



City of Barstow and Barstow Fire Protection District

DATE: March 19, 2020
TO: Immediate Release
FROM: Nikki Salas, Ed. D
City Manager
SUBJECT: **COVID-19 PRESS RELEASE**

During the week of March 2, 2020, the City of Barstow first addressed concerns surrounding the local response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Since that time, the City has maintained an open line of communication with the community to ensure residents and visitors are as informed as possible. As this situation continues to evolve, the City of Barstow is working diligently to provide up-to-date and accurate information through several platforms, including the City's website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, local radio, newspaper, City-run local Channel 6, and ABC News. It is our goal to provide the community with the resources to prepare for a proactive and safe response to COVID-19.

San Bernardino County currently has several confirmed cases; however, they will no longer be confirming the location of cases. San Bernardino County health officials are working to secure more lab testing facilities and testing kits. As healthcare facilities increase their testing capabilities, it can be anticipated that there will be an increased number of reported cases. Although the spread of the virus cannot be stopped, the steps that are being taken, such as closing bars and other public facilities, are in place help slow the spread.

By proactively slowing the spread of the virus, the demand on our healthcare facilities can decrease, which allows for more robust care of those severely sick with the virus. To help slow the spread of the virus, San Bernardino County "ordered the cancellation of gatherings of any number of people within the county" at least through April 6, 2020. The order also requires the "closing of all movie theatres, gyms, health clubs, bars, adult entertainment establishments, and other businesses that serve alcohol but do not serve food."

On Sunday, March 15, 2020, the City activated its Emergency Operation Center at a Level 3 activation to monitor response to COVID-19. On Monday, March 16, 2020, the City Council declared a local state of emergency. All City meetings scheduled through April 1, 2020, are now cancelled.

Additionally, as a safety measure to the public and to staff, most City buildings will be closed to the public, which include City Hall, the Fire Department Administration, the Public Works Yard, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Harvey House, the Cora Harper Center and the Robert Sessions Sports Park. Open-air parks will remain open to the public. Although City buildings are closed to the public, City staff are working and available by phone or email. For City services or to make a payment by telephone, please call the City Operator at (760) 256-3531.

All Parks and Recreation activities are now cancelled, including Tot Time, until further notice. Those residents who pre-paid registration can contact the Recreation Department at (760) 255-5215 to request a refund or credit.

For information on Police Department services, please call (760) 256-2211.

On March 19, 2020, at 3:00pm, Barstow Unified School District (BUSD) will announce the possible extension to school closure via the auto dialer system and online. Free breakfast and lunch are available to all BUSD students. Meals can be picked up by vehicle or walk-up from 9:00am to 11:00am at Barstow Fine Arts Academy, Lenwood Elementary, and Barstow Junior High School. Parent or Guardian does not need to be present. If you need any assistance or special accommodations for disability or other protected status, please contact Pupil Services at (760)255-6028.

On March 18, 2020, at 8:30am, the Barstow Community College campuses closed to the public and to students. Classes, services, and college operations will continue remotely. Classes set to begin remotely on March 23, 2020, will begin as scheduled.

The Barstow Courthouse will be closed March 17, 2020, through April 2, 2020.

To purchase bus passes, please call Victor Valley Transit Authority at (760) 948-4021 ext. 123.

The Barstow Senior Center is closed for services. Meals are still being served on a to-go basis. Please call (760) 256-5023 for more information.

Dignity Station Warming and Cooling Center is closed until further notice.

During this time, when many are turning to alternative toilet paper products, please do not flush any wipes or paper towels down the toilet, even those that are labeled flushable. These wipes can clog pipelines and cause damage to equipment, leading to stress on the wastewater system during a time when resource prioritization is essential.

San Bernardino County officials have assured that there is absolutely no shortage in the food supply chain. Buying in excess, or “panic buying,” negatively impacts our vulnerable populations because it does not leave enough food or supplies for everyday life for others. Please only purchase goods at a normal rate for the sake of your neighbors.

Some recommendations may seem drastic, but we urge you to take them seriously. Although we ask you to prepare responsibly, we ask that you do not panic. If we proactively respond to this virus now, we minimize our risk of needing to act reactively later. We do not want our community’s response to be inadequate in the days to come.

If you are feeling sick, the California Department of Public Health recommends the following:

CALL AHEAD: If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and may have had contact with a person with COVID-19, or recently traveled to countries with apparent community spread, **call your health care provider before seeking medical care so that appropriate precautions can be taken.**

If you have a true emergency, please call 9-1-1. If you call emergency services for any reason and have flu-like symptoms, please notify dispatch that you are ill and, if possible, please put on a facemask before emergency services arrive. Please do not put our first responders at risk.

San Bernardino County Public Health can be reached at 909-387-3912.

For more information regarding the City of Barstow’s response to the COVID-19 crisis and more resources, please visit www.BarstowCA.org or call (760) 256-3531.