

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY TO IMPLEMENT NEW COVID-19 COMMUNITY MITIGATION MEASURES**

**13 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott today issued an executive order to declare a state of emergency in Vermont in response to COVID-19, commonly known as the new coronavirus.

With this executive order, the Governor can exercise his emergency powers to take important community mitigation steps to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable.

Most individuals affected by COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate symptoms but some individuals – especially the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions – are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness.

“The best information we currently have from the experts concludes that slowing it down and preventing as many cases as possible is the best way to make sure the most vulnerable – the very ill and the elderly – get the care they need, which in many cases will include hospitalization, when they need it,” said Governor Scott. “We all have to do our part to slow down spread to protect the ill and older Vermonters who are at risk.”

Through his emergency powers, Governor Scott is implementing additional mitigation strategies to prevent or control outbreaks of COVID-19, to protect those at the greatest risk, to minimize the risk to the public, to maintain the health and safety of Vermonters, and to limit the spread of infection in our communities.

The Governor’s executive order outlines several new actions, including restricting visitor access to hospitals and facilities that house and serve the elderly and very ill; prohibiting non-essential

gatherings of more than 250 people in a single room or a single space; and prohibiting all non-essential out-of-state travel by state employees. More details are included in the executive order.

In consultation with the Vermont Department of Health and Agency of Education, the state will not be requiring K-12 school closures at this time but advised that will be continually re-evaluated and could change if circumstances demonstrate a need. Students absent from school due to concerns arising from COVID-19 will not be penalized, per this order.

“There is no doubt these are difficult steps that, for a few weeks or possibly months, will change what we do in our daily lives and I also need you to know more may be necessary,” said Governor Scott. “But the compassion and commitment of our people and communities will see us through. We have to rise above frustrations and fear. We can’t focus on how this may set us back because what it’s really about is who we are as Vermonters, and how we’re going to lead our state forward.”

Governor Scott outlined these actions at a press conference Friday, joined by Commissioner of Health Mark Levine, MD, Director of Emergency Management Erica Bornemann, Human Services Secretary Mike Smith, Education Secretary Dan French, Secretary of Administration Susanne Young, Commissioner of Public Safety Michael Schirling, Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Commissioner Monica Hutt, Acting Commissioner of Labor Michael Harrington and additional members of the cabinet.

For the most current information – including current case and testing status, the latest guidance for specific groups and informational materials in multiple languages – please regularly visit [healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19).

Details on the specific actions taken are outlined in the Governor’s Executive Order, which is [available by clicking here](#).

