rhode Island. Establishments with a food license can continue to conduct pick-up, drive-thru and delivery only. The Governor and Dr. Alexander-Scott also directed all Rhode Islanders not to host or attend gatherings of 25 people or more.

“This is a critical time in the state’s response, and I know this decision is difficult for small business owners across the state,” said Governor Raimondo. “We know that this action will slow the spread of the virus and help save lives. I appreciate the sacrifices everyone is continuing to make, and I want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to protect public health while also protecting businesses and workers throughout Rhode Island.”

The Governor and Dr. Alexander-Scott were joined today by Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza, who echoed these recommendations for the City of Providence.

“I ask that everyone stay home, follow the recommendations the City and the State have issued and do their part to protect our community,” said Mayor Jorge Elorza. “Unfortunately, that means no bars on St. Patrick’s Day and no group outings to some amazing restaurants. I want to thank the members of our businesses community who have adapted during trying times and express how sensitive we are to the impact these circumstances have on our city. Our number one priority right now is limiting the spread of this virus.”

Businesses looking for resources or information should visit Commerce RI’s COVID-19 [webpage](#). The Department of Labor and Training (DLT) has worked to increase the flexibility of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and unemployment Insurance (UI) programs, including waiving the seven-day minimum amount of time and previously required medical certification. Affected businesses with questions on Unemployment Insurance, Paid Sick and Safe Leave, or other work-related programs should contact DLT by emailing dlt.covid19@dlt.ri.gov or calling (401) 462-2020.

The announcement of these measures is coming as Rhode Island today announced one additional case of COVID-19 involving a woman in her 40s. This woman has been hospitalized but is in stable condition.

RIDOH is currently investigating the source of her illness.

As a reminder, beginning today, free “grab and go” meals will be available for Rhode Island kids. These meal sites will be open throughout the next week as schools across the state are closed. All sites are open and free for anyone age 18 or younger. There are no ID or residency requirements, but the child must be present. Schools cannot give a meal to an adult on behalf of a child. Visit the [Food Sites for Schoolchildren](#) page for an updated list of meal sites. New sites are still being added, so please check back or contact your school district or charter school for more options.

The Governor and Dr. Alexander-Scott will provide additional updates to reporters about Rhode Island’s coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response this afternoon at 4 p.m. in Conference Room 2A at the Department of Administration.

Data updates

These numbers are also [available online](#).

- Number of Rhode Island COVID-19 positive (including presumptive positive) cases: 21
- Number of people who had negative test results at RIDOH’s State Health Laboratories: 308
- Number of people for whom tests are pending: 149
- Number of people who are currently instructed to self-quarantine in Rhode Island: approximately 2,300. (This number includes approximately 1,700 people from Cranston High School West.)

Testing, including confirmatory testing, in Rhode Island is being done at RIDOH’s State Health Laboratories.

Key messages for the public

- Most people who may get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms and can recover at home.
- If you have traveled anywhere internationally in the last 14 days, self-quarantine for 14 days. That means do not go to work or school and stay at home.
- Avoid all crowded places, large events, and mass gatherings. This is social distancing. However, people should continue doing essential errands (such as going to the grocery store).
- Whenever possible, avoid close personal contact with people in public. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. [Additional guidance](#) is available from CDC.
- Although Rhode Island has the testing capacity it needs, people without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.
- People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. These people should not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless they are experiencing a medical emergency). Healthcare providers have

a dedicated number that they are then using to consult with RIDOH on potential COVID-19 cases.

- Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness. RIDOH is reiterating CDC's guidance for people older than 60 years of age:
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs.
 - Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
 - Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
 - More information is [available from CDC](#).
- People with general, non-medical questions about COVID-19 can visit www.health.ri.gov/covid, write to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov, or call 401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public. The Hotline will be staffed this weekend from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm both Saturday and Sunday. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)
- Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island.
 - Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
 - Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
 - Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

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