

For a complete look at federal and state action related to the coronavirus, visit MWC's [website](#).

Updates from Gov. Northam's Daily Press Conference

March 25

On Wednesday, March 25, Governor Northam made the following announcements on Virginia's COVID-19 response:

- There are 391 positive cases in Virginia. Governor Northam said the numbers are a result of increased testing and community spread.
- Governor Northam gave an update on Virginia's healthcare capacity, including medical professionals, equipment, and beds.
 - Virginia is exploring ways to make it easier for qualified medical professionals to help during the pandemic, including reworking Virginia's licensing procedures and considering the use of medical students. Governor Northam said the state will make better use of the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps. The VMRC has more than 8,000 deployable volunteers. Governor Northam asked medical professionals that are licensed or students that are interested in volunteering to go to the VMRC website.
 - Governor Northam said he has encouraged medical providers to postpone elective surgeries. Today, Governor Northam will sign an executive order directing them to do so. Northam explained that this will preserve bed space and PPE.
 - Governor Northam said we need a national response due to price increases as states are competing for equipment.
 - To address bed capacity, Governor Northam spoke with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who can build emergency hospitals on sites that the state identifies for them should the need arise. Those sites will be announced when they are decided.
- Virginia state parks will be day-use only starting Friday morning. Campgrounds, cabins, and bath houses will close.
- The state is also working with the federal government to get additional federal dollars to families that qualify for SNAP benefits as a result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that Congress passed last week.
- Secretary Layne gave an overview of the \$2 trillion federal stimulus package that Congress will likely pass this week, and encouraged Congress to pass it quickly.
 - The package includes \$250 billion in direct payments to individuals, \$250 billion in enhanced unemployment benefits, \$130 billion for aid to hospitals, \$350 billion for loans and aid to small businesses, \$500 billion to large businesses, and \$150 billion in state and local aid.
- Governor Northam emphasized that residents need to stay home and encouraged Jerry Falwell to reconsider his message that invites students to return to Liberty University.

March 24

On March 24, Governor Northam made the following announcements on Virginia's COVID-19 response:

- There are currently 290 cases of COVID-19 in Virginia.
- Virginia is working to ensure hospitals and medical providers have the equipment they need. Virginia received the first shipment of PPE from the national stockpile. Virginia has also ordered a shipment of PPE from a company overseas. Government officials are working with Virginia businesses to use their manufacturing lines to create PPE. Governor Northam commended the public and private sectors for being creative. For example, some Virginia distillers are making hand sanitizer, and the Department of Corrections is making masks. Virginia is also working to secure more ventilators.
- Governor Northam spoke with Maryland Gov. Hogan and Washington, D.C. Mayor Bowser on ways the region can work together and share medical equipment, such as ventilators.

Governor Northam announced that the press conferences will be held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 2:00PM moving forward.

March 23

On March 23, Governor Northam made the following announcements on Virginia's COVID-19 response:

- There are 254 cases of COVID-19 in Virginia.
- Governor Northam signed [Executive Order 53](#), which orders the closure of certain non-essential businesses, bans all gatherings of more than 10 people, and closes all K-12 schools for the remainder of the academic year. The order goes into effect at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 and will remain in place until 11:59 PM on Thursday, April 23, 2020.
- Governor Northam directed all schools – private and public – to remain closed for the remainder of the academic year. School divisions will decide how students will learn the information they were meant to cover for the remainder of the year. By tomorrow, the Department of Education will issue guidance to help school divisions plan and ensure that every student is served equitably. Governor Northam reiterated that Virginia is working on waivers for testing requirements.
- The Governor called for a public-private partnership to provide care for the children of essential workers. The Department of Education and the Department of Social Services will issue guidance today on how to provide childcare services for essential personnel.
- Under the Executive Order, recreation and entertainment businesses must close; dining and on-site alcohol establishments can continue to offer delivery and/or takeout services; retail business can open but must adhere to social distancing requirements; professional businesses must utilize telework as much as possible.
- Last week, 40K people filed for unemployment in Virginia.

The press release of the Governor's announcement can be found [here](#). The text of Executive Order 53 can be found [here](#).

March 22

On March 22, Governor Northam and his administration made the following announcements on Virginia's COVID-19 response:

- Virginia has a total of 219 cases of COVID-19 as of today.
- VDEM shipped a major supply of PPE to emergency medical services, health districts, and hospitals yesterday.
- Virginia is actively reaching out to companies for help making and distributing PPE. Governor Northam called on Virginia companies with manufacturing, logistics and supply chain expertise to help.
- Governor Northam called for hospitals to reschedule elective surgeries. He said many hospitals have already done so.
- The Governor encouraged Virginians to telework and use telehealth services.
- The Department of Corrections is providing two free phone calls to inmates per week, since all in-person visitation has been suspended due to COVID-19. Transfers to prisons have also been suspended.
- Governor Northam said they will likely have additional guidance for schools tomorrow, March 23.

Governor Northam announced that he will move his daily press conference to 2 pm starting tomorrow.

March 21

On March 21, Governor Northam made the following announcements on Virginia's COVID-19 response:

- Virginia's testing criteria will give additional priority to medical professionals that have cared for someone with COVID-19. They are also easing testing criteria for those in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Virginia is pursuing every opportunity to secure the necessary medical supplies. Secretary Carey said some manufacturers in Virginia may be able to make masks quickly, and Virginia is pursuing all options. Secretary Carey emphasized the need for a national solution as well.
- The Governor signed an executive order last night that will allow hospitals and nursing homes more flexibility to add beds during this situation. The order lifts the certificate of public need restrictions so that our health commissioner can give hospitals and nursing homes the authority to add more beds without red tape.
- The Virginia Department of Education is preparing a waiver to exempt Virginia students from federal testing requirements, following the U.S. Department of Education's announcement that it will grant waivers to states.

- The Northam administration is also considering actions necessary to provide relief to students on state-mandated SOL tests.
- Attorney General Mark Herring issued an opinion that says that public bodies may conduct meetings electronically, if the purpose of the meeting is to address the emergency.

March 20

On March 20, Governor Northam held his daily press conference to provide updates on Virginia's COVID-19 response. As of today, there are 114 cases, 19 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths in Virginia. Virginia has more than 1,000 tests available as of today.

Governor Northam thanked businesses and restaurants that are abiding by the social distancing restrictions. He said for those restaurants and businesses that are not complying, localities have the authority to enforce the restrictions. He also said that Virginia ABC has granted restaurants the ability to sell beer and wine for takeout.

Yesterday, over 16K jobless claims came in. Dr. Megan Healy, Chief Workforce Development Officer, said the Virginia Employment Commission is increasing its capacity. It has expanded call centers and online server capacity. Additionally, the Governor has waived the waiting week and work search requirements to be considered for unemployment benefits. Dr. Healy said the Department of Labor is changing the rules daily on who can apply for unemployment benefits, so she encouraged everyone that has lost their job to apply.

Finally, Governor Northam encouraged all Virginians to complete their census form.

March 19

Today, the Governor announced several actions in response to COVID-19:

- Businesses will be able to request an extension of February sales tax returns, which are due tomorrow, until April 20. Businesses will have to pay interest. This will cost the state \$145M and about \$30M will be felt by localities.
- While the tax filing deadline for individuals and corporations will remain the same, the payment deadline has been extended until June 1, 2020. Additional guidance on this as well as the sales tax returns extension will be posted on the tax commissioners website later this afternoon.
- The Governor directed the state police to suspend motor vehicle inspections for the next 60 days.
- As of yesterday, there are 10K unemployment claims in Virginia. The Governor said they are taking steps to ensure people don't have to wait a week to apply for unemployment.

- Virginia's application to the Small Business Administration to allow small businesses to apply for loans was approved.
- The Department of Corrections is suspending in-person meetings
- The Virginia Medicaid program is eliminating copays for services, extending prescription refills for 90 days, and enhancing telehealth options.

Virginia State Action on COVID-19

March 23

[Virginia Governor Issues Executive Order Addressing Schools, Businesses, and Large Gatherings](#)

Executive Order 53 closes K-12 schools for the remainder of the academic year, bans gatherings of 10 or more, and creates temporary business restrictions.

March 20

[Virginia small businesses eligible to apply for coronavirus disaster loans](#)

Virginia small businesses are now eligible to apply for financial assistance due to the impact of the spreading coronavirus.

[Governor faces calls for special session, 'bolder and swifter action' on COVID-19](#)

After adjourning a historic legislative session last week, a few Democratic lawmakers crossed Capitol Square to stand with Gov. Ralph Northam at a news conference about the state's response to COVID-19. Then they left town and went home to their districts. Then the world changed.

[DEQ suspends routine fieldwork but will continue pipeline monitoring through contractors](#)

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has suspended all routine fieldwork, including regular inspections and in-person monitoring, for two weeks in the face of the continuing spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus.

March 19

[Governor Northam Announces Additional Actions to Address COVID-19](#)

Co-pays eliminated for all Medicaid-covered services, tax relief, small businesses can begin applying for low-interest federal disaster loans

[Virginia to extend May 1 tax deadline for all individuals and businesses](#)

Virginia will allow all individuals and businesses to delay paying their 2019 income taxes by 30 days, bumping the deadline to pay from May 1 to June 1

[Insurers waiving testing, telemedicine fees](#)

Virginia health insurers say members who need screening and testing to see if they are infected with the COVID-19 coronavirus won't be asked for the usual co-pay or other cost-sharing

[Unemployment Benefits for Workers Impacted by Coronavirus in DC, Maryland, Virginia](#)

Workers are facing financial hardship as businesses either shut down or reduce their hours over the coronavirus

[VDOE seeks federal SOL testing waiver during coronavirus crisis](#)

Amid statewide school closures due to the threat of coronavirus, the Virginia Department of Education has requested a federal waiver for students slated to take the Virginia Standards of Learning tests this spring

[In letter to Northam, Fairfax offers suggestions to help fight coronavirus](#)

Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax sent a letter to Gov. Ralph Northam voicing his opinion on what steps the state should implement during the coronavirus pandemic

[Virginia officials asking law enforcement to avoid arrests when possible](#)

Virginia state officials are asking law enforcement agencies to avoid arrests when possible, amid calls from civil rights groups about jail conditions amid the COVID-19 outbreak

[Virginia GOP Delays Convention to Pick Trump as Nominee; The Republican Party of Virginia has postponed its upcoming statewide convention due to the coronavirus](#)

The Republican Party of Virginia has postponed its upcoming statewide convention due to the coronavirus.

[DMV shopping malls shut down amid coronavirus concerns](#)

Simon Properties and Westfield stores have temporarily closed stores in Maryland and Virginia

March 18

[Clearer picture arrives of economic toll of coronavirus](#)

The economic toll of the coronavirus pandemic became clearer Tuesday as layoffs and furloughs in the hospitality and service industries continue to mount in Greater Washington

[State allocates additional \\$11M to struggling transit systems](#)

Commonwealth Transportation Board funds are aimed at helping transit agencies recover from ridership losses and other COVID-19-related operating expenses

[Universities, colleges cancel graduation ceremonies amid pandemic](#)

Public, private and community colleges have canceled commencement

[Pentagon wants USNS Comfort ready to deploy to New York](#)

The Defense Department wants the Norfolk-based hospital ship USNS Comfort to get ready to deploy to New York in an effort to aid civilian hospitals that may need to relocate patients who aren't diagnosed with coronavirus

March 17

[Governor Northam Announces New Measures to Combat COVID-19 and Support Impacted Virginians](#)

Directs adherence to 10-person gathering ban, quarantine for high-risk individuals, worker and employer support

[Governor Northam Declares Public Health Emergency](#)

March 12

[Governor Northam Declares State of Emergency, Outlines Additional Measures to Combat COVID-19](#)

Governor issues guidance on large events and state workforce, activates long-term economic plan

Virginia Local Action on COVID-19

March 23

[Fairfax County COVID-19 Update](#)

Fairfax County is still proceeding with development reviews, inspections and permitting, albeit with adjusted procedures. For zoning cases, the Department of Planning and Development is primarily working remotely and has adjusted to receiving electronic resubmissions.

March 19

[F.C. Declares Local Emergency in Response to Coronavirus](#)

Falls Church City Manager Wyatt Shields, in an exclusive interview with the News-Press Wednesday afternoon, confirmed that the City and City schools are in full-scale mobilization to adhere with “social distancing” and other key elements aimed at stemming the spread of the deadly airborne coronavirus.

[LewisGale implements stricter policies as coronavirus cases in Virginia reach 77](#)

LewisGale Regional Health System is implementing new procedures as cases of the novel coronavirus continue to increase throughout Virginia

[Colonial Downs announces all Rosie’s Gaming Emporiums will close temporarily amid coronavirus](#)

[Richmond-area police departments prepare to enforce 10-person limit, while keeping eye on crime during pandemic](#)

The Richmond and Chesterfield County police departments are giving targeted businesses a grace period to comply with Gov. Ralph Northam’s order limiting gatherings larger than 10 people.

[Arlington Officials Scramble to Rethink Budget, Urge Additional Action from State](#)

While reducing the human toll of the coronavirus outbreak is a top priority, Arlington officials are also trying to determine its impact on the upcoming county budget

[Social distancing: Williamsburg City Council met via video, and the public participated](#)

[Hampton’s top prosecutor criticizes judges for hearings held amid coronavirus concerns](#)

A jury trial in a Hampton gun possession case this week likely marked the last such trial in Hampton for quite a while.

March 18

[Loudoun County board opposes sending letter to governor requesting closure of gathering places](#)

[With budgets to review, local governments seek legal help to balance COVID-19 precautions, public participation](#)

[As virus forces shutdown, rural Northern Neck library works to fill essential role for community](#)

[Virus threat pushes jail head, prosecutors to release inmates at Middle River Regional Jail](#)

Middle River Regional Jail in Verona has started releasing some non-violent offenders in an effort to reduce the jail population as the threat of the coronavirus continues to grow

[Amazon to hire 1,400 Virginians to meet order surge, donate \\$1M to Arlington nonprofits](#)

The company will also add \$2/hour to employees' current hourly rates through end of April

[Arlington County residents get tested at drive-thru coronavirus testing site](#)

As COVID-19 cases spike in Virginia and the D.C. area, Arlington County is stepping up its efforts to test those who are showing symptoms of the novel coronavirus

[Central Virginia's First Drive-Through Coronavirus Tests Begin](#)

More than 100 people were tested for the coronavirus disease at the first drive-through testing site in Central Virginia on Wednesday

[Goodyear shutting down operations until at least April 3](#)

Citing a sudden decline in market demand with the spread of the coronavirus, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. is shutting down manufacturing until at least April 3, according to a company statement. Goodyear is Danville's largest employer with about 2,000 workers