BE A HERO AND FOLLOW THE PROTECTIVE ACTIONS ON WWW.CDC.GOV.

Many protections and orders are inconvenient, but we are not living in convenient times.

FLATTENING THE UPWARD CURVE OF INFECTION IS EVERYONE'S NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

BE AWARE of your information sources – at the end of this report please see reliable resources. Expect information and all levels of government action(s) to change on short notice to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic quickly.

UPDATES:

- Call 211 to help get answers and resources. Or chat with a 211 operation at http://www.mass211.org/.

- The Board of Health issued new orders today that are listed under the Health Department section. Compliance checks of social distancing, number of people in a facility and proper signage are done daily. The signage is attached to this report.

- Beginning Friday, March 20th Easthampton School Department has expanded their breakfast and lunch program to include anyone between the ages of 0 to 18 years.

- Governor Baker has ordered day cares closed effective Monday, March 23, 2020 at least through April 6, 2020.

- Real Estate Taxes and Personal Property bills can be paid online at: https://unipaygold.unibank.com/customerinfo.aspx

ECONOMIC RELIEF:

- The MA Department of Public Utilities has restricted all electric and gas companies from shutting off service – is applies to ALL RESIDENTIAL account regardless of income.
• MA Housing Court has issued a Standing Order to halt evictions of tenants. Call 413-748-7838 or www.masscourts.org for more information.

• The Department of Housing suspended FHA evictions and foreclosures. Details: https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_042

• **DO NOT WAIT TO APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.** Apply now if your income has dropped or you are without employment.

• **Eversource Electric, Natural Gas, and Water Operations suspended disconnections for nonpayment.** Visit www.eversource.com for call 877-659-6326 to speak with a Customer Service Representative. They can be reached at 877-659-6326.

Below is vital information by the city function. We will also start attaching documents that give important breaking information. For full updates, please visit the list of resources at the very bottom of this report:

**Easthampton Municipal Government**

For continuity, core City operations and services will continue through the State of Emergency. City employees are checking emails and voicemails as frequently as possible. The majority of City employees are working remotely or on a limited schedule. During the State of Emergency, emails and calls directly related to COVID-19 are answered first. Direct urgent inquiries to mayor@easthamptonma.gov or 413-529-1400 ext 143.

All non-essential committee meetings are postponed through April 7, 2020. There is important work happening within City boards and committees all the time. We understand that this may be inconvenient for some, or potentially slow projects and discussions temporarily. However, it is being done under evolving recommendations and with the City's best interests in mind.

**Easthampton Public Buildings**

Only essential or on-call staff have access to public buildings until further notice. Essential staff conducts municipal government functions that are only and regularly possible on-site. On-call staff intermittently access public buildings to conduct the municipal government functions of their job not possible remotely. While an inconvenience, we are not in a time of convenience.

This restriction is to curb infection for all staff, the public, and our essential/on-call employees. Exceptions to this mandate are police and fire, DPW water/sewer, highway, and wastewater crews with staggered staffing patterns and outdoor work in the park and recreation department. Other than these exceptions, no employee is allowed to access public buildings without their department head and the Mayor's approval.

All public buildings are closed to the general public – this includes schools and the Council on Aging. Only the Public Safety Complex lobby at 32 Payson Avenue is an accessible area to the public. Public contact with Dispatch will be via the lobby phone. Drug drop off, and firearms licensing processing are suspended until further notice. Additionally, the sharps dispensary container is in the lobby.
Mayor's Office

The Mayor's office will send out a daily Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Awareness Report for the duration of the City's State of Emergency. The report will be released over verified City Facebook pages, the City's website www.easthamptonma.gov. Both email (mayor@easthamptonma.gov) and voice mail (413-529-1400, ext.146) are being monitored with COVID-19 urgent matters prioritized. Press inquiries should also be sent to the Mayor's Office.

My office is collecting community resources for small businesses, food, and housing-related payments. We also encourage people who want to volunteer to email mayor@easthamptonma.gov. I ask for patience and understanding as we gather what is needed and where and the length of assistance. We do not want to overwhelm agencies providing services with help that does not match their needs. Also, high-risk groups like seniors and those with underlying health conditions are being given priority. It is not every volunteer who can serve. Most importantly, the need for volunteers will not diminish in a week or even a month that said we must set up supply chains to meet long term deficits in our community.

City Council

Governor Baker issued an Executive Order regarding Open Meeting Law and COVID-19. Per his order, the City Council President is working to enable remote participation by Council, Committee and Board members for meetings essential to the operation of City business.

Last night, the City Council held the first virtual meeting in Easthampton’s history. The agenda was limited to items that had to be moved forward or formally extended by Council. The Council President is working with the City’s Technology Department to implement a virtual system that allows for public input.

Audit

The Auditor and Assistant Auditor are approving financial warrants remotely while monitoring their emails. Additionally, they are creating accounts to track and receive emergency funds.

Building Inspection

Subject to change, all inspections will be suspended except for time-sensitive inspections. For smaller projects, pictures will be accepted for inspections per the State Building Department. For large projects, structural inspections are still happening. Please call the Building Inspection Department at 413-529-1400, ext. 128 with any questions about inspections.

Collections and Assessors

Real Estate Taxes and Personal Property bills can be paid online at:
https://unipaygold.unibank.com/customerinfo.aspx
From March 13 through April 30, 2020, late fees and processing of warrants are suspended. The Drop Box is still available to the public. It will be emptied daily, but the City cannot guarantee that the Drop Box or any outside surface of public buildings are disinfected.

**Department of Public Works**

Essential services – provision of water, sewer, and wastewater – continue to operate on standard protocols. Staffing has been split into smaller working groups, practicing social distancing. If an emergency occurs outside business hours, please call the non-emergency Dispatch line to report the issue.

**Fire Department**

The Easthampton Fire Department is still conducting Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector inspections for home sales. To schedule an inspection, please email the Fire Department Administrative Assistant at brouthier@easthamptonma.gov. Please allow for flexibility in scheduling in light of current events. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Please include the property address, date of closing, and the best number to reach you. You will receive an email as soon as possible with at least 2 available inspection times.

If you are seeking a burning permit, come into the Public Safety Complex lobby to obtain one. At this time, we are not collecting the five-dollar fee. If you have a seasonal burning permit, call the Fire Department to see if the state is allowing burning on that day.

**Health Department**

Per Governor Baker's Executive Order, gatherings of 25 or more persons in a single room or venue at one time are prohibited. This order includes but is not limited to community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, sporting events with spectators, concerts, fundraisers, parades, fairs, etc. **The Easthampton Board of Health strongly recommends no more than 10 people attend gatherings in a single room, venue, or outdoor area at one time.** For details on gatherings, go to [https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html](https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html)

Due to the inability to maintain the minimum social distancing of 6 feet, the Board of Health is requiring hair salons, esthetic (skin care) salons, spas, nail salons, barber shops, and body art establishments to **suspend operations effective Monday, March 23, 2020 through Sunday, April 5, 2020.** This order will be re-evaluated in two weeks and may be extended.

The Health Agent is available by via at beichstaedt@easthamptonma.gov. Inspections at this time are suspended until further notice. All scheduled inspections are in the process of being rescheduled to a later date to be determined by our alternate inspector.

Food Establishments, bars, convenience stores, etc. should email the Health Agent and ask to be added to the email list if they have not been receiving our emails. Information including sample signage that food establishments can use can be found on our website at [https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html](https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html). Updates can also be found on our Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonHealth](https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonHealth)
**Payroll**

City employees are asked to check their work email for further information about payroll and benefits. If you cannot access your email remotely, please call Personnel at 413-529-1400.

**Police Department**

The current inventory of firearms licenses will be mailed via the US Mail.

Effective 12:00 AM, Tuesday, March 17, 2020, all on-premise consumption licensees are prohibited from selling alcohol to the public until 11:59 PM on April 5, 2020. This order includes restaurants, bars, hotels, general on-premise, clubs, war veterans' clubs, continuing care retirement communities, pub-brewers, farmer – series pouring permits, and manufacturing pouring permits. These establishments are also prohibited from serving any food or drinks for on-premise consumption; only takeout and delivery of food are permitted.

The department has put in for supplies and equipment to protect our public safety employees as they respond to emergency calls.

**Private Schools**

All private elementary and secondary schools are shut down per the Governor's Executive Order at least through April 6, 2020.

**Public Schools**

The Tuesday, March 24th, School Committee meeting has been cancelled per the Mayor’s Order. The school budget hearing will be rescheduled for the earliest possible date.

Please email or call. Do not come to the Easthampton Public School's central office or individual school buildings. School staff will be checking emails and voice mails remotely.

**EXPANDED** meals for students: **beginning Friday, March 19, 2020**, from 8:30 am to 11:00 am, Monday – Friday anyone between the ages of 0 to 18 years can pick up bagged breakfast and lunch at Easthampton High School. Subscribe to School Messager to get detailed updates and plans for our students, families, and staff.

**Treasurer**

Payroll services have been set up for remote processing. Bank accounts and essential financial services continue on a regular schedule. As to date, no financial transactions have been deferred given the financial markets and emergency banking protocols. Any employee who receives an actual check can pick them up at Dispatch, 32 Payson Ave.

**Veteran Services**
Checks will be processed normally. However, if a Veteran does NOT have a direct deposit, their check will be available at the Public Safety Complex in Dispatch. All other checks will be mailed via USPS.

**Council on Aging and Enrichment (COA)**

The COA is suspending all on-site programs and services until further notice. The COA serves residents who are most at risk of contracting the virus. The closing of the building is a proactive step to protect the patrons of the COA. The staff of the COA is working and available during regular business hours to provide alternative arrangements for seniors who need access to essential services. The COA is doing wellness calls to seniors and is working on a protocol for volunteers. For questions, call 413-527-6151.

**Keep Informed through RELIABLE Sources**

Please access these reliable sources of information for the coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the State of Emergency:

- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html](https://easthamptonma.gov/health-department.html)
- [www.epsd.us](http://www.epsd.us)
- [www.facebook.com/easthampton413](http://www.facebook.com/easthampton413)
- [https://www.facebook.com/easthamptonfire/](https://www.facebook.com/easthamptonfire/)
- [https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonPD/](https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonPD/)
- [https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonHealth/](https://www.facebook.com/EasthamptonHealth/)