



March 18, 2020

Dear Residents, Property Owners, and Friends:

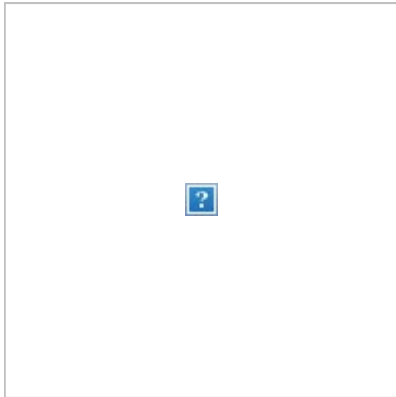
Our country has been drastically affected by COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). The Village of Bald Head Island is not protected from these impacts. A few weeks ago, we were preparing for island visitors and property owners to “kick-off” the summer season. In short, that has changed. We are now considering methods to keep our island safe. There will be hard choices in the coming days, weeks, and perhaps months. Rest assured, we have truly dedicated staff willing to work tirelessly to get us through this period.

Yesterday, I was made aware of an individual that visited the island, who had

close contact with a healthcare worker who had been providing care for a positive COVID-19 patient. Both the healthcare worker and the close contact have been tested for COVID-19 and the results are pending. As an added precaution, I provided the details to Brunswick County Health Services for follow-up. Based on guidance provided by Brunswick County Health Services, the impact on those who were in contact with the visitor is considered “no” to “low” risk. If deemed necessary by Brunswick County Health Services, Health Services will follow-up if the visitor is positive for COVID-19. Federal and North Carolina laws place a significant emphasis on protecting the individual’s identity and health status.

The Village has undertaken steps to reduce our footprint on the transportation system and the island as a whole. We will be working to maintain normal levels of service during this time of uncertainty. However, as would be expected there will be some glitches that will need to be resolved. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to reach out by phone or email. Our Public Information Officer will answer you as promptly as possible at (910) 457-9700 ext. 1025 or cfaulkner@villagebhi.org.

Respectfully,



Jeff Griffin

Assistant Village Manager

As Mr. Griffin indicated, Village officials continue to take proactive steps and following County, State, and Federal guidelines regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Here is a summary of the status of operations for Village departments:

Village Hall/Administration:

Village staff who can work remotely will not be coming to the island daily. For

utility payments, please use the drop box outside, or pay online.

Utilities & Public Works:

Staff is transitioning to alternate work schedules which will limit travel on the ferry. Essential staff will be available to meet any emergent needs.

Development Services:

Development services staff will be conducting inspections by appointment only.

Public Safety:

Public Safety, as always, will be staffed 24/7. Protocols are in place to respond to COVID-19 related issues. The Village is working to ensure that equipment is well stocked to protect staff from exposure. If you have an emergency, please dial 911.

If you are on Bald Head Island and are [symptomatic](#) and have been told by a physician that you need to be tested, please call 911. As always, tell the 911 operator that you are on Bald Head Island. This will ensure that if you are symptomatic and in need of testing that Public Safety can coordinate your care with the least amount of exposure to others. If you think you are sick, please do not come directly to the Public Safety building.

Information from Brunswick County

Brunswick County has released the following information about understanding your risk for COVID-19:

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RISK

We recognize that the novel coronavirus is a stressful and concerning situation for our residents. During situations like these, it is important to seek out the most up-to-date and accurate information about the virus from the CDC, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) and Brunswick County to prevent the spread of rumors or misconceptions about the virus.

The County takes the novel coronavirus seriously and has prepared for its potential impacts for the past two months. We encourage our residents to remain calm and to remember that people who have confirmed COVID-19 and are in isolation, and people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and are self-monitoring, are **doing the right thing** and helping to protect their communities.

If you believe you might have come into contact with someone who was diagnosed with coronavirus, here is how you can determine your risk for contracting the virus:

· **No Risk:** Briefly walking by a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and was not experiencing symptoms

· **Low Risk:** Being in the same room as a person who tested positive for COVID-19, had symptoms and you were within six feet

· **Medium Risk:** Sustained close contact (10 minutes or longer) within six feet of a person with COVID-19 while they had symptoms

· **High Risk:** Close household contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 According to the CDC, individuals at high risk of becoming ill from coronavirus include older adults and individuals with serious chronic or long-term medical conditions.

At this time, novel coronavirus is currently not widespread in Brunswick County and is still considered a low risk.

This is an evolving situation and the County's leadership and Health and Human Services team are monitoring it day by day and maintaining regular communications with our local and state partners to provide residents with the most current information.

FAQ

The following are some answers to some frequently asked questions that the Village has received:

Should I travel to Bald Head Island? The Village highly recommends that individuals review the recommendations of the CDC, NC DHHS, and Brunswick County. The most recent recommendations provided by the CDC in its [15 Days to Slow the Spread guidelines](#) indicate that young, or otherwise healthy individuals are still at risk and can increase the risk for others and suggests that individuals avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips, and social visits.

What do I need to do if I feel symptoms of COVID-19? Everyone should be monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. According to the CDC after 2-14 days of exposure they are:

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**

If you have symptoms, before going anywhere, you should contact your primary care provider. If you are on Bald Head Island and you are told you need to be tested for COVID-19, please call 911 and tell the operator you are on Bald Head Island. This will ensure that if you are symptomatic and in need of testing that Public Safety can coordinate your care with the least amount of exposure to others. If you think you are sick, please do not come directly to the

Public Safety building.

I'm already on Bald Head Island, what can I do? If you are not in a high-risk group, are not symptomatic or under quarantine, you should follow the recommendations provided by the CDC regarding social distancing. Going outside is fine as long as you are keeping your distance from others (fishing, walking the beach, riding bikes, etc.). Since all North Carolina bars and restaurants have been closed to dining, you can still get food from establishments that are offering take out and curbside service. If you need other items, some retail stores are still open (call ahead). Some places are closed such as Old Baldy and Smith Island Museum, the Bald Head Island Conservancy (except for the Fleming Education building), and the Village Chapel (services are suspended for at least the next two weeks – March 22 and 29). Several events and activities have been canceled, please check with the organizer for more information. Traveling off and then back on the island is not recommended if it is not necessary.

What if there is a case of COVID-19 on Bald Head Island? As with anywhere in the United States, if someone tests positive for COVID-19 or any reportable communicable disease, this is reported to county health services. A member of the health services team in the reporting county will follow-up with the positive patient. With COVID-19, the positive patient will be quarantined. The patient will be asked questions about who they were in contact with and where, the timing of their symptoms, etc. and a member of the health services team will notify the people they were in contact with if they should also be quarantined. The “contacts of the contact” would not be quarantined, but like everyone, should still be following all of the recommendations of the CDC, NC DHHS, and Brunswick County to prevent the spread of the virus and monitor for symptoms. **PLEASE NOTE:** Information about individual communicable disease cases and contacts are usually not disclosed publicly, or to a subset potentially affected by the disease, or to Village officials. If information is released, it will be disclosed to the public via county health services. Information that is shared with the public can and will be distributed by the Village if it affects Bald Head Island.

Was there an emergency meeting of the Council and how do I find out about these? There has been one emergency meeting of the Council since the COVID-19 outbreak to-date (Monday, March 16, 2020) and information from this meeting was reported in the last Village Voice issue on 3/16. Village Staff and elected officials have participated in conference calls with Brunswick County daily. If more than two Council members are participating in a call, members are separated to prevent having a quorum (as to not be considered an open meeting). All special meetings and emergency meetings are required to be noticed to the public. Village Clerk posts notices on the bulletin boards and sends the notices to the “Sunshine List.” This is an email distribution list maintained by the Village Clerk to send all public notices. If you would like to be on the Sunshine List, please email the Daralyn Spivey, Village Clerk at dspivey@villagebhi.org. Please put Sunshine List in the subject line.

Will there still be a Council meeting on Friday? Yes, the Council meeting will still take place. To minimize contact, the regular meeting will immediately

follow the work session instead of starting at 2:30 p.m. Those who wish to attend the regular meeting should arrive at 9:45 a.m. There will be limited seating available in the meeting room to maintain social distance for attendees. A call-in number will be posted on the Village website. A link to this information will be sent via another Village's Voice and to the Sunshine List. Those who wish to submit public comments in place of attending can send their comments to the Village Clerk. Comments will be added to the agenda packet.

If you have any questions or concerns about COVID-19 you can contact Brunswick County's Health Call Line and email dedicated to coronavirus (1-910-253-2339 or coronavirus@brunswickcountync.gov) North Carolina's Coronavirus Helpline at 1-866-462-3821.

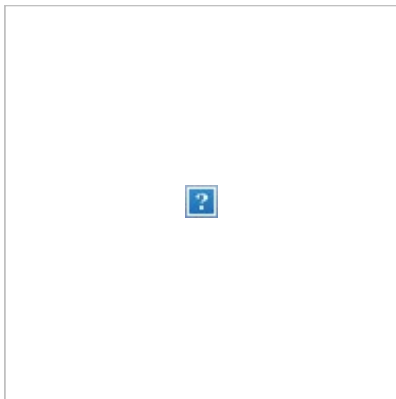
For more information about novel coronavirus go to the following websites:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus

www.brunswickcountync.gov/coronavirus

Thank you,



Carin Z. Faulkner

Village Public Information Officer

cfaulkner@villagebhi.org

(910) 457-9700 ext. 1025