



Frequently Asked Questions Pertaining to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

STOP: Text SURFSIDE to 99411 to register for CodeRed emergency alerts or sign up via the [Town website](#).

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON CORONAVIRUS

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms COVID-19 can include fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, and loss of taste or smell. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Some patients may have body aches, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste and smell, or diarrhea. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

What can I do to protect myself and stop the spread of coronavirus?

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Stay home, except as necessary to pick-up essentials or seek medical help
- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces
- Wear a cloth facial covering where social distancing is an issue
- Maintain at least six feet distance between yourself and others
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Avoid nonessential travel

What if I'm an at-risk senior or resident with special needs in need of support?

If you are 65 years or older or have underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, diabetes or lung disease), then you are urged to stay home. For our at-risk seniors and residents with special needs, please know our Surfside Police Department is here to assist. For support, call the Surfside Police Department's non-emergency number at 305-861-4862.

Should I wear a face mask when out in public?

Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the use of cloth face masks or coverings in public settings to help slow the spread of coronavirus. Additionally, Miami-Dade County issued an emergency order, requiring customers and employees to wear cloth facial coverings and face masks in public spaces (e.g. grocery store, pharmacy, restaurant takeout pick-up, etc.) where social distancing is an issue.

The CDC released [recommendations](#), along with a video by the U.S. Surgeon General with easy instructions on how to make a face covering using rubber bands and a scarf, bandana, hand towel or T-shirt. [You can view the video and CDC recommendations on face masks.](#)

How can I stay safe while shopping for essentials?

If you must make a trip to the grocery store, then make sure to: designate one shopper; wear a cloth face mask or covering; wipe down the handle on the grocery cart; shop during less crowded times and go only when absolutely necessary; take advantage of special hours if a senior, healthcare worker or first responder; use a credit or debit card instead of cash; don't touch your face after handling groceries; and wash your hands after returning home. [Shop safely with these tips.](#)

PRO TIP: To minimize your exposure to other people, try using a delivery service, such as [Instacart](#), [Amazon Prime](#) and [Shipt](#). Avoid a direct hand off by having the bags left by your door and also tip the driver electronically. [Here is a tutorial on how to use Instacart.](#)

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is the practice of staying at least six feet away from others to stop the spread of coronavirus. The measures are aimed at trying to cut down the amount of virus spreading around, and ultimately protect those most vulnerable, including the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. Please follow the recommended social distancing guidelines from the [Florida Department of Health](#).

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. These droplets may land on objects and surfaces. Other people may contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Can I catch COVID-19 from my pet?

While there has been one instance of a dog being infected in Hong Kong, to date, there is no evidence that a dog, cat or any pet can transmit COVID-19. COVID-19 is mainly spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. To protect yourself, clean

your hands frequently and thoroughly. The CDC says anyone who is sick with the coronavirus should still restrict contact with any animals just like you would around other people.

Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The CDC and FDOH recommends everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of the virus.

Where can I go to get tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 testing is available at several locations. But before you go, make sure to check with the COVID-19 testing site for restrictions, such as age limitations and by appointment only. For locations, [visit here](#).

What if I'm a senior or a resident with limited mobility?

Miami-Dade County offers in-home coronavirus testing for seniors and adults with disabilities (18 and older). The tests are free to those exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and are administered by Miami-Dade Fire Rescue units in partnership with Jackson Health System. To make an appointment, call 305-499-8767.

What's the difference between a nasal swab test and a pinprick blood test?

There are several key differences.

Nasal swab tests (also known as molecular tests of respiratory samples) determine whether a person is currently infected with the coronavirus.

Pinprick blood tests (also known as antibody-detecting rapid diagnostic tests) primarily determine whether a person has previously been infected with the virus and recovered, or is close to recovery. These tests are generally not intended to diagnose active coronavirus infections, only past ones. Additionally, at the start of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, the federal Food and Drug Administration waived review of rapid diagnostic blood tests. As a result, there are questions about the accuracy of rapid diagnostic blood testing. Read more here [<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/19/us/coronavirus-antibody-tests.html>].

For the best advice on what kind of test to receive, contact your doctor or the Florida Department of Health.

Whom can I contact with COVID-19 related questions?

For questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 hotline by calling 1-866-779-6121 or by emailing covid-19@flhealth.gov.

The Town of Surfside is available to assist the community in all times of need. For questions pertaining to COVID-19 in the community, call Town Hall at 305-861-4863 and dial "0" during business hours, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily. For concerns outside those hours, please contact the police non-emergency number at 305-861-4862. If you are a senior or at additional risk because of an underlying health condition, please contact the police non-emergency number for support.

Where can I receive the most up-to-date number of confirmed COVID-19 cases?

The Florida Department of Health has created a dashboard where updates are made in real-time. To view the dashboard, visit here.

Where can I go to receive coronavirus updates from the Town?

Along with trusted news sources, here is where you can turn for reliable coronavirus information:

- [Sign up for CodeRed emergency alerts and Town email notifications](#)
- [Town of Surfside website](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization Q&A](#)
- [Florida Department of Health](#)
- [Florida Department of Health COVID-19 case dashboard](#)
- [Miami-Dade County Emergency Orders and Updates from Mayor Carlos Gimenez](#)
- [Miami-Dade County Public Schools](#)

Where can I go to review COVID-19 related emergency orders and executive orders by the State of Florida, Miami-Dade County and the Town of Surfside?

- [State of Florida – Executive Orders](#)
- [Miami-Dade County – Emergency Orders](#)
- [Town of Surfside – Emergency Measures](#)

TOWN SERVICES

Can I visit Town Hall?

Surfside's Town Hall building is publicly accessible to visitors and staff, as long as CDC health and safety guidelines are followed. For the public's continued health and safety, the Town strongly encourages residents to call for matters that can be handled over the phone.

Additionally, the Town is taking additional precautions in reopening Town Hall, including, but not limited to: requiring staff and visitors to wear facial coverings at all times; adhering to a schedule for regular, frequent cleaning; providing additional signage with coronavirus-specific health and safety information; and requiring various social distancing measures.

To contact Town Hall, call 305-861-4863 and dial "0" during business hours, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily. For concerns outside those hours, please contact the police non-emergency number at 305-861-4862. If you are a senior or at additional risk because of an underlying health condition, please contact the police non-emergency number for support.

Are Surfside's parks and recreation facilities open?

The Tennis Center is open with guidelines to keep tennis players safe. However, all other parks and recreation facilities in Surfside remain closed until further notice including the Community Center, 96th Street Park, Tot Lot, and Dog Park. The following programs and/or services have been impacted as a result: All Town meetings, committees, recreation activities, community events,

after school programs and summer camp have been either canceled or postponed until further notice.

In the meantime, Surfside's Parks and Recreation Department is working hard to provide a variety of online activities to keep residents' busy and active. Check out Zoom classes, virtual activities, a scavenger hunt and much more on the [Town website](#).

Is the Police Department open?

The Police Department lobby remains open to the public for emergencies only, but we strongly recommend you call first before coming to the lobby. The Surfside Police Department is now accepting telephone reports for your non-emergency response service needs. Examples of reports that may be taken by telephone include fraudulent activity and most misdemeanor crimes. To file a report, contact our Police Department non-emergency number at 305-861-4862.

Is the Town still picking up trash and recycling?

Yes, the Town's Public Works Department is continuing to pick-up trash, recycling and bulk items. [View the schedule](#).

What if I need to make a utility or solid waste payment?

Utility and Solid Waste Payments are still being accepted. Payments can be made online, mailed, or dropped off at Town Hall and placed in the gray lock box. Please make sure your account number is listed on the check. (NO CASH, CHECKS ONLY)

Is construction affected?

The Town of Surfside is allowing construction in a limited capacity, subject to compliance with restrictions as outlined in the [Code of Care and Conduct Pledge Agreement](#). Every owner and contractor for a construction site will be required to sign the pledge agreement prior to commencement of any work and will be expected to proceed with care to protect both Surfside residents and construction workers while mitigating the spread of coronavirus.

Is the shuttle bus still running?

Operations for the Surf-Bay-Bal community shuttle bus are currently suspended until further notice.

BUSINESSES AND UNEMPLOYED

When are restaurants, hair salons and non-essential businesses reopening in Surfside?

Miami-Dade County has issued a new [Emergency Order 23-20](#), effective at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, May 18, that allows certain retail and commercial establishments to reopen, as long as businesses follow the health and safety guidelines outlined in ["The New Normal" handbook](#). Under the county's new Emergency Order, all restaurants, retail, office, and personal grooming establishments in Surfside will be allowed to reopen on Monday, May 18 as long as businesses strictly follow the requirements outlined in "The New Normal handbook."

At this time, the Miami-Dade County Order does not allow the reopening of public beaches (including Surfside), hotels, hotel pools, apartment and condominium pools. Additionally, spas, licensed massage establishments, tattoo shops, bars, clubs, gyms, dance studios, bowling alleys, movie theaters and large event venues are to remain closed. And, professional sports facilities may not have fans present.

Does Surfside have a curfew like Miami Beach?

Surfside does not currently have a curfew as it was determined there is not a need for it.

Where can I turn for financial relief and help as a small business or individual?

To assist individuals and businesses who are financially impacted by the crisis, the Town of Surfside has compiled a list of helpful resources. This information is regularly updated on the [Town website](#).

Where can I turn for job assistance?

For reemployment assistance and disaster recovery, visit the [Florida Department of Economic Opportunity](#). Note that due to issues with the DEO website, [26 Miami-Dade Public Library branches](#) are distributing unemployment applications and providing additional forms for public assistance, including the federal food assistance program (SNAP), Medicaid and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). [Visit the Miami-Dade Public Library System website for participating library locations](#).

CareerSource South Florida is also another good resource for job seekers. [Visit here for more information](#).

BEACH AND SEAWALLS

Why is the beach closed?

The public beach in Surfside is under the jurisdiction of Miami-Dade County, which issued a mandatory closure of all public beaches to help stop the congregation of groups and prevent the further spread of coronavirus. For the convenience of residents, the hardpack and beach jogging path remain open; however, residents must wear a facial covering, maintain a safe social distance (at least six feet away from others) and avoid gathering in groups.

Why are the seawalls closed?

There are several reasons why the seawalls are currently closed including:

- Reports of large groups of paddleboarders and/or kayakers congregating and launching from the seawall. Launching from the seawall especially during low tide can lead to injuries as it is an unsafe action. If someone gets injured it would utilize Fire Rescue and Police resources needlessly.
- The seawall has also been a congregating point for juveniles that are less likely to heed social distancing requirements.
- There were reports of people illegally parking their vehicles in the street ends while they use these areas.

Why are the beach tractors on the beach during the coronavirus crisis?

This is a Miami-Dade County operation for public beach maintenance including in Surfside. The reason for the beach tractor is not for aesthetics, but to smooth out escarpments (created by waves) and to help reduce erosion. This is an essential service conducted by Miami-Dade County as our public beaches are our first line of defense with major storms and hurricanes.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

How long will Miami-Dade County Public Schools be closed?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will remain closed through the end of this 2019-2020 school year. Teacher planning days and legal holidays outlined in the [2019-2020 schools calendar](#) will continue to be observed.

What if my child needs meals?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools offers free Grab-and-Go Meals to students and families of students, as needed, at 50 locations throughout the county from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. Parents You must show child's school ID and can pick up meals for multiple days at a time. [Check out this map to find a location near you.](#)

[Also visit the Miami-Dade County Public School's dedicated COVID-19 page for updates.](#)

Where can I turn for questions?

M-DCPS has a hotline to answer questions from students, parents and other community members about school district-related coronavirus efforts. The number is 305-995-3000. For additional resources and support, visit covid19.dadeschools.net.

TRAVELERS

What if I'm traveling to Surfside from an area with documented substantial coronavirus cases?

To combat the further spread of coronavirus, the Town of Surfside has issued an Emergency Order, mandating that individuals traveling to Surfside from outside of the United States or from any of the 19 U.S. states (listed in the Order), must self-isolate or quarantine for the entire duration of their visit to Surfside, or for 14 days beginning on the day of their arrival, whichever is shorter. The Emergency Order applies to people traveling from areas with substantial documented coronavirus cases in their communities, as determined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) data](#). The order may be amended to include additional states where community spread is documented by the CDC.

[Review Town of Surfside Emergency Measures No. 4](#)

Where can I book a hotel or short-term vacation rental?

At this time, all hotels, motels, short-term vacation rentals and other commercial lodging cannot accept new reservations, except for “essential lodgers.”