



City of Mishawaka

Office of the Mayor

David A. Wood, Mayor

March 19, 2020

My Fellow Mishawakans:

I want to keep you updated about the City's efforts to address the outbreak of COVID-19. These are certainly unprecedented times and conditions are changing rapidly. I want to assure you that our top priority is your health and safety while providing all necessary and critical city services that you depend on.

What is the City doing?

I have appointed Mishawaka Fire Chief Bryon Woodward and Assistant Fire Chief Brian Thomas as our "czars" to stay up to date with the ever-evolving conditions and advise me. I have also assembled a task force made up of key city staff and healthcare professionals to monitor, assess and assist me in making decisions as conditions warrant. We are meeting on a daily basis to share the most current information. We are taking guidance from Center for Disease Control, the State of Indiana, County Health Department and our own medical clinic and public safety departments and have established protocols based on their guidance. We have also developed action plans within each department to ensure that your critical services such as water, sewer, electric, EMS, Police, Fire, etc. will function uninterrupted despite the possibility of reduced staff.

As a City, we have established protocols for additional building/equipment cleaning/disinfection. We have taken steps to limit employee and public interaction. We have cancelled or postponed most events on City owned properties and non-essential group meetings/activities. We are working to develop new Human Resource policies for City employees and are working with our County, State, and Federal officials on identifying needs and potential emergency funding.

As we obtain new or updated information, it will be posted on our City website which will serve as a valuable resource and clearing house for FACTUAL information relevant to you. We know that there is a lot of information out there and we think that there is value in providing you with up to the minute, professionally reviewed information in a way that is conveniently located in one location as a resource for you at www.mishawaka.in.gov

What to do if you think you have COVID-19

First, contact your doctor regarding your symptoms as soon as you notice them. They are your best source for practical information and guidance. Many facilities have set up remote testing areas. Because this virus is very contagious, separate testing areas helps to keep everyone safer. Please call first if you are able and read the directional signs that are located at doorways. Remember, if you are experiencing severe symptoms related to COVID-19 such as inability to breathe or high fever, you should go directly to the hospital or call 911.

It is also important to remember that contracting the COVID-19 virus is low risk for developing severe complications. In fact, it is estimated that 80% of those who contract the virus have either mild or no symptoms. Most of the population will not be affected (or only mildly affected) as the virus runs its course. A current misconception is that this virus only seriously impacts older individuals. There are many young people that have been hospitalized with this, and although the mortality rate is higher for older people with underlying health issues, no one is immune or out of danger.

As has been mentioned everywhere, there are standard precautions we should all take:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

There are also community resources that have been set up if you have general questions that include: Beacon Telehealth hotline at 855-523-2225 from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week; South Bend Clinic from 8am to 8pm, Monday thru Friday, and 8am to 6pm on weekends at 574-347-6870.

What can I do?

We know this is difficult on many levels. You may be out of work. The kids could be home and in need of attention. You might have an existing health condition that makes you more vulnerable. You might not be capable of paying your bills and are worried about the consequences.

The first thing we want you to do is not to panic. As of 3/19 at noon, there were a total of five positive cases in St. Joseph County. If we all follow the recommended guidelines and practice social distancing of keeping 6 feet apart from one another, this will significantly limit the virus's ability to spread quickly.

Congress has passed multiple pieces of legislation that will hopefully provide financial aid soon. The Governor has also ordered some minimum standards regarding sick leave and the like that should also provide for some assurances in the short term.

At the City level, I am asking you to use common sense for your daily activities. If you are a teenager and a group of 20 people are trying to get together at a friend's house, don't go. If it is a nice day and you want to go for a walk, great. Just practice social distancing. If CDC standards can be reasonably met, you can still do things to maintain your mental health.

If you can hold off on going to the store, and you see that there is a big crowd, hold off. If you are in a risk group, plan to have a friend pick up a needed prescription.

A completely unintended consequence of all this is the impact on many of our businesses. As such, I would encourage you to take advantage of carry out food if you have the ability to do it. Help keep our local restaurants open and their employees with jobs. If a restaurant is not following the Governor direction and is open for seated business, please make a point and get your order to go and don't contribute to the negligence.

In Mishawaka, I have not ordered any travel restrictions as of yet, and I do not plan to at this time. Our public safety personnel have plenty to do and we are relying on you to do the right thing. We do want you to limit your travel to just what you believe is essential. If your car needs fixed, I want you to have the ability to make the decision that it is essential to take it to the shop or not.

At this time of crisis, I also want each of you to do you do your best to support one another. If you are capable of helping someone else safely, please do. If you are older and in poorer health, do not feel bad if you need to ask a neighbor for help. You are actually helping all of us by keeping yourself well. Be kind

to one another, believe it or not, there are increased domestic calls to Police in times like this. Do your best to help our first responders by helping to take care of yourself and your families.

There are a number of social programs available for those in dire need. If this pertains to you, I would suggest calling the United Way 211 line to obtain potential guidance on whatever your issue may be. Multiple food pantries are open and are merely providing food to go.

I also want to thank our first responders and those that have chosen to work in the medical profession. We need you now more than ever and I couldn't be prouder of the dedication and selflessness that I see every day.

I have confidence in you to answer the call, to rise above these circumstances and to be THE example of what a community that comes together looks like. There is no one that I'd rather confront this with than the great people of Mishawaka. We shall meet these challenges head on and we shall rise above together, just as we always have in the Princess City.

We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you informed as new circumstances or information is made available. Check our website often. It is my sincere hope that all of this work, planning and effort maintains the health of our City. By following the recommended guidelines from government, healthcare professionals and our city staff, we will be able to weather this storm together.

Yours in Mishawaka,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Wood", is positioned below the text "Yours in Mishawaka,".

Mayor Dave Wood