

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ANNOUNCES PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT WI-FI HOT SPOT MAP TO HELP VERMONTERS ACCESS INTERNET DURING COVID-19**

**23 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. - Governor Phil Scott today announced the Vermont Department of Public Service has released an interactive Public Wi-Fi Hot Spot Map to help Vermonters connect to publicly available internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Internet connectivity is an important resource for Vermonters during this crisis, which is keeping us physically distanced from one another,” said Governor Phil Scott. “As we’re asking many to work and learn remotely, these public Wi-Fi points are especially critical to keeping workers and students connected if they do not have access at home.”

The map includes the location of the Wi-Fi hot spots and pertinent information about how to access them, including places where users can access Wi-Fi from outside the building or in a parked vehicle to encourage social distancing.

The Department received assistance from libraries, schools and municipal governments in creating the map, as well as support from the Agency of Digital Services, the Department of Libraries, the Agency of Commerce & Community Development, the Agency of Education, the Vermont Center for Geographic Information and the Department of Health.

“I extend my sincere gratitude to these organizations for their assistance, without which the Department would have been unable to put together this map,” said Public Service Commissioner June Tierney.

The map can be found at <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/announcements/public-wifi-hotspots-ver...>

Additional connectivity resources can be found at [publicservice.vermont.gov/content/new-connectivity-resources-support-you-during-covid-19-state-emergency-vermont](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/new-connectivity-resources-support-you-during-covid-19-state-emergency-vermont).

The map will be updated as new information becomes available. Vermonters are encouraged to send information about Wi-Fi hot spots to [psd.telecom@vermont.gov](mailto:psd.telecom@vermont.gov).

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## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ORDERS BUSINESSES AND NON-PROFITS TO IMPLEMENT WORK FROM HOME PROCEDURES**

**23 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott today announced additional mitigation measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In consultation with the Department of Health, Governor Scott has directed all businesses and not-for-profit entities - to the maximum extent possible - to put into place telecommuting or work-from-home procedures, no later than 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23.

“We’re now entering a new phase in this fight to flatten the curve,” said Governor Scott. “Vermonters should also expect additional steps in the coming days that will further reduce contact and direct more to stay home in order to keep everyone safe.”

This order follows [further reductions to the allowable size of non-essential mass gatherings](#) to no more than 10 people and the [closure of all close-contact businesses](#), both announced Saturday, March 21.

At this time, any entities not required to close under a previous order, or unable to implement work-from-home procedures, must implement – and publicly post – CDC and the Vermont Department of Health guidance related to COVID-19, including:

- Maintaining a distance of six feet between people;
- Ensuring employees practice appropriate hygiene measures, including regular, thorough handwashing;
- Ensuring that employees who are sick remain home; and

- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The Governor has also said Vermonters should prepare for a forthcoming announcement on further restrictions and a stay-at-home directive. He further advised all Vermonters, "All of us should already be taking personal responsibility to physically distance ourselves from others and to follow the guidance in place to help keep each other healthy and safe."

For details on these new measures, [click here to read the full addendum.](#)

Commercial entities, employers, event sponsors and others with questions should contact the State Emergency Operations Center at 800-347-0488.

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont's COVID-19 response, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/covid19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19).

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## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ISSUES A “STAY HOME, STAY SAFE” ORDER, DIRECTS ADDITIONAL CLOSURES**

**24 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott today issued a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order and directed the closure of in-person operations for all non-essential businesses.

These restrictive measures are in place to minimize all unnecessary activities outside the home to slow the spread of this virus and protect the public. These actions were implemented in consultation with the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health and his evaluation of the latest data.

“I want to be very clear about this: We need everyone to limit activities outside of the home and to practice social distancing at all times to slow the spread of this highly contagious and potentially deadly virus,” said Governor Phil Scott. “We all must do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 to minimize infections - particularly for those who are elderly or have underlying chronic health conditions - and prevent it from overwhelming our healthcare facilities. The more Vermonters who take this seriously and stay home, the faster we can return to normal.”

The Governor’s order directs Vermonters to stay at home, leaving only for essential reasons, critical to health and safety. If leaving the home, Vermonters should adhere to social distancing policies, including remaining six feet from others (except for those with whom they share a home) and thoroughly and regularly washing hands.

Effective March 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., all businesses and not-for-profit entities not expressly exempted in the order must suspend all in-person business operations. Operations that can be conducted

online or by phone, or sales that can be facilitated with curbside pickup or delivery only, can continue.

The Order provides exemptions for businesses and entities providing services or functions deemed critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. This includes – but is not limited to – health care operations; retail serving essential human needs, like grocery stores, pharmacies and hardware stores; fuel products and supply; news media; maintenance of critical infrastructure; and transportation and critical manufacturing sectors. For a full list, please review the order at <https://governor.vermont.gov/content/addendum-6-executive-order-01-20>.

All exempt entities must still strictly adhere to CDC and Vermont Department of Health guidance to ensure social distancing and proper hygiene and disinfecting is occurring. All exempt entities conducting retail operations should also facilitate curbside pick-up or delivery to the extent possible.

“I fully recognize the emotional, financial and economic impact of these decisions, but based on the best science we have available, these measures are necessary,” said Governor Scott. “I need all Vermonters to understand that the more quickly and closely we follow these stay-at-home measures, the faster and safer we can get through this and get our daily lives, and our economy, moving again. I have tremendous faith in Vermonters and our ability to follow these guidelines, to save lives and support each other throughout – even as we are physical separated.”

Governor Scott declared a State of Emergency on March 13, and has since directed a number of mitigation strategies in order to reduce close contact among individuals, including visitor restrictions for long-term care facilities and other health facilities; the closure of bars and restaurants, schools and day care centers and close contact businesses; limiting the size of mass gatherings; postponing

all non-essential medical procedures; and ordering all businesses to implement telecommuting wherever possible.

The Stay Home, Stay Safe order will be in effect until April 15, 2020, though may be extended or shortened as needed. For full details, please [click here to read the full addendum](#).

Commercial entities, non-profits, employers and others with questions about acceptable continuation of business operations should contact the Agency of Commerce and Community Development via this online form: <https://bit.ly/covid-vt-business-operations>.

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont's COVID-19 response, visit <http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19>.

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## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT DISMISSES SCHOOLS FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION FOR REMAINDER OF 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

**26 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. - Governor Phil Scott today [directed schools to remain dismissed](#) through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Districts will close schools for in-person instruction and be required to implement continuity of learning plans for remote learning. This extends the Governor's previous directive dismissing PreK-12 schools from March 18 to April 6.

This decision was made in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education in the continued effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. To minimize disruption to students' learning, the Governor's order directs school districts to come up with plans for distance learning by April 13.

"The education of our students and the bonding and learning experiences they have at schools are tremendously important, so I fully appreciate the impact and difficulty of this decision," said Governor Phil Scott. "I also recognize it will be challenging for some schools to implement remote learning through the end of the year. But I'm encouraged by the creativity I've seen from administrators, educators and parents already, which is why I know, together, they can rise to the occasion."

Governor Scott also noted that some school districts have also set up creative and critically needed programs to offer onsite care for their students whose parents are working on the frontlines in this response. "These educators and staff who are finding ways to support these families have been critical to our COVID-19 response efforts and I am so proud and appreciative of their hard work, creative can-do attitude and their willingness to step up in this

moment of service. These educators, and the staff supporting them, represent the very best of our public education system.”

The Agency of Education will provide technical guidance to districts on how to implement continuity of learning plans by the end of the week, specifically looking to address challenges around equitable access to learning opportunities, Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities, continuation of school meals, and school attendance and school calendar requirements.

The Department for Children and Families will also provide updated reimbursement provisions for providers who are not currently offering services and for providers who are delivering child care through this health crisis.

Read the full directive

here: <https://governor.vermont.gov/content/directive-5-continuity-learning-planning-pursuant-eo-01-20>

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont’s COVID-19 response, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/covid19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19).

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## **TRANSCRIPT: GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT MARCH 27 ADDRESS ON SCHOOL DISMISSAL**

**27 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. - At a press conference Friday, Governor Phil Scott and members of his administration provided an update on the [Governor's directive to dismiss schools for in-person instruction for the remainder of 2019-2020 school year.](#)

"The education of our kids, along with the bonding and learning experiences they get at school, are incredibly important, so I fully understand and appreciate the impact this will have on our kids individually and families across Vermont," said Governor Scott. "But from my vantage point, I believe it's the right decision because it's for the health of our kids, communities and the entire state. That's why we're doing this—to keep people safe, to slow the spread and to save lives."

[Click here to view the full press conference](#) and see a full transcript of Governor Scott's remarks below.

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont's COVID-19 response, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/covid19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19).

### **Transcript:**

*Good morning. Thank you all for continuing to tune into these important updates.*

*As this pandemic continues, the health and safety of all Vermonters is my top priority. Every decision I've made is guided by what's best for public health based on the best science we have available. And, as I've said, as the virus continues to spread and we learn more about COVID-19, Vermonters can expect we may have to take further action to help slow it down.*

*Slowing the spread of infection is critical to making sure we can protect the vulnerable, meaning the elderly and others who are at risk for serious illness and, in too many cases, even death.*

*These steps are also necessary to keep our healthcare system from being overwhelmed like we're seeing right before our eyes in other states like New York. What we're doing is important to the health and safety of all Vermonters.*

*To help reach these goals, on March 15, I ordered the temporary dismissal of schools. While we hoped this would be enough, that has not proven to be the case.*

*So, working closely with the experts at our Department of Health and the Agency of Education, I came to the difficult decision to extend dismissal and close in-person instruction at schools for the remainder of the school year. However, to make sure our kids continue learning, I'm asking districts to complete plans for continued education through remote learning so we're ready to go April 13.*

*I know this news is incredibly difficult. Let's face it: It's disappointing, frustrating and it's just plain sad for kids, parents, teachers and all school employees. My heart goes out to all of you. It's going to be hard. I know that.*

*The education of our kids, along with the bonding and learning experiences they get at school, are incredibly important, so I fully understand and appreciate the impact this will have on our kids individually, and families across Vermont.*

*But from my vantage point, I believe it's the right decision because it's for the health of our kids, communities and the entire state. That's why we're doing this—to keep people safe, to slow the spread, to save lives.*

*The sobering reality is: Before too long, each of us will know someone who has lost their life from this virus. That's why we must come together and support each other to get through this.*

*Even with this decision, it's my hope that with the mitigation steps we've taken, our children will be able to return at the end of the year for activities like graduation. But we won't make that decision until we're certain it's safe.*

*For now, we need to use our creativity to find ways to deliver quality remote learning for our students through the end of the school year.*

*I want to thank school administrators, superintendents, educators and staff around the state who are working hard to adapt to incredibly challenging circumstances. The fact is, we need your help and we appreciate your public service.*

*Childcare providers will also remain closed but will still be able to provide care for the children of those workers critical to the state's response. I've been impressed with school districts who have worked very hard to set up creative and critically needed programs to offer care for students whose parents are working on the frontlines. These educators and staff, who are finding ways to support these families, have been so important to our COVID-19 response efforts.*

*I'm proud and appreciative of their hard work, creative can-do attitude and their willingness to step up in this moment of service. These educators, and the staff supporting them, represent the very best of our public education system.*

*We find ourselves at a time when there's no road map available. So, our education leaders, parents and kids—and all Vermonters for that matter—have never been asked to do anything quite like this. But these times require all of us to think outside of the box to find creative solutions, and we must work together to ensure we still get the best outcomes possible for our kids.*

*I want to assure you, me and my team are here to help every step of the way as we navigate these uncharted waters together. Our way out of this is using the best information we have, common sense about what we want and what we need and working together in service to Vermonters.*

*The Agency of Education will be providing technical guidance to districts by the end of this week and Secretary French is with us on the phone today to answer questions.*

*I want to thank the many education leaders, teachers, parents, staff and others who've stepped up during this difficult time. I know this is not easy. But your commitment to public service and your ability to adapt is exactly what we need.*

*It's what makes us Vermont strong—and united as well. We will get through this and we'll do it together.*

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ISSUES ORDER ON TRAVEL AND LODGING RESTRICTIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH “STAY HOME, STAY SAFE” ORDER AND NEW CDC GUIDANCE**

**30 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott [today ordered](#) additional restrictions on travelers arriving in Vermont and announced additional guidance for the lodging industry to enhance compliance with his Stay Home, Stay Safe order.

The measures under the Stay Home, Stay Safe order, effective March 25, were implemented in consultation with the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health to minimize all unnecessary activities outside the home to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus and protect the public.

Governor Scott is taking additional action to encourage compliance with newly released CDC guidance around interstate travel from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, which advised residents of those states to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days.

In light of the significant risk posed by the further spread of this dangerous virus to Vermonters and the viability of Vermont’s health care system, this new order directs residents and non-residents coming from outside the state for anything other than an essential purpose to home-quarantine for 14 days and strongly discourages travel to Vermont by those located in COVID-19 “hot spots.” Details and exemptions are outlined in [Addendum 7](#).

“We all must do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 to minimize infections – particularly for those who are elderly or have underlying chronic health conditions – and prevent it from overwhelming our healthcare facilities,” said Governor Scott. “I

understand there will be some who need to travel from other states to return to a home in Vermont or support a vulnerable family member. But we need anyone entering Vermont to abide by this 14-day self-isolation directive, and then follow Vermont's Stay Home, Stay Safe order while here. We must work together to slow the spread of this virus."

The Governor's order also provides additional guidance to lodging providers to ensure compliance with the Stay Home, Stay Safe order, which suspended lodging operations.

The order makes clear that lodging facilities – which includes hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, inns, short term rentals (e.g. VRBO, Homeaway, Airbnb, etc.), and all public and private camping facilities and RV parks – are to be closed except for stated exemptions when supporting the state's COVID-19 response. Additionally, the Governor has suspended online lodging reservations.

Under this order, the Vermont State Police and local law enforcement will monitor lodging providers for compliance and work with the Attorney General's Office on additional compliance measures if needed.

Addendum 7 provides lodging operations with additional details on requirements, and state agencies will also be reaching out to these businesses directly.

"These are incredibly difficult times, but the more closely we can follow all of the CDC and Health Department guidance, the more effectively we can slow the spread and save lives," said Governor Scott. "I know we're asking a lot of business owners, workers, school employees, parents, students and all Vermonters. But your sacrifice is not for nothing. If we do this now, we can slow the spread of this deadly virus and keep many of our neighbors and loved ones alive and healthy."

The Stay Home, Stay Safe order and today's updated travel and lodging order are in effect until April 15, 2020, though may be extended or shortened as needed. For full details, [please see Addendum 7 by clicking here.](#)

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont's COVID-19 response, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/covid19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19).

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## **GOVERNOR SCOTT CALLS ON VERMONTERS TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**31 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott is calling all Vermonters into service with the launch of a new website allowing people to sign up for volunteer assistance to support the state’s response to COVID-19: <https://vermont.gov/volunteer>.

This website directs those with medical and healthcare skills to the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), and those with other needed skills to a quick registration process to sign up to help.

“I am asking every Vermonter to dig deep and find a way to give more in this incredibly challenging time,” said Governor Phil Scott. “As we prepare for a surge in COVID-19 cases expected in the coming weeks, it will require each and every one of us to do our part to ease the burden on our health care system, the struggles of those less fortunate, and, ultimately, to save the lives of our friends and neighbors.”

### **Medical Reserve Corp Volunteers Needed to Bolster Existing Health Care Workers**

Those with medical experience or other health care background and the ability to volunteer are needed to bolster the ranks of Vermont’s current health care workforce.

The [state’s volunteer website](#) directs these individuals to Vermont’s MRC units, community-based groups of volunteers who can supplement local emergency, health care provider staff and public health resources. This is needed because Vermont’s existing health care workers are going above and beyond to respond to this challenge as it unfolds, and they are going to need reinforcements.

“In every health care facility in Vermont, staff have been working extraordinary hours, performing herculean tasks under great pressure and with limited resources,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “Knowing we have qualified volunteers ready to serve will help our current health care workers and strengthen Vermont’s response. We are all in this together.”

The Vermont Medical Reserve Corps is seeking these qualified and experienced volunteers:

- Licensed and certified health care professionals;
- People with mental health, or other types of clinical or professional experience;
- Health care administrative experience, such as with medical data entry or language translators; and
- People who have worked with displaced individuals, such as homeless shelter programs.

State officials emphasize this effort is about drawing more skilled personnel, such as retirees or those not currently employed in the healthcare field, into the response and not about redirecting existing healthcare workers.

Vermont has eased licensing requirements for the purposes of aiding this emergency response. Individuals who are licensed in other states or who were previously licensed should visit the Health Department website and [review the guide on emergency licensure](#).

### **Other Volunteer Workers and Donations Also Needed to Strengthen Vermont’s Response**

Other individuals who do not have medical or healthcare backgrounds but are willing to volunteer their time in Vermont’s response effort can register through the [state’s volunteer web portal](#) and indicate their expertise and availability.

The State expects to draw upon many skills to meet the challenge of serving those affected by COVID-19, potentially including drivers, food service, construction, IT, security, skilled trades and more.

In addition to volunteering their time, Vermonters can also contribute to blood banks, food banks, and other emergency supply efforts. The American Red Cross of Northern New England faces a severe blood shortage and many local food banks and other community organizations are in need of support and donations of supplies. In addition to volunteering, Vermonters can also give back in the following ways:

- Donate PPE: Donations of N95 masks, medical and industrial grade or surgical masks can be brought to your nearest State Police Barracks. You can find the location nearest to you here: <https://vsp.vermont.gov/stations>.
- Give blood: Visit the American Red Cross to learn how to safely donate blood: <https://www.redcross.org/local/new-hampshire-vermont.html>.
- Support your local Food Bank. Donate online at [vtfoodbank.org](https://vtfoodbank.org) or you can text GIVEHEALTH to 85511. If you're in need of help, please visit [vtfoodbank.org/gethelp](https://vtfoodbank.org/gethelp).

Governor Scott is calling on all Vermonters to support these critical needs. "Our state is at its best when Vermonters pull together to help each other. The coming weeks will be very difficult, but united in common purpose, we will face, fight and defeat this virus – and emerge stronger together," he said.