

## **Frequently Asked Questions from Community Briefings**

**(last updated April 6, 2020)**

Q: What does shelter in place mean?

A: The phrase ‘shelter in place’ is generally viewed as a more rigorous form of social distancing and means to stay in your home and not leave unless necessary for one of the designated exceptions such as:

- Engaging in or performing tasks essential to health and safety, or the health and safety of family/household members. This includes pets. Examples include picking up medicine, visiting a doctor or getting supplies to work from home. This means making a trip to the pharmacy, your doctor, swinging by your office to get supplies so you can work from home, etc.
- Obtaining necessary supplies or to deliver supplies to others.
- Grocery shopping, curbside pick-up, pharmacy visits, medical supply store visits and the like.
- Going for a run, hike or other outdoor activity, if proper social distancing is observed. Walking your dog.
- To care for a family member or pet in another household
- To perform work at an essential business (see below) or perform minimum basic operations

Q: Does shelter in place prevent someone from visiting my home or me leaving my home to visit someone else?

A: The purpose of sheltering in place is to limit contact with others. It’s not a law that can be enforced but by not acting responsibly and limiting trips out of your home or bringing people you haven’t been with regularly; you increase the chance of the virus spreading. The Town cannot enforce the limitation of visitors to your home.

Q: Why did you close the beaches?

A: The intent of closing the public beaches was to send a public message to create awareness about the seriousness of COVID-19 and that the Town is being proactive in its response. The goal is prevent the spread on our public beach areas (midtown, Phipps Park, etc) where we were experiences large crowds of young people that are

here for spring break for the next month and ignoring CDC recommendations as it relates to social distancing and large gatherings.

Q: Why can't Palm Beach require the adjacent communities near us to close their beaches in the interest of public safety?

A: Palm Beach does not have the jurisdiction to do so.

Q: Can I leave the island for a flight or trip?

A: Yes

Q: What is the rule for gardeners, contractors, personal house staff? They are still everywhere, all over town. Can they continue as they have, even within the town wide state of emergency situation?

A: Yes. Until an order from either the Federal or State Government, they are permitted.

Q: What type of guest access should condos implement during this health crisis? In my condo, the management feels that the number of guests that condo owners/renters have cannot legally be controlled even in this critical health crisis.

A: Your condo management is correct. The Town cannot legally enforce visitation rules for your condo. The Association Board could modify their existing rules. A guide for multi-unit dwellings is available here: <https://www.townofpalmbeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/12462/Communityaction-plan-for-condos-part-2-APA-Upgrades>

Q: Why can't I know who has COVID-19 – especially if they live in my building?

A: The job of our Emergency Services Team is to transport the patient to the hospital. We cannot violate HIPPA laws by disclosing names or addresses. The hospital then calls the Dept. of Health with the information and the response is up to the epidemiology team for any follow up.

Q: Will construction continue on the island? Under what circumstance would construction cease?

A: Yes, construction will continue unless there is an issuance from the Federal or State Government that states otherwise.

Q: Are the 'private' beaches open for residents?

A: Yes

Q: What can be done about people coming over from West Palm and other areas to use the bike trail?

A: You can't differentiate who is from where on the bike trail. Practice social distancing!

Q: Would there ever be a situation where there would be check points set up so it would be resident and essential personnel access only to the Island?

A: At this time, the Town does not envision that.

Q: There are concerns over the Country Clubs remaining open. Would they have to close now that there is an essential business only order?

A: Most of the Country Clubs have closed. The Town cannot mandate a private country club to close.

Q: Now that the Governor's Essential Business only order has been issued, does this mean construction is not permitted?

A: The Town has no statutory authority to restrict business.

Q: Will the post office on the island stay open?

A: Please visit the USPS website for updated statements but currently, the post office anticipates remaining open.

Q: Will Fed Ex continue delivery?

A: According to the FedEx website, they are delivering.

Q: If someone is picked up at home with suspected Covid-19 infection, where are they taken? Does one have a choice?

A: EMS will provide transport to the hospital that can provide appropriate care.

Q: Before and after a hurricane you can lock down the island. How come the Island hasn't been locked down for this incident?

A: A hurricane is different in that we must control access to the island for public safety. The roadways are hazardous with debris. If people are entering the roadway before we are able to assess the situation and make the roads passable it is very dangerous. Also, in an effort to protect property, access to the island is restricted.  
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Q: If someone feels like they have symptoms, what should they do? In what order? Personal physician first?

A: Anyone experience severe symptoms like shortness of breath should call 911. Otherwise, call your physician. They may instruct you to call Department of Health or an Urgent Care. An excellent option is to use telehealth or a virtual physician program if you have access to that.

Q: Now that the Governor's Essential Business only order has been issued, does this mean construction is not permitted?

A: The Town of Palm Beach does not have the statutory authority to close any business. The Governor's executive order lists businesses that would be considered non-essential. We strongly recommend business owners who are not listed on the essential list to seriously evaluate the necessity of remaining open and serving patrons. The only way to stop the spread is to limit person-to-person contact and any business that remains open contributes to the spread.

Q: Can dogs spread COVID-19?

A: There have been several articles that suggest COVID-19 can be transferred between dogs and humans.

Q: What defines a private beach as it relates to the mean high tide line?

A: The mean high tide line is the erosion line, anything above the erosion line is private. Anything below the erosion line is considered public.

This week the Police Department had a high call volume reporting groups gathering on public beaches, the police department did respond to the calls and asked those on the beach to leave.

Q: If you have a boat at a private dock, can you take it out?

A: Yes, if you have a boat on a private dock you may use it, but please keep in mind there are restrictions on county owned land such as peanut island, which it closed at this point in time.

Q: Will there be an announcement at some point in regard to hotels staying open in the Town?

A: There may be an announcement in regard to hotels in the future. At this point in time, hotels may stay open. Please sign up for the alerts in order to stay up to date with any changes made within the Town due to COVID-19.

Q: Are all of the Golf Courses on Island closed?

A: The Town owned Palm Beach Par 3 is closed. We cannot confirm if privately owned golf courses have closed.

Q: Are liquor stores permitted to stay open?

A: Per the Governor's Executive order 2020-71, they are permitted to remain open

Q: Can a boat be used from a private dock?

A: Yes

Q: Does the 9:00 pm curfew apply to walking one's dog in your own yard?

A: No

Q: Why hasn't the town halted landscape work yet?

A: The Town is constantly assessing and prioritizing what areas are causing the greatest impact on public safety. We are strongly encouraging every business to take this seriously and reduce or eliminate services during this crisis. Home owners themselves could certainly temporarily cancel services which would reduce the number of landscapers on the Island. We keep emphasizing our message that we need residents to take personal responsibility to help us curb the spread. It cannot be accomplished through government orders and enforcement alone.

Q: How long does the corona virus live on surfaces?

A: It stays in the air for 3 hours, cardboard for 24 hours, stainless steel for 2-3 days, plastic for 3 days.

Q: Since the Governor's order to stay home if you are 65 or older or in a compromised state of health, how can I obtain groceries, meals and prescriptions?

A: Publix has information on their website on how to place an online order. Amici also offers deliveries (561-832-0201). Lew's Pharmacy and Green's Pharmacy deliver and most restaurants in town are also delivering food. The Town will add to the website on the COVID page [information and tips on handling delivered food](#) and [resources for online or phone delivery grocery shopping](#).

Here are some tips if you are receiving some prepared meals:

- Order hot foods when you can.
- Have your delivery left at the door
- Place the entire delivery in your sink and empty the food containers onto plates and put the containers directly in your trash can. Wash your hands thoroughly before you eat. For added measure you can microwave or simmer your delivery food before eating it. 149 degrees Fahrenheit is the recommended temperature.

Here are some tips if you get groceries delivered:

- Wash nonporous containers or wipe with a disinfectant wipe. If that isn't practical, just make sure you wash your hands after you put away your items.
- Wipe down your counter, wash your hands and other surfaces you have touched after you put the groceries away- don't forget the door handles on your fridge.
- Wash your fresh fruits and veggies. Rinse well.

Q: What should condo owners do if they have someone in their building who is not abiding by the 14 day shelter in place order?

A: If you have credible and specific information that someone in your building is breaching the quarantine order, you may contact the police department. The Order gives law enforcement the authority to make an arrest and requires them to make a notification to the Department of Health. However, for an arrest to occur, an investigation has to be conducted.

Q: Is there any learning from the two confirmed cases of COVID 19 in the south end of Palm Beach that would inform changes in behavior in multi-family buildings; i.e. were these cases travel related; were the people recently in the NYC area, etc...?

Thank you for any insight I might share with the south end buildings.

A: (from Chief Donatto) We urge residents to take personal responsibility. Please refer to the multifamily building guidelines that can be found on the Town website.

Currently, we don't have recommendations to make beyond what is available in those guidelines.

Q: I keep reading conflicting reports on animals. Does PBC have any information about this?

A: There is no evidence that dog and cats carry or transmit the COVID-19 virus. The County did put information on their webpage, and we will provide a link to that from the Town page.

Q: With the 24hr/day lockdown in Bahamas, at least 2 COVID-19 cases in Grand Bahama and continued good weather, are we on the lookout for potential immigration landfalls?

A: The Town's Law Enforcement is still monitoring for cases and will continue to during this crisis.

Q: Why can't we just put check points on the Island like we do during hurricanes? I have read other communities have done this – why can't we?

A: It is important for residents to understand that initiating check points during a hurricane are completely different than setting them up during the COVID -19 crisis.

During a hurricane, the population on Palm Beach is very low. In fact, many residents are not in Town; the ones that are, have been requested to evacuate. Even with limited population, the lines to come back onto the Island are long and traffic intense. During this crisis, we have most of our residents, many of whom utilize staff and services increasing the daily population of Town. In addition, we have essential businesses that require workers to commute into Town. The traffic impact would be enormous creating gridlock for the Town of Palm Beach, neighboring communities like West Palm Beach and would impact medical transport. A significant amount of our police resources would be spent on just having check points. This would expose our Police to thousands of people unnecessarily, putting them at greater risk for not only catching the virus but spreading it.

Small barrier islands in other parts of the United States may be able to have check points because the population is smaller. Key Biscayne did try to set up check points last week and reversed their decision after two hours because of traffic congestion and the mayhem it caused in surrounding communities. The traffic lines to gain entry to Key Biscayne were over 2 hours long.

Q: Why are we not permitted to raise the bridges to the Island?

A: The Federal Government controls the bridges, not the Town.

Q: What is the Town doing to communicate with construction companies who are working on the Island? And why is this essential during this time?

A: The Town sent out a letter to nearly 2500 contractors who are listed in the PZ&B Contractor Update / Information list. The letter discusses the concern with open construction sites and provides guidance as to what construction companies need to do in order to keep their work sites safe.

Construction work is listed as essential in the Governor's Executive order and may continue. If we continue to see construction sites not following procedures, the Town may begin to limit construction or halt activities until after the pandemic has passed.

Q: I know the County order issued the closing of community pools. Does that mean our residents can't use the furniture surrounding the pool?

A: Yes, the pool area must be closed in its entirety.

Q: For Chief Donatto: Can you please give us the parameters of self-quarantine?

For example: If you arrived from NY or you are the spouse of someone with COVID-19, can you go to the grocery store? May you do laundry in a shared laundry room?

A: Yes, if you have arrived from the tri-state area of NY or if you're the spouse of someone with COVID-19, you may go to the grocery store, supplies or leave to receive medical care. However, it is strongly encouraged to have someone else, if possible, to do this for you.

We ask those not to focus on what you can and can't do while self-quarantined but to think about why you're doing it, and how your actions can help slow/stop the spread of COVID-19.

Q: Can you please share specific messaging you are taking with contractors?

A: We are asking each contractor to implement the following:

1. Hand Wash Stations on each site.
2. Hand Sanitizers available to their employees.
3. Screening Workers Health when they arrive for duty and reminding them to stay home when they are not well.
4. Posting Signs with protocols all workers should be following.
5. Maintaining Social Distances.
6. Requesting or insisting (depending on the contractor) that workers limit trips to Publix, Green's, Amici, etc., to minimize contact between persons.
7. Limiting Site Access.

8. Following OSHA Issued Guidelines for Worker Safety during this Virus Period.

Q: Regarding landscaper and construction work hours, is the Town enforcing in – season or out of season hours now?

A: [Click link to view.](#)

Q: Where can I obtain the case stats that you report on your briefings and alerts?

A: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/#latest-stats> [See Report at bottom and Dashboard at Bottom]

Q: For Chief Donatto: Why should I wear a mask when I am out in public? And if I can't find one to purchase, what should I do?

A: The CDC has a link that we have added to our Town website that has instruction on how to make masks. You should wear a mask because it protects you from spreading the virus if you have it (and don't know you have it) and it also keeps you from touching your face.

Q: The Town has been in communication with Publix regarding concerns of social distancing, do you have any updates for us?

A: Starting today, Publix will be controlling the number of shoppers in the store at a time and having a movement coordinator inside and outside of the store to ensure shoppers are maintaining safe distances from each other.

Q: There seems to be some confusion regarding the beaches – can you please clarify the regulations?

A: The Governor and County both issued orders to close the beaches. However, in some communities, this is taken as closing public beaches. In Palm Beach, we have quite a few private beaches which are defined by the property west of the mean high tide line. The Police Department is not patrolling the private beaches and trying to maximize their resources on the public beaches. However, the Palm Beach County Sherriff's office is patrolling **all the beaches** and we have had residents let us know they were asked to leave their private beach by the Sherriff's office. The ultimate

goal is for people to stay home and not go to the beach. However, if you are on your private beach, the Town isn't issuing warnings. We plead with residents to please stay home as much as possible.