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 #6: Gov. Walz Orders Minnesotans to Stay Home Starting at 11:59 p.m. Friday

State Agencies, Volunteer Organizations Continue Coordinating Efforts to Provide Essential Services, Important Information to Minnesotans

ST. PAUL — Gov. Tim Walz announced today that he is ordering Minnesotans to stay home Friday, March 27 at 11:59 p.m. until Friday, April 10 to help limit the spread of COVID-19 so the state's health care system is prepared to care for those who fall critically ill. The Governor is also extending the closure of schools until May 4 and bars and restaurants until May 1. Details are on the Governor's website.

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. 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 staffing the SEOC either physically or virtually.

- The SEOC is helping the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) public-private partnership group with planning and logistics related to the health care response to COVID-19.
- The SEOC is working to determine commercial impacts, business interruptions and potential public-private partnerships for COVID-19 response.
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) regional coordinators are supporting local jurisdictions, emergency managers and partners.
- The SEOC hotline continues fielding questions 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.
- HSEM regional coordinators are in touch daily with emergency managers from all 87 Minnesota counties and well as tribes in the state.

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

Lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases up 25 from yesterday; 26 currently hospitalized

Global/National Update

- Worldwide: 438,000 cases and 19,600 deaths.
- U.S.: 55,243 (NY: 26,376; NJ: 3,675; CA: 2,628; WA: 2,400) and 802 deaths.

Minnesota Update

- Total of 287 lab-confirmed cases in Minnesota – up 25 cases from March 24.
  - Since the start of the outbreak, 35 patients in Minnesota have been hospitalized.
  - 26 patients currently hospitalized, 12 in the ICU; the rest are recovering at home.
- 1,430 calls to the MDH public hotline March 24. The public hotline is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The number is 651-201-3920.
- 719,000 visits to MDH COVID-19 website on March 24.

Worker protection information updated to include Families First Coronavirus Response Act

- Information about Minnesota's worker protections related to COVID-19 now includes details about the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which was recently signed into law.
- FFCRA requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded families and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.
- The worker protections document also contains information regarding sick leave, family medical leave, discrimination, reporting health concerns at work, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation.
- View the worker protection information online.

State Patrol troopers deliver personal protective equipment to three locations

- State Patrol troopers delivered person protective equipment today to medical facilities in St. Paul, Stillwater and Detroit Lakes. The quick delivery from the Minnesota Department of Health warehouse in St. Paul to these locations will help keep health care professionals and patients safe.

School fire inspections continue, fire marshal warns about transporting gasoline in unapproved containers

- The Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) has heard from fire departments across the state that there is an uptick in people using unapproved containers to transport and store gasoline. SFMD fire code specialists have developed an information sheet about how to safely dispense gas into portable containers.
- SFMD school inspections continue with staff using best practices for their safety and the safety of school staff. Fewer students and staff in the schools allows SFMD inspectors to see the school in its normal setup, visit most all spaces and ensure that the schools are fire-safe when students return.

Don't flush your disposable wipes

- With the COVID-19 outbreak, many people have stocked up on staples like toilet paper, leading to a shortage in some places. This shortage may cause consumers to use alternative products such as paper towels, facial tissues, baby wipes, disposable wipes, and other similar items. These products — even those labeled "flushable" — do not break down like toilet paper and can clog pipes, leading to sewer backups and costly repairs.
- Please don't flush items other than toilet paper down the toilet. Place wipes and other products in the trash instead.
- This guidance applies to consumers in cities with municipal systems and those in rural areas with on-site sewer systems.
- Read more about the problem with wipes.

Traffic volumes continue to be lower than this time last year

The Minnesota Department of Transportation continues to monitor traffic volumes.

- Traffic volumes were down 29 percent statewide March 24 compared with Tuesday averages for March 2019.
- In the Twin Cities metro area: Traffic volumes on March 24 were down 35 percent from Tuesday averages for March 2019.
- Statewide: Traffic volumes for March 24 were down 18 percent from the most previous Tuesday (March 17, 2020).

Consumer Alert: Minnesota consumers warned not to borrow from unlicensed online lenders.

This alert from the Minnesota Department of Commerce joins a number of other recent consumer alerts providing reminders and suggestions for the public on ways to avoid scams and unscrupulous individuals as this time of uncertainty. Tips noted in this unlicensed lender consumer alert include:

- Verify the lender is licensed in Minnesota. Consumers can verify a license online.
- If a lender does not have a license, don't do business with them.
- Read the fine print.
- Consider alternatives such as a loan from your local bank or credit union.
- Contact a local credit counseling service.

View consumer alerts from the Minnesota Department of Commerce online.

MPCA extends Line 3 comment period

- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on March 24 announced it is extending the public comment period for the Enbridge Line 3 project to Friday, April

10. The original deadline for the draft air and NPDES permits and 401 certification was April 3. The extended comment period will still allow the MPCA to review and respond to all public comments and meet the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's current Aug. 15 deadline.

- In addition to extending the comment period, the MPCA announced new public comment opportunities that include three 90-minute statewide telephone town hall meetings.

Red Cross blood collection, disaster relief will continue

- Giving blood is considered an essential community service. As part of our state's and our nation's critical infrastructure, healthy individuals can still donate with the American Red Cross Minnesota Region during a shelter in place declaration.
- To help with the flow of blood donors in alignment with social distancing practices, the Red Cross is asking donors to make an appointment at redcrossblood.org before showing up to donate in the coming weeks.
- Red Cross disaster relief will continue during a shelter in place declaration, including financial assistance and other resources like health and mental health services which can be provided over the phone.