

Governor Carney Issues Third Update to State of Emergency

Delaware beaches closed to help slow spread of coronavirus

REHOBOTH, Del. – Governor John Carney on Saturday issued a [third modification](#) to his emergency declaration. The new orders close Delaware beaches to help slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The public is prohibited from accessing the beach except to exercise or walk their dogs where dogs are permitted. Local officials may choose to enact tighter restrictions.

These modifications go into effect at 5:00 p.m. tonight, March 21, and will last until May 15, or until the public health threat of COVID-19 has been eliminated.

*“We need everyone to take this situation seriously. We saw too many people on the beaches yesterday and we weren’t seeing the kind of social distancing that we need in order to slow the spread of coronavirus,” said **Governor Carney**. “This was a difficult decision, but we need folks to follow the rules to keep all Delawareans safe. Don’t go out in public unnecessarily. Wash your hands and disinfect surfaces frequently. Stay home, especially if you feel sick and even if you have mild symptoms. We will get through this together.”*

“We fully understand Governor Carney’s decision to close the beaches,” said **City of Rehoboth Mayor Paul Kuhns**. “This move is for the health and safety for all our citizens.”

In the [second modification](#) of the emergency declaration issued on March 18, Governor Carney authorized state and local law

enforcement to enforce the provision in any State of Emergency. The State of Emergency has the full force and effect of the law, and violations constitute a criminal offense.

*“Governor Carney’s action to close all Delaware beaches sends a vital message to all Delawareans and those who may be thinking of coming here,” said **City of Lewes Mayor Ted Becker**. “Our beach communities are a very important part of the state’s economy but they are not equipped to be a safe harbor for those who come from other areas. We urge everyone to shelter in the location of their primary residence.”*

During a live COVID-19 update on Wednesday, Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of the Division of Public Health, answered a question about going outdoors to take a walk. Dr. Rattay [explained](#) it is safe to go for walks, but noted it is important to keep distance from others.

There have been 40 total laboratory-confirmed cases in Delaware since March 11. This includes nine additional cases announced yesterday. Of the Delawareans diagnosed with COVID-19, 28 are from New Castle County, five are from Kent County, and seven are from Sussex County.

Delawareans with general questions about COVID-19 or their exposure risk can call the Division of Public Health’s Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899, or 711 for individuals who are hearing-impaired, from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware’s response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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