Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Driver and Vehicle Services

Emergency Communication Networks

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Minnesota State Patrol

Office of Communications

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Pipeline Safety

Office of Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SEOC Update #7: Minnesotans Who Want to Help Are Encouraged to Visit the State Emergency Operations Center Website

ST. PAUL — Minnesotans looking to help during the COVID-19 outbreak can visit the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) website for a list of ways they can take action. The website includes information for businesses that would like to offer resources as well as individuals looking to donate supplies or volunteer.

Staff from state agencies and volunteer organizations continue working to keep Minnesotans safe and coordinate efforts to provide essential services and information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated to support state agencies with their COVID-19 response following Gov. Tim Walz's executive order issuing a Peacetime State of Emergency in response to the pandemic.

SEOC continues coordination and planning

The SEOC continues to be fully activated and staff from all state agencies, along with volunteer organizations, are working either physically or virtually. The SEOC is:

- Facilitating the delivery of 22 personal protective equipment (PPE) orders to locations across Minnesota.
- Requesting ventilators from the Strategic National Stockpile and working to find ventilators from other sources around the country.
- Working with the Salvation Army in the Twin Cities to distribute donated PPE. They are also working with the Salvation Army in Duluth to set up a PPE drop off site in the area (this is in the planning phase and no details are available).
- Continuing to field questions to the hotline regarding business and school closures and child care. Staff from the departments of Education and Human Services are answering calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at either 651-297-1304 or 800-657-3504.
    - The hotline received 752 calls on Wednesday. Callers are mostly asking questions related to unemployment. Calls about school and childcare issues are waning.

Here are today's updates and actions from state agencies and volunteer organizations:

Today's increase of 59 cases in Minnesota represents largest jump yet

Global/National Update

- Worldwide: 510,108 cases and 22,000 deaths.
- U.S.: Approximately 70,000 cases (NY: 37,258; NJ: 4,407; CA: 3,247; WA: 2,600) and over 1,000 deaths.

Minnesota Update

- Total of 346 lab-confirmed cases in Minnesota – up 59 cases from March 25.
    - 2 reported deaths; both Ramsey County residents in their 80s.
    - Since the start of the outbreak, 41 patients in Minnesota have been hospitalized.
    - 31 patients currently hospitalized; the rest are recovering at home.
    - See the latest situation report on the Minnesota Department of Health's website.
- 1,799 calls to the MDH public hotline March 25. The public hotline is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The number is 651-201-3920.

Federal REAL ID enforcement deadline extended to Oct. 1, 2021

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is extending the REAL ID full enforcement deadline to Oct. 1, 2021. The deadline was originally set for Oct 1, 2020, but is being delayed by one year due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
    - "The federal, state and local response to the spread of the Coronavirus here in the United States necessitates a delay in this deadline," Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf said in a statement. "Our state and local partners are working tirelessly with the Administration to flatten the curve and, therefore, we want to remove any impediments to response and recovery efforts."
    - Many Driver and Vehicle Services exam stations, deputy registrar and driver's license agent offices have closed or limited services due to COVID-19 concerns.

Minnesota State Patrol: Crashes, DWI arrests down statewide

- The Minnesota State Patrol has seen a significant reduction since March 17 in traffic on our roads, which has led to a reduced number of DWIs and crashes.
    - By the numbers March 17-26:

	2019	2020
DWIs	204	88
Crashes	762	389

Latest numbers: traffic volumes remain significantly decreased from same time last year

The Minnesota Department of Transportation continues to monitor traffic volumes.

- Traffic volumes were down 32 percent statewide March 25 compared with Wednesday averages for March 2019.
- In the Twin Cities metro area: Traffic volumes on March 25 were down 37 percent from Wednesday averages for March 2019.

Pollution Control Agency issues safety warnings

In response to recent reports of hospitalizations due to poisonings related to mercury thermometers and mixing household cleaning chemicals, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) has issued the following safety warnings:

- Do not mix household cleaners of different types together and do not mix any household cleaner with bleach. Use only one cleaner at a time and rinse surfaces thoroughly between using different chemicals on them.
- Use only non-mercury thermometers, as mercury thermometers are easily dropped and broken, creating contamination problems in homes. To find your local household hazardous waste collection site for disposal of mercury thermometers, visit the PCA's website.

Healthy Minnesotans are helping patients in need

- Thank you to all Minnesotans, including members of the Minnesota National Guard, who have stepped up to help the American Red Cross Minnesota Region keep blood on the shelves for every day patients in need here and across the country during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Because of the remarkable response, the Red Cross has downgraded the current need from severe to critical. The need for blood is constant, and patients will need your life saving gift in the weeks ahead. If you don't see available appointments in the near future, please be sure to search 7-15 days out at redcrossblood.org.
- During the state's Stay at Home Order, people affected by disasters, including home fires, the most common disaster, can rely on Red Cross disaster relief to continue. Disaster financial assistance and other resources like health and mental health services will be provided over the phone.

Grocers, agribusinesses with questions can email the Department of Agriculture

- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has established an email address for grocers, agribusinesses, stakeholders, and the public to submit questions about continuation of dairy, meat, and food safety and inspection services.

All motorcycle training courses canceled through April 12

The Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center (MMSC) is canceling all motorcycle training courses through April 12 at training sites statewide. Riders who have registered for these

courses will be contacted by the training site for refund or rescheduling information. The MMSC will provide additional information if cancellations expand beyond April 12.

Fire marshal starts social media campaign to help families stay fire-safe

The SFMD has started a social media series called “Stay Home, Stay Safe” that focuses on what families can do while spending time together at home to keep their homes-fire safe. The series will also include activities for families with children. You can find the posts on the SFMD Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Adjustment to BCA fingerprinting services

Fingerprinting services at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) are by appointment, and for critical positions only, effective until further notice. The BCA has made this temporary change to help ensure social distancing for members of the public and BCA fingerprinting staff.

Consumer alert: Financial institutions labeled as critical, banks and credit unions to remain open

This alert from the Minnesota Department of Commerce joins a number of other recent consumer alerts from the department providing relevant updates and suggestions for the public on ways to avoid scams and unscrupulous individuals in this time of uncertainty. Points noted in this consumer alert include:

- Minnesota banks, credit unions and other related financial institutions will remain open under Gov. Walz’s Stay Home Executive Order.
- Commerce Commissioner Steve Kelley clarifies that financial institutions, including banks and credit unions, are identified as critical sectors in the economy.
- Money in a bank or credit union is secure.
- Deposits are secured through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) for banks, and the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) for credit Unions.
- Consumers are urged to work with their financial institution, bank or credit union on any financial concerns they may have.

Consumer alerts are on the Minnesota Department of Commerce’s website.

Bars, restaurants violating executive order could face criminal, civil penalties

- On-site sale operations in Minnesota bars and restaurants are closed until at least May 1 at 5 p.m., per Gov. Walz’s executive order. Delivery and curbside take-out services are permitted, as allowed by license.
    - Many restaurants and bars must obtain two licenses: One from the state and one from the municipality in which they are located.
    - Both local and state regulatory agencies may investigate violations of the executive order. Local law enforcement may be sent to a place of business to investigate any complaints.
    - Businesses that fail to cooperate or have documented violations will be reported to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Alcohol Gambling Enforcement Division. Refusal to comply with the order may result in criminal or civil penalties.
    - Tribal properties are sovereign and exempt from this executive order.