



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Bureau for Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services

Bill J. Crouch
Cabinet Secretary

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Commissioner & State Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: West Virginia EMS Agencies Official Representatives
West Virginia EMS Prehospital Providers
West Virginia Regional/Agency Medical Directors

FROM: Vicki L. Hildreth, BA, NREMT, Interim Director
West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services

DATE: July 13, 2020

RE: REMINDER REGARDING VACATION TRAVEL

Please ensure that your EMS agency and prehospital providers are following the guidance provided by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, for self-monitoring/quarantining when having traveled to large or crowded vacation areas. Failure to follow these guidelines puts patients, prehospital providers, and the public at greater risk of exposure.

I have attached the guidance for your convenience. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Michael R. Mills, DO, FACEP, State Medical Director, WV Office of EMS

Vicki L. Hildreth

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health (BPH) continues to respond to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in West Virginia. BPH is working closely with communities, state agencies, local and federal partners to monitor the ongoing risk of COVID-19 and ensure the health and protection of all individuals in West Virginia. COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported in all 50 states, and the situation is constantly changing. **Because travel increases risk of infection and spreading COVID-19, staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.**

BPH recommends state residents with plans to vacation in a crowded area be extremely cautious, practice social distancing and wear a face mask, and those who have traveled or are traveling to a large or crowded vacation area to self-monitor/quarantine for 14 days upon return.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Recent loss of taste or smell

PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION

- Occurs via small droplets from the nose or mouth of the infected person when they cough, sneeze, or exhale.
- Virus can remain on surfaces for a limited time period. Although less common, transmission may occur from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

GENERAL PREVENTION

- Learn about COVID-19 from reputable sources.
- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others.
- Encourage proper handwashing.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces often.
- Do not share food, drinks, etc.
- Wear cloth face coverings.
- Stay home if you feel sick.
- Isolate sick individuals.

IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT TRAVELING AWAY FROM YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, ASK:

- Is [COVID-19 spreading](#) where you're going?
You can get infected while traveling.
- Is [COVID-19 spreading](#) in your community?
Even if you don't have symptoms, you can spread COVID-19 to others while traveling.

- Will you or those you are traveling with be within 6 feet of others during or after your trip?
Being within 6 feet of others increases your chances of getting infected and infecting others.
- Are you or those you are traveling with [more likely to get very ill from COVID-19?](#)
Older adults and people of any age who have a serious underlying medical condition are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Do you live with someone who is [more likely to get very ill from COVID-19?](#)
If you get infected while traveling you can spread COVID-19 to loved ones when you return, even if you don't have symptoms.
- If you get sick with COVID-19, will you have to miss work or school?
People with COVID-19 disease need to stay home until they are [no longer considered infectious](#).
- Do not travel if you are sick, or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days. Do not travel with someone who is sick.

IF YOU TRAVEL, PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS DURING YOUR TRIP

- Clean your hands often.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, after touching surfaces frequently touched by others, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and before touching your face or eating.
 - If soap and water are not available, bring and use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub your hands together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with others.

- Keep 6 feet of physical distance from others.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Pick up food at drive-throughs, curbside restaurant service, or stores.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TYPES OF TRAVEL

- Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. Airports, bus stations, train stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces. These are also places where it can be hard to social distance (keep 6 feet apart from other people).
- **Air travel:** Air travel requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes. However, social distancing is difficult on crowded flights, and you may have to sit near others (within 6 feet), sometimes for hours.
- **Bus or train travel:** Traveling on buses and trains for any length of time can involve sitting or standing within 6 feet of others.
- **Car travel:** Making stops along the way for gas, food, or bathroom breaks can put you and your traveling companions in close contact with other people and surfaces.
- **RV travel:** You may have to stop less often for food or bathroom breaks, but RV travel typically means staying at RV parks overnight and getting gas and supplies at other public places. These stops may put you and those with you in the RV in close contact with others.
- To learn how to protect yourself from COVID-19 on different types of transportation:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/using-transportation.html>.

OTHER TRAVEL-RELATED QUESTIONS

- **Is it safe to visit family or friends?**
 - Traveling to visit family may be especially dangerous if you or your loved ones are more likely to get very ill from COVID-19. People at

higher risk for severe illness need to take extra precautions.

- **Is it safe to travel to campgrounds/go camping?**
 - Going camping at a time when much of the United States is experiencing community spread of COVID-19 can pose a risk to you if you come in close contact with others or share public facilities (like restrooms or picnic areas) at campsites or along the trails. Exposure may be especially unsafe if you are more likely to get very ill from COVID-19 and are planning to be in remote areas, without easy access to medical care.

SAFETY MEASURES FOLLOWING RETURN FROM TRAVEL

- Self-monitor your health 14 days following out-of-state travel. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid contact with others.
- Avoid going into public places for 14 days following out-of-state travel.
- If you do need to go out into public, wear a cloth face covering when going into public places like stores, restaurants, and work/school.
- If you have to be around others practice social distancing (keep 6 feet away from individuals).
- If your job permits and to protect others, it is recommended that you telework for 14 days following out-of-state travel.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Considerations for Travelers—Coronavirus in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>
- Protect Yourself When Using Transportation: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/using-transportation.html>

Questions and concerns can also be directed to the 24/7, toll-free COVID-19 information hotline:

1-800-887-4304



www.coronavirus.wv.gov



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