



## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

City Hall, 258 Main Street  
Oneonta, NY 13820-2589

Phone: 607.432.6450  
Fax: 607.433.3420  
Internet Address:  
[www.oneonta.ny.us/cityclerk](http://www.oneonta.ny.us/cityclerk)  
E-Mail Address:  
[cityinfo@oneonta.ny.us](mailto:cityinfo@oneonta.ny.us)

### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT: City Clerk's Office  
Phone: (607) 432-6450

March 13, 2020

#### City of Oneonta Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advisory

"The Coronavirus presents a real threat to our community, our country, and our world", states Oneonta Mayor Gary Herzig. "The severity of this pandemic can only be minimized by all communities acting locally to mitigate the spread of this virus. Here in the City of Oneonta, we owe it to ourselves, our neighbors and our fellow New Yorkers to voluntarily implement social distancing measures in all group activities. For this reason, the City of Oneonta now issues an advisory to all Organizations (e.g. places of worship, gathering spaces, social clubs, gyms, business meetings, cultural events, performances etc.) that they should immediately implement measures for social distancing, which may include temporarily suspending services or activities, and/or limiting the maximum allowed attendance or occupancy. This advisory will take effect immediately and will be in place until March 27th at which time it will be re-evaluated. While we understand that this may cause significant inconvenience and negative economic impact, the result of not acting could be significantly more serious. The City of Oneonta has always been a caring community and there is no better time than today to demonstrate this".

The City of Oneonta has established a work group, consisting of key personnel, elected officials, and the City's Health Officer, to coordinate the City's response and preparedness for the impact of COVID-19 on our community. The group has been meeting regularly, and communicates daily to keep abreast of the latest updates and developments. As of this afternoon, I wanted to update you on the important measures the City has put into place and steps we have taken to ensure that we are mitigating the impact of COVID-19, as well as efforts families and individuals can take to help protect themselves and our community.

- Our primary focus remains to be continuity of essential public services.
- We have been working with department heads, Town of Oneonta officials, the Otsego County Department of Health, local schools, representatives from both Hartwick College and SUNY Oneonta, healthcare organizations, and the NYS Governor's Office to discuss and plan for the impact of COVID-19 on our employees, residents, and visitors.

- City employees have been advised of best practices to prevent the spread of colds, flu, and COVID-19. In addition, we have increased the frequency and methods for sanitizing City facilities, including common surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, handrails, bathrooms, counters), as well as buses and bus stops.
- The Oneonta Fire Department (OFD) continues to follow CDC guidelines to make ambulance transportation safe for both patients and crew. OFD continues to work with the Otsego County Office of Emergency Services to coordinate our response to the potential for an increase in calls for service related to COVID-19.
- The Oneonta Police Department (OPD) promotes CDC guidelines on preventive hygiene, and has increased situational awareness in responding to calls. Both our police and fire departments continue to work together to ensure a coordinated emergency response to any calls for service.
- At this time, Oneonta Public Transit continues to run on a largely normal schedule, including paratransit. Minor route modifications due to the extended college break will be published.
- The City will follow the Governor's recommended guidelines in regards to public events and meetings. Specifically, all non-urgent meetings of City Boards and Commissions have been cancelled for the month of March. All Common Council meetings will be live-streamed through Facebook Live; the public is strongly encouraged to attend remotely. Check the City's website or social media for the most up to date information in regards to meeting cancellations.
- All recreational activities on City property are cancelled until further notice. This includes all events held at the Armory (Teen Center, Little League, Blendos basketball, etc.).
- We are updating the City's website to include a page dedicated to the unfolding COVID-19 situation, including important information on the City's continued response, as well as additional information and resources from community partners and other organizations. Additionally, you will receive a special alert (combination of phone, email, or text) via the City's community messaging platform, Nixle, with information on subscribing to a newly created distribution list for COVID-19 updates. By voluntarily opting in to receive periodic alerts, you will be kept up to date on the most current information available from the City. If you have difficulty subscribing, please contact the City Clerk's office at (607) 432-6450, or [cityinfo@oneonta.ny.us](mailto:cityinfo@oneonta.ny.us).

In addition to the City's efforts, there are many things you can do to help protect our community from the spread of illness, as well as to be prepared for its impacts. These steps include:

- Continue with good preventive hygiene, including washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before you eat. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue and then discard the tissue in a closed container. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects in your home (including your cell phone). Stay home from work or school when you are sick.

- Prepare as you would for a winter storm, including purchasing some extra foods like canned goods, dry pasta, and peanut butter. Have soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, and fever reducing medications on hand.
- Be prepared for changes in daily schedules, including making plans for childcare due to the temporary school closure.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding mass gatherings and by keeping a distance of at least six feet between yourself and others when possible.
- Stay informed through reliable sources, including the New York State Department of Health, CDC, Otsego County Department of Health, and the City of Oneonta.

Although there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the City of Oneonta or Otsego County at the time of this release, it is imperative that we exercise an abundance of caution by adopting precautionary measures. During this health event, it is important to remain calm, use common sense, and stay informed. The City of Oneonta remains committed to keeping you informed, safe and healthy.