

COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

In our continued efforts to inform the residents and local businesses of Norton about the ever-evolving situation of the coronavirus pandemic, the Town of Norton has established this COVID-19 Information page. Numerous Town Officials and Departments, including the Norton [Board of Health](#), Norton [Police Department](#), Norton [Fire Department](#), Department of [Public Works](#), [Norton Public Schools](#), [Norton Emergency Management \(NEMA\)](#), the [Board of Selectmen](#), and the [Town Manager's Office](#), are in regular communication with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and are monitoring the situation closely to provide timely updates as they become necessary.

Please also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Norton Alerts](#) for important updates. You can also sign up [here](#) for emails from the Town of Norton website to receive important information.

Sign up for Massachusetts COVID-19 text alerts to get up-to-date alerts sent directly to your phone, text **COVIDMA to 888-777**.

To see the daily case report in the State of Massachusetts, click [here](#).

Status of Town Services:

In keeping with the Governor's continued emergency actions closing schools until May 4, limiting gatherings, and many more efforts to maximize social distancing and reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Norton Municipal Center and all Town Offices and are to remain closed to the public until at least May 4, 2020.

All departments are working remotely and are reachable during regular business hours via telephone, email, or US mail. Town department contact information and the status of municipal services during the COVID-19 State of Emergency can be accessed [here](#).

To review the Town of Norton Interim Inspection Policy during the COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency, please click [here](#). This policy, effective as of March 17, 2020, applies to all inspectional staff in the Building Department. The Town appreciates your continued patience and support as we all do our part together to flatten the curve and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Postponement of Annual Town Election

In response to the implications on elections due to COVID-19, the governor, on March 23, 2020, signed into law Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 "An Act granting authority to postpone 2020 municipal elections in the Commonwealth and increase voting options in response to the declaration of emergency to respond to COVID-19." After joining the Board of Selectman and the Board of Health for an emergency meeting on March 16, 2020, it was decided that the Annual Town Election scheduled for April 4, 2020, has been POSTPONED. The safety of residents and election workers is our utmost concern. We will

be meeting again in a month and will keep you updated. Thank you for your patience. More information and updates can be found [here](#).

Norton Public Schools:

Governor Baker's announced on March 25, 2020, that all public and private elementary and secondary schools and all non-emergency childcare programs will remain closed until May 4, 2020. Information from the Easton Public Schools can be found on their dedicated website <https://www.norton.k12.ma.us/>

Closure of Playgrounds and Suspension of Group Play on Fields

Please note until further notice, ALL Norton public parks are closed, including Everett Leonard and Tricentennial. Norton Parks & Recreation will send out notifications when the parks have reopened.

Following Governor Baker's Orders, athletic and recreational activities that bring participants into close physical contact are prohibited even when involving 10 or fewer people and regardless of where conducted.

We ask that families focus on outside activities such as walking, running, biking and hiking with people living in the same household as alternative options. As always, we appreciate all efforts that our residents are making together to reduce the spread of this disease. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Closure of Non-Essential Businesses:

Governor Charlie Baker issued an [emergency order](#) requiring all businesses and organizations that do not provide "COVID-19 Essential Services" to close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public as of Tuesday, March 24th at noon until Monday, May 4th. These businesses are encouraged to continue operations remotely.

- [Learn about businesses and organizations defined as providing "COVID-19 Essential Services" under Governor Baker's March 23, 2020, Emergency Order](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources and Guidance for Businesses](#)
- Any questions regarding designation as an essential business can be directed to covid19.biz@mass.gov.
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Essential Services](#).

Stay at Home Advisory

Governor Baker also directed the Department of Public Health to issue a Stay at Home Advisory: [Read the Advisory](#)

Local Business Assistance from the Small Business Administration

New loan programs for small business owners and non-profits are available under the CARES Act, including up to \$10 million under the Paycheck Protection

Program: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options>.

Suspension of Plastic Bag Ban/Reusable Bags Not Allowed

The Commissioner of Public Health has ordered that customers at grocery stores and pharmacies shall not use reusable checkout bags until further notice. Suspension of plastic bag ban/reusable bags not allowed. Please see March 25, 2020, [Pharmacy-Grocery Order](#) for more information.

Nursing Home Family Resource Line

The Nursing Home Family Resource Line is a dedicated phone line to connect family members of nursing home and rest home residents with the information and resources they need. This new phone line provides one central contact for families and community members who have questions about the nursing home or rest home care their loved one is receiving during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Nursing Home Family Resource Line is staffed from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, seven days a week, at 617-660-5399. Staff will field questions on a range of topics and coordinate across state agencies to help provide answers.

Other Helpful Resources:

The Town of Norton encourages everyone to stay informed regarding COVID-19. The following web sites are recommended for the most updated information:

- Norton Board of Health: <https://www.nortonma.org/board-health>
- Town of Norton Official Website: www.nortonma.org
- Norton Media Center: <https://www.nortonmediacenter.org/>
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/covid-19
- Massachusetts 2-1-1 general COVID-19 information: [Click here](#) or dial 2-1-1 (24/7)
- United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- [Local Business Assistance from the SBA](#)
- Support Local Businesses
[Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce](#)

Questions about Coronavirus?

If you or your family develop symptoms consistent with COVID 19, you should contact your primary care physician to discuss the next steps including possible testing. The test must be ordered by a physician.

If you have a specific question you need to ask, the [Mass 211](#) call center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [Mass 211](#) is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community. It serves as a resource for finding government benefits and services, nonprofit organizations, support groups, volunteer opportunities, donation programs, and other local resources. Always a confidential call, Mass 211 maintains the integrity of the 9-1-1 system saving that vital community resource for life and death emergencies.

Coronavirus: Managing Anxiety and Stress

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. [The CDC website has resources on how to manage anxiety and stress.](#)

[Additional resources can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.](#) The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Call **1-800-985-5990** or text **TalkWithUs to 66746** to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

Social Distancing

We cannot reiterate how important social distancing is to slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Social distancing is the act of limiting human contact and increasing the physical space (approximately 6 feet) between people to help slow the spread of disease.

Social distancing includes the following:

- Stay 6 feet away from people
- Cancel mass gatherings
- Work from home
- Stay home as much as possible

Why is this so important?

COVID-19 seems to be transmitted by close contact, inhalation of droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your face, mouth or nose. **Even people who don't feel sick and have no symptoms can be infected and spread the virus.** Distance will help minimize the chance of spreading the virus to others. Please remember that we all have a role in lowering the curve of the number of positive cases moving forward. We are all in this together.

Currently, Governor Baker has several orders in place requiring social distancing. Gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people, elementary and secondary schools are closed and all non-essential businesses must cease in-person operations. These actions will help, but we ALL must do our part by following the orders and practicing social distancing to the best of our ability:

- DO NOT gather outside in large groups. It has been observed around town that large groups of adolescents are congregating. Adolescents are also at risk of contracting COVID-19. Even with mild or no symptoms, people can pass the disease to others. Restricting access to school buildings will have little impact on public health if these best practices are not followed in good faith.
- Go outside to exercise but stay 6 feet away from others not in your household.
- Visit with friends virtually using online apps.
- Check out electronic resources available at the Norton Public [Library](#).
- Get take out from a local restaurant. To be extra safe, when you get home with your food, take it out of the containers, throw those out, and then wash your hands thoroughly before eating.
- Museums are offering free online tours.
- Musicians are live streaming shows.

PLEASE we cannot emphasize enough how important it is to follow these social distancing recommendations. Even people who don't feel sick and have no symptoms can be infected and spread the virus.