



*City of Florence*

**A City in Motion**

# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## City of Florence Services Updates Related to COVID-19

**FLORENCE, OR** – The City of Florence is committed to the safety and well-being of our community and staff. Below is some information about what the City is doing to address the concerns over COVID-19. This information and pertinent links can be found at [www.ci.florence.or.us/covid19](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/covid19).

### City's Role

- As a City, it is our responsibility to maintain essential services and support our public health and public safety partners.
- **During a public health emergency, [Lane County Public Health](#) in conjunction with the [Oregon Health Authority](#) are the lead agencies.**
- We have emergency management and operations plans for situations like this, they are in place and working to maintain those critical services, identify community needs, and mobilize coordinated responses.
- The City is taking action to slow the spread and flatten the curve of COVID-19 and amplify the messages, recommendations, and preventative measures of the lead agencies.

### What We Are Doing

- We are collaborating and coordinating with our partners in Florence, the Siuslaw Region, and at the County through the West Lane Emergency Operations Group (WLEOG) to identify community needs and address them as quickly as possible.
- We are making sure our first responders and personnel stay healthy and are prepared to continue serving the community.
- We are suspending meetings, temporarily closing facilities, and modifying some face-to-face services to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Florence and Lane County. See below for specific information.

### Why We Are Doing It

- All of these efforts help slow the spread of COVID-19.
- By slowing the spread, it is the goal to preserve our health care capacity which will be critical in the coming weeks.
- These actions also help protect people who may be at higher risk - people over 60 and those with pre-existing respiratory, cardiac conditions, or who are immunocompromised.
- We can all help reduce the impact of COVID-19 in our community.

### What Can You Do

- Follow the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the Oregon Health Authority, and Lane County Public Health regarding [healthy behaviors and social distancing](#).
- Help each other through checking on your neighbors, reducing stigma, supporting local organization and businesses.
- Educate yourself through trusted and official resources to reduce the spread of misinformation. Links are listed below under Key Resources.

## Public Meetings, Events, and Facilities

In addition to the strategies put in place by Governor Brown and to help slow the spread and protect each other the City has implemented the following:

- Canceled the March 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.
- Canceled the March 25<sup>th</sup> Florence Urban Renewal Agency meeting.
- Suspended all City committee meetings until further notice.
- Suspended all programming and gatherings at the Florence Events Center, as well as closed the facility to the public, through April 13<sup>th</sup>, the full length of the governor's closure guidance for gatherings over 25 people.
- The Public Works Operations Facility is closed to the public. City staff continue to operate essential functions from that facility.
- Temporarily closed the Florence Senior Center to the public through April 13<sup>th</sup>.  
*(For more information about Senior Meals Program, please call 541-682-3353 or 1-800-441-4038 or go online to [lcog.org/160/Senior-Meals](http://lcog.org/160/Senior-Meals).)*

Full meeting details and a calendar of City events can be found at [www.ci.florence.or.us/calendar](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/calendar). Future updates on City actions related to COVID-19 will be located at [www.ci.florence.or.us/covid19](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/covid19).

## Accessing City Services

The City of Florence is working to ensure the safety, security, and health of the public and our staff while continuing to offer you the customer service you expect from us.

Consistent with guidance on limiting the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing, we ask you to please communicate with our staff over the telephone and internet as a primary method. Visit the City's website at [www.ci.florence.or.us](http://www.ci.florence.or.us) for information on services, forms, or other items you need. Staff email addresses are also available online to conduct business via email.

If you must meet with our staff in person to conduct business, please call for an appointment before coming to our offices so we can make sure we have the right staff available to assist you.

- City Hall – 541-997-3437
- Building Department – 541-997-2141
- Finance/Utility Billing – 541-997-3436
- Florence Events Center – 541-997-1994
- Municipal Court – 541-997-3123
- Planning Department – 541-997-8237
- Police Department – 541-997-3515
- Public Works – 541-997-4106

**City Services (Utility) Bills & City Hall Front Counter** – We recognize the economic hardship that may impact our community during the current public health emergency due to the COVID-19 virus. Effective immediately and until further notice, the City will be suspending water disconnections and late fees. Customers who are impacted by the suspension of service shutoffs during this grace period will still owe the City for past due balances and fees related to services provided, and are encouraged to contact us to make payment arrangements or inquire about assistance programs to avoid accruing a large overdue bill.

**Beginning March 19th, the City Hall front counter will be closed to the.** We encourage the public to use the drop box at City Hall or make their payments online at [www.ci.florence.or.us/administrative-services/city-services-utility-billing](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/administrative-services/city-services-utility-billing). If you must speak with staff, please call 541-997-3436. A public kiosk, to be located in the City Hall lobby, will be available later this week to provide an access point to City services available online for those who do not have internet access.

**Florence Justice Center** – The Florence Justice Center is currently closed to the public. If you need service in person, please utilize the intercom system in the lobby similarly to access during normal operational off hours (nights and weekends).

**Municipal Court** – Court has been canceled for the following days: March 23rd, 24th, 30th, 31st, and April 6th and 7th. Anyone who is scheduled to appear on those dates should call 541-997-3123 for instructions. For those who have court appearances after April 7th, we will continue to update court status as more information becomes available. All jurors are released for these dates. Payments to the court can be made at the drop boxes at the following locations:

- City Hall - 250 Highway 101, Florence
- Florence Justice Center - 900 Greenwood Street, Florence
- Payments can be made over the telephone online at [www.ci.florence.or.us/court/pay-your-court-fine-online](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/court/pay-your-court-fine-online).

**Florence Public Works Operations Facility** – The Public Works Operations Facility is closed to the public. City staff continue to operate essential functions from that facility, including water and wastewater services.

Continue to follow the City of Florence on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Vimeo](#).

We are making these difficult decisions based on the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the Oregon Health Authority, and Lane County Public Health. The City is working on technology solutions to resume future public meetings while continuing to adhere to social distancing guidance.

#### **Lane County Public Health Community Call Center**

Lane County Public Health's call center is available for non-emergency calls related to COVID-19 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. The phone number is 541-682-1380. You can also contact Lane County Public Health's Coronavirus Response Team via email at [corona-info@lanecountyor.gov](mailto:corona-info@lanecountyor.gov).

#### **Oregon Health Authority Updates**

You can sign up for Oregon related updates on the OHA website. There is a link in the box at the top of the page. They also have some good informational handouts at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>.

#### **Key Resources**

- [Lane County Public Health](#)
- [Oregon Health Authority](#)
- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- School Closures & Food Service Plans
  - [Siuslaw School District](#)
  - [Mapleton School District](#)

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