



County of Powhatan,  
Virginia

3834 Old Buckingham  
Road  
Powhatan, VA 23139

Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

03/18/2020

Contact:

Bret Schardein, Acting County Administrator

Email: [bschardein@powhatanva.gov](mailto:bschardein@powhatanva.gov) Phone: (804) 598-3639

---

**COVID Powhatan County Status Update for March 18th 2020**

**Due to the ever-changing nature of the response to the pandemic, this update is intended to provide the most accurate information at the moment, with anything contained in this update is subject to change. Please check the County, State and Federal websites or with the relevant authorities for the most up to date information at any time.**

**Message from the Powhatan County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator**

"The Powhatan Board of Supervisors is working closely with the County Administrator and our Emergency Management Team to ensure the county is continuing to run as smoothly as possibly in these ever-changing times. Keeping the public safe and healthy is our utmost concern. In order to keep you up to date please view the following web page it is updated daily <http://powhatanva.gov/1687/COVID---19-Information> as well as our Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/pg/powhatancountyva/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/powhatancountyva/posts/?ref=page_internal). Additionally, if you know someone in need of food or medicine, the Board of Supervisors is working closely with the schools and social services to secure the basic necessities for all of our citizens. Stay home, stay safe and be well."

Sincerely,

David Williams, Chair, District 1  
Karin Carmack, Vice-Chair, District 5  
Larry Nordvig, District 2  
Mike Byerly, District 3  
Bill Cox, District 4  
Bret Schardein, Acting County Administrator

**Emergency Operations Plan**

Did you know the County has an Emergency Operations Plan (or EOP) for local emergencies and employs a full-time Emergency Management Coordinator? The EOP is a multi-discipline, all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of major emergencies and disasters within the County. The EOP incorporates the National Incident Management System as the County-wide standard for incident management. The plan outlines the roles and responsibilities assigned to County departments and agencies for response to disasters and emergencies. The EOP is not intended as a stand-alone document but serves as the overarching strategy that aligns more detailed department and agency plans and operating procedures to meet County response and recovery needs.

## **Board of Supervisors meetings**

The March 23<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting has been cancelled. All items, including previously advertised public hearings shall be rescheduled, and re-advertised, for a later date.

The March 24th Special meeting is postponed, date TBD

## **Powhatan County Government Offices**

As we operate with limited in-office staff and work to limit the spread within Powhatan, access to offices shall be by appointment only starting on Thursday March 19<sup>th</sup>, until Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>. Please call ahead to see if your request can be handled remotely or to schedule a time to come in, at (804) 598-5612 or [administration@powhatanva.gov](mailto:administration@powhatanva.gov). A list of departments and their contacts can be found at <http://www.powhatanva.gov/35/Departments>. For a comprehensive list of County closings, check the Powhatan COVID-19 page at <http://powhatanva.gov/1687/COVID---19-Information>. Specific information on various departments can be found below:

### Building Inspections

The Building Department is following current CDC guidelines when performing both office and field duties. All communication shall be performed through phone or email until further notice. We have placed a drop off box inside the double-doors of the Administration Building for permits, amendments, and other paperwork. Please leave any and all information that you feel necessary when leaving paperwork. Permits can also be mailed in. Fees will be calculated at a later date and we will contact you with the amounts and how payment will be accepted. A valid email address is necessary for us to respond, please be sure it is legible on any paperwork that you leave. We ask that everyone work together through this unique period and that all parties remain outside of our office so that the services that we provide can continue. Inspectors may refuse to inspect portions of buildings occupied by individuals diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, exposed to others with the virus or display symptoms of illness. Anyone on an inspection site is asked to maintain a minimum 6 feet distance from County staff and have limited communication with them while they are on site. Inspections are being performed as usual at this point and we will be expanding the third party inspection process as necessary. The public can leave a voicemail if they do not reach us at 804-598-5622 #2 or email us using the email directory on our page for assistance. Trade permits normally issued over the counter will need to be mailed in with the fee which they can request the amount due by email from [jhammond@powhatanva.gov](mailto:jhammond@powhatanva.gov) or calling 804-598-5622 #2. Proffer amounts to be mailed in and CO requests can be emailed to [jhammond@powhatanva.gov](mailto:jhammond@powhatanva.gov). To pick up a permit please request by email [jhammond@powhatanva.gov](mailto:jhammond@powhatanva.gov) or by voicemail at 804-598-5622 #2 to set up an appointment time. Thank you for your cooperation!

### Parks and Recreation

All Sports Leagues, Teams, and Activities have been suspended on County and School fields and facilities. County parks are still open to the public, please abide by Federal and State guidelines, such as social distancing and do not gather in groups of 10 or more. All Restrooms will be locked.

### Library

To help limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Library will be closed to the public for two weeks beginning Monday, March 16, through Saturday, March 28, 2020. This includes meeting room reservations. While the library is closed, the book drop will also be closed. Fines accrued during the closure will be waived. For the most up-to-date information please see [our Facebook page](#). Library WiFi and [our e-branch resources](#) are available 24/7.

### Convenience Centers

Convenience center is operating normally. Please follow current guidelines when visiting.

### Public Works

Public works offices are closed and available by appointment. Grounds and facilities are working normally and using social distancing. Custodial staff are operating normally. Utilities are operating normally.

Ramona Carter, Director of Public Works [rcarter@powhatanva.gov](mailto:rcarter@powhatanva.gov) (804) 385-6204

### The Powhatan County Circuit Court Clerk's Office

As of Thursday March 19, 2020, the Powhatan Circuit Court Clerks office will only be open by appointment only. We ask that customers contact us at 804-598-5660 for appointments for mission critical work. All other business will be conducted via U.S. mail or email.

Teresa Hash Dobbins, Clerk

Phone: (804) 598-5660

[tdobbins@vacourts.gov](mailto:tdobbins@vacourts.gov)

### Office of Elections & Voter Registration

Currently closed to the public. Limited staff will be working in shifts in the office between 9 AM – 5 PM, Monday - Friday, but will only be accessible to the public via phone, e-mail, and fax at this time. In the meantime, we are requesting that the public utilize our online resources for electronic voter registration and absentee ballot requests. If the online resources offered are not a feasible option, then the public can request to have election documents mailed to them for the purposes of returning completed documents by mail. If special accommodations need to be made for any Election/Voter Registration service; please contact the office (804) 598-5604. Our website can be reached via:

<http://www.powhatanva.gov/310/Voter-Registrar>

### Commonwealth's Attorney's Office

Open, can be contacted by phone as usual. Will remain open to serve law enforcement and courts. Citizens can call in for assistance.

### Commissioner of the Revenue

Services by appointment or phone calls. Call first to see if we can complete your business over the phone or email. (804) 598 5619. Board of Equalization Hearings postponed to a later date. In response to the CDC guidelines and in helping contain the spread of the COVID-19, the Powhatan Commissioner of the Revenue office in cooperation with the Powhatan Board of Supervisors will accept late filings for the Tax Relief program for the Elderly and Disabled through May 15th. We will also be accepting phone verification of income and assets in order to encourage the target population to stay home during this uncertain time.

### Treasurer's Office

Services by appointment or phone calls. Call first to see if we can complete your business over the phone or email. (804) 598 5627. <http://www.powhatanva.gov/316/Treasurer>

### Fire & Rescue

Access to buildings by appointment only, first responders are actively serving the community and operating normally.

### 911 Dispatch

Access to buildings by appointment only, dispatchers are actively serving the community and operating normally.

### Powhatan County Public Schools

The March 24, 2020 Powhatan School Board Budget Workshop has been CANCELED. Refer to the Powhatan County Schools' website for the latest information on closings and available resources to students. <http://www.powhatan.k12.va.us/groups/79021/covid19/covid19>

### Powhatan Extension Office

Residents may contact the Powhatan Extension Office by calling the main office number at (804) 598-5640, or email staff at <https://powhatan.ext.vt.edu/staff.html>.

- All programs, including Spring Garden Fest, have been canceled through April 30.
- Powhatan 4-H camp registrations may be mailed, or delivered to the drop box located to the right of the Village Building front doors. There are no female spots available.
- Soil Testing Services: The Virginia Tech soil testing lab is experiencing longer than normal turn-around time for samples to be analyzed due to the COVID-19 virus impacting their staffing. They are also receiving well above average sample volume. All samples will be analyzed, but please bear with us during the next month or so as they try to resolve these issues and return to a regular process. \*Sample forms and boxes may be picked up at the rear of the Powhatan Village Building at the Extension Demonstration Garden.\*
- Master Gardener Help Desk will have limited, or no ability, to send samples to the plant disease, weed ID or insect ID labs at Virginia Tech. Please contact our main office (804) 598-5640 or email [gpmastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:gpmastergardener@gmail.com) with inquiries.

### **Summary of Governor's March 17<sup>th</sup> briefing**

The Governor held a press-briefing on March 17<sup>th</sup> and issued a declaration of a Public Health Emergency, giving the following guidance:

- Stay at home if over the age of 65
- Do not gather in groups of 10 or more in close proximity
- Practice social distancing
- Encourage take-out options for restaurants
- Unemployment will be available without a one week waiting period

### **Local Team**

Powhatan County has created a Coronavirus Planning Team comprised of County leadership from Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, Fire/Rescue, 911 Dispatch, IT, Public Information, Administration, Schools, Dept of Social Services and Public Works. The team is meeting frequently online to continue to monitor, plan and coordinate efforts to address impacts.

### **Regional Planning**

Powhatan County is a member of the Central Virginia All Hazards Incident Management Team (CVAHIMT) comprised of Powhatan, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Richmond, and Goochland to help lead a regional response to COVID-19. This allows Powhatan to draw on a larger network of communication, information and resources.

### **Cleaning of County Buildings**

Public Works has initiated a comprehensive cleaning plan for all County buildings that meets or exceeds VDH guidance.

### **Powhatan County State of Emergency**

On March 15 Powhatan County joined Richmond, Hanover, Henrico, Chesterfield and Goochland in declaring a Local State of Emergency. While the Administration and Emergency Management officials remain comfortable with Powhatan's current state of preparedness, this declaration will allow the County to move more swiftly in putting resources towards the issue, should they become needed in the future.

### **Information sources**

Be aware there is misinformation being shared, particularly on social media, much of it looking legitimate. The best sources for official vetted information are the Center for Disease Control and the Virginia Department of Health. The best website for national information is the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> . The VDH has a website for Virginia's status <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>. We will continue to put out information directly on anything specific to Powhatan at <http://powhatanva.gov/1687/COVID---19-Information>.

### **Need broadband?**

If you are in an area without good internet, and need access, the County has several free public Wi-Fi spots available. The network Powhatan\_guest is accessible in the parking lots of the Powhatan County Library (2270 Mann Rd), Administration Building (3834 Old Buckingham Rd) and Village Building (3910 Old Buckingham Rd). It is also available from the Courthouse (3880 Old Buckingham Rd), but parking near the building is limited. Many businesses, particularly restaurants, also have free Wi-Fi inside or outside of their buildings. Although closed, the Powhatan County Library is working to expand the availability of loaner hotspots.

Comcast Xfinity WiFi Free for Everyone: Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit [www.xfinity.com/wifi](http://www.xfinity.com/wifi). Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the “xfinitywifi” network name in the list of available hotspots, and then launch a browser. More information from Comcast may be found at [www.xfinity.com/prepare](http://www.xfinity.com/prepare)

### **Steps to reduce illness**

We ask all employees and the public to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace, including the following:

- Stay home when you are sick.
  - Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use hand sanitizers that are found throughout the workplace and in common areas.
  - Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash; or
  - Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
  - Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
  - Clean frequently touched surfaces.
  - Practice Social Distancing, which the CDC defines social distancing as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible." Avoid gathering in groups of 10 or more in close proximity.
- Persons 65 and older are being recommended by the Governor to self-quarantine for the time being.

Sincerely,

**Powhatan County Administration**

###