CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 PANDEMIC

Windsor Locks Response

On March 10, 2020, the Governor Ned Lamont declared a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency for the State of Connecticut regarding the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency.

On March 15, 2020, pursuant to the authority granted to me under Connecticut General Statutes §28-22a, I declared a civil preparedness emergency in the Town of Windsor Locks due to the clear and present risk to the public health posed by the rapid proliferation of COVID-19.

These emergency declarations triggered the implementation of our Local Emergency Operations Plan. Part of that plan calls on our Emergency Management Director to convene the First Selectman’s Unified Command and open a Local Emergency Operations Center. The Unified Command represents the best tool for managing an emergency and helps to ensure well-coordinated decision-making. The Unified Command includes our Emergency Management Director and CERT Coordinator, the Chiefs of the Windsor Locks Fire Department, Police Department and Lions Ambulance Corps, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Directors of Health, Public Works, Social Services and the Senior Center. With regard to the present emergency, the Unified Command first met on Monday March 9, 2020 and has been meeting regularly ever since.

The citizens of Windsor Locks can be very proud of the efforts of each member of the Unified Command and the response of the departments they represent with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. This document is a summary of those efforts to date.

J. Christopher Kervick
First Selectman
Town of Windsor Locks

Emergency Management

The primary task of the Windsor Locks Emergency Management Department is to assist all other town departments during emergencies. The term “emergency” is not limited to storms, floods, hurricanes, tornados and other natural disasters but also includes manmade disasters such as chemical spills and mass casualty scenarios. It also includes health related epidemics and pandemics.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are coordinating the response the town takes as regards its ability to keep the people of the community as safe as possible and be sure we follow all the guidelines put out by the state and federal governments.
The Emergency Management Department orders and works to expedite the delivery of equipment needed to keep our first responders safe. We help record and manage all the expenses that the town will make during any declared emergency so that we may be in the best position to secure reimbursement for all of those expenses covered by the State of Connecticut and FEMA. It is our job to get the town back as much money as possible.

We do all this with the help of a cadre of caring and dedicated volunteer townspeople we call our CERT team (Community Emergency Response Team). We are also grateful for any volunteers who come forward during these times of crisis.

Vic Puia
Emergency Management Director

Police Department

As always, the safety of our citizens is our #1 priority and we remain committed to providing professional service 24/7/365 in this ever-changing high-risk environment.

In an attempt to mitigate exposure to our officers, we have implemented several changes. Dispatchers now ask questions of callers regarding their possible exposure before sending officers to medical calls. Officers keep a safe distance and utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) at scenes when applicable. As always, EMS will be present for medical calls.

The Records Division is sending out documents instead of people coming to the station to pick up documents. Fingerprinting service has been suspended indefinitely per order of Governor Lamont. Officers have the discretion to handle calls about less serious matters that are not still in progress by telephone. Officers evaluate their mode of response on a case by case basis.

Officers may meet citizens outside of their home or business to reduce transmission of COVID-19. Officers may be wearing protective gloves and/or mask during these meetings. We highly encourage calling the police department when able rather than coming into the station and we will respond accordingly. All community events have been cancelled.

A local car wash business has been sanitizing our cruisers. We have increased the sanitation and cleaning of our building and obtained PPE through various sources. We have implemented staggered schedules with non-essential personnel. We continually push out all Covid19 info to our staff maintaining situational awareness.

Eric Osanitsch, Chief
Windsor Locks Police Department

Fire Department

The Fire Department has cancelled all meetings, training and social gatherings until further notice. Members are observing social distancing guidelines whenever possible.
Firefighters will stay home if they do not feel well and self-isolate or quarantine for 14 days as recommended by the Department of Public Health and the CDC if they have been exposed. Access to the Fire Department area of the Public Safety Complex is restricted to members of the Department only unless cleared by one of our Fire Officers. Our dispatchers are asking all callers for our services a series of questions to determine if they are experiencing COVID 19 symptoms. We have a limited supply of masks and gowns and other non-firefighting PPE. We have several PPE items on order but they are back ordered. The Department holds the town’s R1 Supplemental license for responding to medical emergencies. Firefighters will don masks prior to entering buildings where a known COVID patient had been before as notified by the dispatcher.

We have been engaged in weekly Unified Command virtual meetings and stay in contact with our town’s Emergency Management Director. Our stewards have sanitized all of our Department’s equipment including the entire inside of the cabs of the apparatus. All our air packs have had the regulators sanitized and placed in zip locked bags. Equipment and apparatus are wiped down with a disinfectant after all calls. We have been on many conference calls with area Departments to keep informed and have discussed COOP plans with them in the event any of our Departments experience manpower issues. We have a draft policy guideline that we are working on regarding Pandemic Operational Response. We are trying to reduce or eliminate exposures of our Firefighters as much as possible. Stay Safe. Stay well. Wash your hands!

Gary F. Ruggiero, Chief
Windsor Locks Fire Department

Windsor Locks Lions Ambulance Corps

There has been a decrease in overall call volume for the ambulance in the last 4 to 6 weeks. This decrease is due to the closing of many businesses, less people traveling, and more people avoiding transport to hospitals because they realize hospitals may be overwhelmed with COVID 19 cases. At this time, we tend to be transporting the more critical patients primarily. The ambulance staffing and coverage remains the same as prior to the pandemic.

Windsor Locks Lions Ambulance is taking steps to limit our personal exposure and the exposure of our patients and their families. Our EMT’s and Paramedics are screened for any signs or symptoms of COVID 19 prior to each shift, and our vehicles and equipment are thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated at shift change and after each call. Every call is treated as if it is a COVID 19 call regardless of the patient’s symptoms. People should expect our staff to be wearing the appropriate PPE, which may include gloves, masks, eye protection, face shields, gowns, etc. We are following current hospital and CDC guidelines. We will continue to update our response as the guidelines are amended or updated.

Stuart Geres, Chief EMT-P
Windsor Locks Lions Ambulance Corps
Board of Education

All Windsor Locks Public Schools buildings and campuses are closed to all staff and students, with the exception of our custodial and food service staff responsible for providing "grab and go" lunches to our students. Staff responsible for the preparation of these lunches are required to wear appropriate protective gear as outlined by the CSDE Nutritional Guidelines, and once meal preparation and pickup is complete, our custodial staff follows diligent procedures to clean and disinfect any areas of use, and then secures the building.

Windsor Locks Public Schools are in Interim Remote Learning mode with devices and materials deployed to all students and families. A website devoted to Interim Remote Learning has been created to support students, families and staff. All communications to families are posted on our website at wlps.org.

The primary goal is to comply with the recommendations of the North Central Health Department and the CDC with regard to the social distancing of staff and employees until the Governor reopens school buildings for classes.

Shawn L. Parkhurst, Superintendent
Windsor Locks Public Schools

Senior Center

The Senior Center was closed to the public as of March 16, 2020. All bus transportation is cancelled. The center staff are working on a rotating basis, with no more than two staff member in the building at the same time. Our main concern was and still is food delivery. The Community Renewal Team of Hartford supplies our meals. In addition to the regular delivery service for homebound seniors (Meals on Wheels), CRT instituted a Grab n Go program for those that would normally come to the Center daily for lunch. Additionally, we identified clients that have limited resources for assistance in obtaining food safely and have added them to our Grab and Go delivery program. Senior Center staff is delivering all meals. Required precautions are being observed: wearing masks and gloves and disinfecting kitchen and vehicles after each use. No person to person contact is occurring during meal drop off. All clients have a designated “drop spot” in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Isolation is another concern for our clients. We have assembled a list of approximately 400 seniors within our community who could benefit from a weekly friendly visitor phone call. With the assistance of volunteers and staff, we are making weekly wellness calls. Senior Center staff will provide pickup and delivery of prescriptions, as well as emergency food, ie.: milk, bread etc. if necessary. The Center staff is working closely with the Social Services Department to make referrals to the food pantry program when applicable.

Following the CDC guidelines, we have implemented the following safety precautions internally for all employees.

- Masks, gloves and wipes are available for daily use,
- Sanitary wipe dispensers have been installed throughout the building
- Employees are following the social distancing guidelines

Ann Marie Claffey, Director
Senior Center
Social Services

Social Services is dedicated to providing services to town residents in need due to the Covid-19 pandemic or any other cause. Food pantry services are available weekly, practicing safe social distancing. We provide front step delivery of food bags to residents who are at a higher risk and should remain at home or those who rely on the senior bus for transportation to the pantry. We are working with FoodShare to receive the maximum amount of food possible to provide to our residents.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving awarded a $20,000 grant to the Department of Social Services to support residents economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The monies received will enhance services already provided to the residents of Windsor Locks.

Anyone needing assistance or wanting to make a donation please contact us at 860-627-1446 or email hgilmore@wlocks.com

Please be aware that during these times, office hours may vary to ensure safety of our staff. Your calls and emails will be returned as early as possible.

Heidi Gilmore, Director
Windsor Locks Department of Social Services

Public Works

The Public Works Department has divided clerical, service and maintenance staff into two teams. Each team is assigned days that they report to routine work locations while the other team is on call working from home or assigned direct report work in an alternate location in Town. Management works three continuous days on-site and works from home two days per week to insure management continuity in operations across public works domains. This plan allows for CDC recommended social distancing, while at the same time insuring that the full staff of public works is available to assist residents and in any emergency situation.

As much as possible, seasonal work is being completed to maintain the infrastructure across town.

We have placed an emphasis on cleaning and sterilizing at all public buildings in Town.

The leaf compost site opened a week earlier than planned to accommodate demand driven by more residents being at home. It is open daily so residents may deposit leaves and brush at the site.

Road projects are starting where possible, albeit at a slower pace along with road sweeping, patching, catch-basin cleaning and mowing.

We are striving to maintain parks in a usable and aesthetic condition for recreation with social distancing in mind.

Phil Sissick, Director
Windsor Locks Public Works
Health Department

The North Central District Health Department is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. The department is governed by a Board of Directors, with representatives from the eight municipalities, in proportion to their population, based on a State formula.

Windsor Locks citizens are asked to do all they can to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus 19. We have entered a period of widespread community transmission, which means that we should assume that the virus has infected many people within our community.

Residents should follow the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The symptoms of COVID-19 are a dry cough, fever and shortness of breath.

- All residents should be practicing social distancing.
- Adults and children should remain home as much as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick except to seek emergency medical care or if advised by your physician.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for a minimum of twenty seconds.
- Cover your cough and avoid touching your face.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, table and countertops.

Patrice Sulik, Director
North Central District Health Department

Town Hall

The Windsor Locks Hall remains open on a restricted basis until further notice.

Hours:
- Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday - 8:00am to 4:00pm.
- Thursday - 8:00am to 6:00pm.
- Friday - Closed

Users should call the department they wish to visit prior to arriving at the town hall or from the lobby of town hall upon arrival. Users are urged to do as much as possible online, by telephone or through the mail or defer business to a later date.

Responsible citizenship requires that we take the needed steps to limit the spread of COVID-19. Even if in an age group that has not experienced a high percentage of illness or death, reckless behavior can lead to further transmission of the virus and the illness or death of others. We are all in this together.