



# Somerset County Department of Health Public Health Emergency Preparedness Situation Update Coronavirus COVID-19 Update #7

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The Somerset County Department of Health is the lead county agency to coordinate public health disease response in emergencies, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), local hospitals, medical providers, emergency medical services and other local health partners.

Somerset County, New Jersey	
Event Name	COVID-19 – Somerset County Department of Health (SCDOH) Response
Date	March 20, 2020
Time	2:00pm
Next Update	Weekly or as needed
Situation Update No.	7



**Want to know what's new? Look for the highlighted sections.**

## What is the Current Situation?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic (3/11/20). A pandemic is a disease that has become widespread around the world.
- On March 9, 2020, Governor Murphy declared a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency, allowing state agencies and departments to utilize state resources to assist affected communities responding to and recovering from COVID-19 cases.
- As of March 20, 2020 -
  - CDC is reporting a total of 15,219 cases of COVID-19 in the US, and a total of 201 deaths.
  - NJDOH is reporting a total of 890 cases and 11 deaths.
  - Somerset County has 30 cases of COVID-19. Residents can call 908-231-7111 for an automated reading of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) case count in Somerset County, NJ. Visit our website for information via our new dashboard: [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health).



## Where can I get tested?

- Governor Murphy announced the opening of a COVID-19 Community-Based Testing Site at Bergen Community College in Paramus. For more information, visit: <https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/health-promotion/2019-novel-corona-virus>.
- Contact your healthcare provider for guidance pertaining to your individual health symptoms.
- Individuals with no exposure to COVID-19 and are not experiencing symptoms, will not be tested.
- Somerset County Department of Health is working with federal and state officials to obtain and provide COVID-19 testing for residents. When testing kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) become available, this information will be made available to the public on our website, social media, and sent to all county media outlets.

## What are the current closures in NJ?

Governor Murphy announced the following closures to slow the spread of COVID-19:

Date	Closures
March 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and private preschool, elementary and secondary schools, and institutions of higher education to close beginning on March 18.</li> <li>Casinos, racetracks, theaters, gyms, non-essential retail, recreational, &amp; entertainment businesses after 8:00 PM</li> <li>Banned gatherings of 50+</li> <li>All bars and restaurants are closed for eat-in services effective 8:00 PM tonight. After 8:00 PM, these establishments may open for takeout and delivery services ONLY, until further notice.</li> <li>Campground, visitor centers, nature centers, restrooms and similar facilities at state parks, forests, recreational areas, Wildlife Management Areas and historic sites are closed until further notice.</li> <li>All non-essential and non-emergency travel in New Jersey is strongly discouraged between the hours of 8:00 PM AND 5:00 AM.</li> </ul>
March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All indoor portions of retail shopping malls and all indoor and outdoor places of public amusement in NJ</li> </ul>
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal care businesses and social clubs including: barber shops, hair salons, spas, nail and eyelash salons, tattoo parlors</li> </ul>

Somerset County facilities are closed to the public until further notice.

## How Can I Protect Myself from the New Coronavirus?

The CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. To protect yourself, you should:

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**Prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses by taking these actions:**

- Wash your hands with soap & water for at least 20 seconds
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- ➔ For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- ➔ <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/health-department/services/disease-prevention/covid-19-health-education>



### What does Law Enforcement Need to Know?

- Law enforcement personnel should follow CDC guidance to protect yourself from exposure: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>.



### What do Healthcare Professionals Need to Know?

- Report any at risk-patients and their clinical status to the local health department where the patient resides.
  - Patients should be evaluated, and the public health department contacted on a case-by-case basis if clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal (e.g., uncertain travel or exposure).
  - As the situation is evolving, please refer back to the NJDOH Surveillance Criteria and Testing for COVID-19 Protocol: [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Surveillance%20Criteria%20and%20Testing%20for%202019\\_nCoV\\_031420.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Surveillance%20Criteria%20and%20Testing%20for%202019_nCoV_031420.pdf)
  - Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>
  - If patient meets the criteria place facemask on patient, and isolate in a private room or a separate area.
- ➔ For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>
- ➔ [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_healthcare.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_healthcare.shtml)



### What do Hospitals and Medical Laboratories Need to Know?

- All U.S. hospitals need to be prepared for patients with suspected or confirmed novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).
- Information regarding recommendations for reporting, testing, specimen collection, interim healthcare infection prevention, and control recommendations for patients under investigation for COVID-19, can be obtained from CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/index.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>.
- As the situation is evolving, please refer back to the NJDOH Surveillance Criteria and Testing for COVID-19 Protocol: [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Surveillance%20Criteria%20and%20Testing%20for%202019\\_nCoV\\_031420.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Surveillance%20Criteria%20and%20Testing%20for%202019_nCoV_031420.pdf)
- Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>



### What do Schools Need to Know?

- On March 16, 2020, Governor Murphy announced that all public, private, and parochial preschool programs, and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, will be closed beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, and remain closed as long as the Order remains in effect.
- ➔ For more information: [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_schoolbusiness.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schoolbusiness.shtml)



### What do Faith-Based Communities Need to Know?

- Faith-based organizations should follow CDC guidance to help plan, prepare and respond to this emerging public health threat: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>
- Governor Murphy banned gatherings of 50 people or more. Social distancing means that you should not be in any large gatherings or groups. Be around as few people as possible. You should stay 2 arms length from each other.
- Information for your congregation and bulletins can be found at: [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health).



### What do Businesses Need to Know?

- Review your emergency plans for your company or business.
- The following interim guidance from CDC may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings.
- **As the lead agency for coordinating public health disease response, the SCDOH communicates with hospitals, laboratories, emergency responders, medical providers, schools, businesses and other community organizations to share information and improve response to public health emergencies. Representatives of these organizations are encouraged to sign up for notifications at: <http://bit.ly/SCLINCS>.**
- ➔ For more information: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html)
- ➔ [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_schoolbusiness.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schoolbusiness.shtml)

### What are the Recommendations for Travelers?



Due to the evolving situation, please check CDC’s Travel Health page for COVID-19 for the most current national/international recommendations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.



### Preparing Individuals and Communities

- Everyone should follow general guidelines for hand hygiene and for preventing disease, as noted in the “*How Can I Protect Myself from the New Coronavirus?*” section above.
- Monitor yourself and your family members for symptoms of COVID -19. Mildly ill patients should be encouraged to stay home and contact their healthcare provider by phone for guidance about clinical management. Patients who have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should seek care immediately. Older patients and individuals who have underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their physician early in the course of even mild illness.
- Social distancing means that you should not be in any large gatherings or groups. Be around as few people as possible. You should stay 2 arms length from each other.
- ➔ For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/preparing-individuals-communities.html>
- ➔ [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_community.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml)

This is a rapidly evolving situation, so everyone should keep up-to date on the most current information by regularly visiting one of these trusted public health sources:

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Get the most up-to-date information on the new coronavirus from trusted sources:



- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)
- World Health Organization [www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/)
- New Jersey Department of Health [www.nj.gov/health/](http://www.nj.gov/health/)
- Somerset County Department of Health [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health)

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**Questions about the new Coronavirus?**

**Call NJ 2-1-1**  
**1-800-962-1253**

**Text**  
**NJCOVID to 898-211**

**Email**



OR



The NJ Poison Control Center & 211 have partnered with the New Jersey Department of Health to provide information to the public on COVID-19.

Residents may contact Somerset County Department of Health at [coronavirus@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:coronavirus@co.somerset.nj.us)

The SCDOH is taking proactive preparedness precautions by monitoring the situation, enhancing disease surveillance, working with area healthcare providers, and keeping the public informed. The most up-to-date information will be made available on the SCDOH website at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health).

If you have questions on this guidance, please email [coronavirus@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:coronavirus@co.somerset.nj.us).

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