



Town of New Canaan, Connecticut

Good Afternoon,

It is 3:45 pm on March 11th and this is Mike Handler with an important update on the novel coronavirus. All of New Canaan's public safety agencies have been working continuously, under a unified command structure, to review emergency operations plans in response to the spread of the novel coronavirus in our region and throughout the United States. As positive tests have been confirmed in neighboring communities, we have been preparing for the eventuality that New Canaan would have its first confirmed case. We now have confirmation from the State Department of Health of New Canaan's first positive case of COVID-19. This individual is receiving appropriate care and our thoughts are with the patient and the patient's family.

As is standard protocol, our team is already coordinating with the State to diligently trace all potential individuals this patient may have had contact with during the presumed incubation period. As per the CDC guidance any individuals who have been in direct contact with this patient will be notified and placed on a fourteen day at-home self-monitoring protocol with public health supervision and they will be medically monitored remotely by our local health director.

We have been preparing for this and want to carefully detail the impact that this will have on our community and the rationale behind our decisions. Please keep at the forefront of your minds that while information is rapidly changing and events are dynamically unfolding, our emergency operations plans continue to provide a strong backbone for our response.

What does this mean for New Canaan?

Schools

All New Canaan Public Schools will close on Thursday, March 12, 2020 and will remain closed for a minimum of 14 calendar days. School Superintendent Dr. Bryan Luizzi will be implementing their continuity of education plan so that classroom instruction can continue remotely. Information on the plan, including e-learning, will be communicated by the district directly to students and parents. Country Day School, St. A's and St. Luke's will close and follow the Public Schools. All Pre-School programs will be sharing their plans directly with their families.

Why are our schools being closed?

We have NO information that the individual who is presumed to have tested positive for COVID-19 had any direct contact with any school staff members or students. However,

thorough contact tracing will take several days to complete. What we do know is that COVID-19 is present in our community and our objective is to slow down the viral spread.

What else is being closed?

Public buildings such as the Lapham Community Center will close to the public. The New Canaan Library will close and follow the Public School procedures until further notice. We will provide updates on these closures periodically. Town Hall will be open for limited hours for essential services only. Please call (203) 594-3000 in advance of arriving at Town Hall.

What are we asking the community to do?

While this is not yet a situation where we are ordering mass self-isolation or quarantine, we are asking that you avoid large gatherings and to maintain appropriate social distancing of at least six feet. We are encouraging individuals to stay home as much as possible to reduce their personal risk of being exposed, but also to limit the spread of the virus. Continue to follow www.cdc.gov guidelines with respect to hand-washing, finding alternative ways to greet people and hard surface cleaning. Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. If you are over the age of 65 and/or have any underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, HIV, cancer treatment or any other immune deficiency the CDC urges you to significantly reduce human contact as much as possible. We are asking all residents to limit travel.

All pertinent information regarding the novel coronavirus can be found at the CDC website, www.cdc.gov. I would encourage everyone to regularly get updated information directly from this CDC site, as things are evolving rapidly. We continue to follow our emergency operations plans, and will swiftly adapt them should any new information or guidance become available.

If you are sick and require emergent medical attention, please call 911. We ask that you be patient and answer all of the dispatcher's questions so that we may appropriately and safely serve your needs. In certain instances where appropriate, you may be advised to self-transport to the hospital. In these instances, we will make certain that the appropriate receiving hospital is notified in advance of your arrival so that they may take all necessary precautions. If you are sick and do not require immediate medical attention, please contact your personal healthcare provider via telephone and discuss your needs, as appropriate.

The Emergency Operations Center will continue to be operational. We will share updates as new information becomes available via the Town's Outcall System and Facebook at facebook.com/newcanaanoem/. All information is being posted to the Town's website at www.newcanaan.info under the COVID-19, CORONAVIRUS link. Additionally, you may reach the State of Connecticut information line by calling 211. Please call (203) 594-4100 with any questions or concerns and reserve 911 for true life-threatening emergencies.

We know that this is unsettling and affecting all of us differently. Taking care of each other is our first priority.

Thank you,

Mike Handler

Emergency Management Director