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Secondary Navigation

[Mayor](#)[First Lady](#)[News](#)[Officials](#)

Mayor de Blasio Issues New Guidance to New Yorkers

March 20, 2020

New Yorkers should text COVID to 692-692 to get regular updates on the latest developments regarding COVID-19; Text COVIDESP to 692-692 for updates in Spanish

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today issued updated COVID-19 guidance to New Yorkers, pursuant to new State regulations. Effective Sunday, March 22nd, at 8:00 PM, all non-essential businesses in New York City will be closed. Only businesses with essential functions will be permitted to operate, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, internet providers, food delivery, mass transit, banks, and financial institutions. Businesses that provide essential services must implement rules that facilitate social distancing, as well.

As of 6:00 PM today, citywide, there 5,683 positive cases of COVID-19 and 43 fatalities. Currently there are 1,514 cases in Queens 1,402 in Manhattan, 1,740 in Brooklyn, 736 in the Bronx, and 285 in Staten Island.

“Tonight our city braces for the next battle of this war,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Things will continue to get worse before they get better; but New Yorkers are strong and I know we can get through this together. Lives are on the line all across our city. We must all do our part to protect those who need us the most.”

New Guidance for New Yorkers

Effective Sunday, March 22nd, at 8:00 PM, all non-essential businesses in New York City will be closed. Only businesses with essential functions will be permitted to operate, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, internet providers, food delivery, banks, financial institutions and mass transit. Businesses that provide essential services must implement rules that help facilitate social distancing. The NYPD will be out in neighborhoods across the City to ensure compliance with the policies.

The City will also enforce the following rules for non-vulnerable individuals with fines and mandatory closures:

- o No non-essential gatherings; any concentration of people outside their home must be limited to workers providing essential services
- o Practice social distancing in public (6 feet or more)
- o Individuals should limit outdoor recreational activities to non-contact.
- o Limit use of public transportation to only when absolutely necessary.
- o Sick individuals should not leave home except to receive medical care.

The City will also enforce “Matilda’s Law,” which sets the following restrictions for vulnerable New Yorkers who are over the age of 70 and/or immune-compromised:

- o Remain indoors
- o Limit outdoor activity to solitary exercise
- o Pre-screen all visitors and aides by taking temperature
- o Wear a mask when in company of others
- o Do not visit households with multiple people
- o Everyone in presence of vulnerable people should wear a mask
- o Stay six feet from other people
- o Do not take public transportation unless absolutely necessary.

Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs)

The Department of Education plans to open 93 REC sites across all five boroughs, with the first sites opening starting the week of March 23rd for the children of essential workers. The sites will include 76 K-12 Centers and 17 Early Childhood Centers citywide. We have identified 32 sites in Brooklyn, 22 in the Bronx, 20 in Queens, 15 in Manhattan and 4 in Staten Island, with at least one site in every school district. We are contacting first responders, transit and healthcare workers, DOE staff at our Centers and Meal Hubs, ACS Frontline/Investigators still making direct contact with families, Department of Correction essential staff, Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration Shelter staff and contracted staff, and Department of Sanitation essential staff. We are evaluating our capacity to serve other students. We are contacting agencies, unions and partner organizations to alert them of this opportunity and register them for a site near their home. We expect to serve approximately 57,000 students starting next week.

REC sites were chosen with accessibility as one of the main drivers, and all identified sites are either fully or partially accessible. In the best interest of our medically fragile students, we do not recommend they attend REC sites and are working with the Department of Health to ensure they have continuous medical services.

Students at RECs will engage in remote learning with their home schools, as well as art, music, and physical education. We will ask DOE and Community Based Organization employees to staff the Center, and we are grateful to the numerous DOE employees who have already offered to help staff these sites.

The health and safety of staff members remains our highest priority. All social distancing protocols will be followed, including 6 feet of distance between people. Anyone who is sick should stay home.

Meal Hubs

This week, free breakfast and lunch were available to all New York City students. Children were able to receive free meals at any site, regardless of which school they attend until 1:30 PM daily. During grab-and-go meals this week, we served approximately 560,000 meals and expect participation to rise in the coming weeks.

Starting Monday, March 23rd, three meals a day will be served to all New York City students at 439 hub sites citywide. 100 of the sites were high participation sites in Summer, 2019, and the remaining sites are schools where more than 50 percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced meals. Department of Education and DOHMH have been working to identify the most medically fragile students, and we are proud to say that we are partnering with Door Dash who will be delivering meals to students whose medical needs are so significant that they should not be leaving the home even to get meals. We have already been in contact with those families and hope to expand to more in the future. Food delivery will also be made available to children who reside in City shelters. Families search “Free Meals” on schools.nyc.gov or call 311 to find a site near them. Starting Monday, families can also text FOOD or COMIDA to 877-877 to find a meal near them. A complete list of meal hubs is available [here](#).

Congressional Delegation Letter

Yesterday evening, the Mayor sent a letter to the United States Congressional Leadership, including Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Senator Schumer, and Leader McCarthy. New York City has more cases than any city in America and the Mayor reiterated his requests from the federal government. The requests include:

- The deployment of the United States Armed Forces in assistance to New York City’s frontline response efforts with their supply chain capabilities, stockpile of medical supplies, and skilled workforce.
- Critical medical supplies, reiterating the ask from the Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Veterans Affairs for 15,000 ventilators, 3 million N-95 masks, 50 million surgical masks, and 45 million each of face shields, surgical gowns, coveralls, and pairs of gloves.

The letter is available online [here](#).

Census Letter

Mayor Bill de Blasio called on the U.S. Census Bureau to extend 2020 Census operations to ensure a complete and accurate count of all New Yorkers in light of the challenges posed by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Mayor de Blasio called on the Bureau to implement the following operational changes to its 2020 Census implementation in New York City:

- Reschedule Early Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) to later in the year
- Substantially delay door-to-door enumeration
- Extend the self-response window to September 30, 2020

The letter is available online [here](#).

New Bike Infrastructure

To ensure cycling in the city is safer and easier, the City will install temporary protected bike lanes along 2nd Avenue from 42nd to 34th street in Manhattan, and on Smith Street in Brooklyn, from Atlantic Avenue to Fulton Street, connecting to existing lanes on Jay Street. These temporary protected bike lanes will plug two key gaps on two of the busiest bike corridors in the city.

To further implement the City’s Green Wave’ vision, 15 MPH signal progressions have been installed on 43rd Avenue in Queens from 35th to 51st Streets and Clinton Street in Brooklyn from Nelson Street to Pierrepont Street. The installation of a signal progression on Prince Street in Manhattan, from 6th Avenue to the Bowery, is currently underway, with launch date for next week. This new signal timing will help reduce the number of red lights cyclists hit as they travel.

Updated Ferry Service

The Staten Island Ferry will operate on a reduced schedule. Starting midnight Sunday, March 22, the following measures will take effect:

- Only 3 boats will operate in the morning and evening rush hours on weekdays. Previously, 4 boats operated during these hours.
- From 7:00 to 9:00 AM, the ferry will operate every 20 minutes. The ferry previously operated every 15 minutes.
- From 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, the ferry will continue to operate every 30 minutes.
- From 4:30 PM to 8:00 PM, the ferry will operate every 20 minutes. The ferry previously operated every 15 minutes.
- From 8:00 PM to every 12:00 AM, the ferry will continue to operate every 30 minutes.
- From 12:00 AM to 5:00 AM on weekdays, and from 12:00 AM to 7:00 AM on weekends, the ferry will operate every hour. The ferry previously operated every 30 minutes.

New Health Guidance

To preserve personal protective equipment for healthcare workers providing medically necessary care for hospitalized patients, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is directing healthcare facilities to immediately stop testing non-hospitalized patients for COVID-19 unless test results will impact the clinical management of the patient. In addition, DOHMH is also advising providers and hospitals to not test asymptomatic people, including health care workers or first responders.

Keeping Businesses Closed

Yesterday, the City inspected 7,939 businesses and religious institutions and has observed overwhelming compliance. Three violations in total were issued.

Stay Informed

Nearly 700,000 New Yorkers have signed up for the City's COVID text notification system to get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City text COVID to 692-692. New Yorkers can text COVIDESP to 692-692 for updates in Spanish. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments. If you have any questions on finding medical care call 311

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