

7/2/20 Municipal & First Responder Call Notes

I. **Welcome and Introduction:** VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- This is the weekly call for first responders, EMDs, RPCs, and municipal officials. These calls are on an every-other-week schedule. The next call will be on Thursday July 16th at 2PM. The invitation will go out on Monday.
 - The next call will be via Microsoft Teams, instead of Skype. You will [not need a Teams account](#) to join the call. If you're dialing in on a phone, you likely won't notice a difference.
 - The meeting invitations include a link to a survey we use to guide our talking points. The survey will only capture one question per response. To ask multiple questions, fill out the survey multiple times. The survey link will not change week to week.
 - On today's call we will hear from EMS Chief Dan Batsie and Karen Horn from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. In addition, we have Capt. Mike Manley from the Vermont State Police, Director Michael Desrochers from Division of Fire Safety, and Chief Pete Lynch from the Vermont Fire Academy available to answer questions. We will be providing you all an overview of the State's response to COVID-19 and we will have time for additional questions at the end of the call.
 - FAQs will be updated as needed and can be found at: <https://vem.vermont.gov/coronavirus>
 - From this site you can also click on the ["Call Notes" section](#) on the left-hand side where we will post notes from this call. It will be added to the list of First Responder Notes.
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II. **COVID-19 Overview/VDH Comments:** Health Operations Center Incident Commander and EMS Chief Dan Batsie

- Overall update on COVID-19 in Vermont
 - 17 new cases of COVID-19 were reported today, scattered throughout the state.
 - There have been fewer than 4 hospitalizations at one time, and zero deaths or ICU admissions, due to COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks.
 - The largest outbreak is in Winooski and Burlington, with 114 cases total. There have been no new cases associated with the outbreak since June 24th. Almost 5,000 residents of Winooski and Burlington were tested in the past 3 weeks. This testing, along with contact tracing, helped control the outbreak.
- Testing/tracing updates
 - Testing for symptomatic individuals is still on-demand, based on health care provider referrals. In addition, there are ongoing pop-up testing sites, for asymptomatic individuals without a referral:
 - 7/6: Bennington and Winooski
 - 7/7: Springfield, Burlington, and Winooski
 - 7/8: Brattleboro, Hyde Park, Rutland, and St. Johnsbury
 - 7/9: St. Albans, White River Junction, and Barre
 - 7/10: Middlebury
 - The State is working to make testing schedules more regular.
 - For more information on pop-up testing, and to sign up, visit healthvermont.gov or <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/popups>
- EMS updates
 - The Department of Health is moving forward with the hybrid EMT course, with the goal of having a finalized plan by the end of next week.
 - The Office of EMS has been receiving a lot of calls about conducting EMS exams. Testing is available and psychomotor exams are allowed if [guidance is followed](#). Online exams are also becoming increasingly prevalent.

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- Next week, the Office of EMS will update its provisional license guidance.
 - There continue to be situations where EMS providers have to quarantine following an exposure. Please follow the State's PPE guidance – always wear a mask, eye protection, and gloves on every call. Quarantined providers can lead to staffing shortages and gaps in service.
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III. SEOC Overview/ VEM Comments: VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- **SEOC status:** The SEOC remains partially activated, as opposed to fully activated, every day from 0800 until 1600. This means that certain partner agencies are no longer participating in SEOC operations, but can be recalled at any point should the need arise. The SEOC is entirely virtual.
 - Over the holiday weekend the SEOC will be returning to Monitoring Status. The Watch Officer will still be available for any resource needs that arise. The SEOC will return to Partial Activation on Monday, July 6th at 0800.
- Now I will go over recent policy updates. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the Department of Taxes announced yesterday that the application window for Economic Recovery Grants will open on Monday, July 6th. Businesses who have been harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible for recovery grants through ACCD or the Department of Taxes.
 - The [Economic Recovery Grant page](#) on the ACCD website has full details, including requirements, document preparation needs and the application process. ACCD set up a call center for questions on this program, at 802-828-1200.
 - As the grants will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, ACCD encourages all businesses to review these requirements prior to Monday, July 6th.
- Effective yesterday, 8 northeast states and the District of Columbia were added to Vermont's county-by-county quarantine-free travel policy, which allows quarantine-free direct travel into Vermont from designated counties with less than 400 active cases of COVID-19 per one million residents. In addition to New England and New York, the policy now applies to Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington DC.
 - A map of eligible counties, updated weekly, is available on the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development website](#).
- As of June 26th, ACCD guidance allows mass gatherings to reach 50% of fire safety occupancy or 1 person per 100 square feet, with a maximum of 75 people indoors and 150 people outdoors.
- The latest sector-specific guidance is on the ACCD website under [Resources for Businesses](#). For further questions, use the "[request additional guidance](#)" web inquiry form on the ACCD website or call 802-461-5143.
- **SEOC active missions that have been progressing this week:**
 - Food distributions will resume this Monday, July 6th, and are planned out through July.

Date	Location
Monday, July 6	South Burlington, Middlebury, & St. Albans

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Tuesday, July 7	Rutland, Fair Haven, & Bennington
Wednesday, July 8	Brattleboro, Londonderry, & Springfield
Thursday, July 9	Newport, Richford, & Brighton
Friday, July 10	Barre, Morrisville, & White River Junction

- Registration for these sites is on humanresources.vermont.gov/food-help. Those without internet can call 211 to register. Registration is open for all July sites.
- These upcoming food distribution sites will be a little different than previous ones. There will be more sites (25 locations throughout the state) on a standardized schedule, with less food at each site.
- The Division of Fire Safety still has a large supply of free hand sanitizer available for emergency response agencies. The [request form](#) is available on the DFS and Office of EMS websites, and will be included in the notes for this call.
- **Vermont is under a Federal Disaster Declaration - DR 4532**
 - This means that the federal government will reimburse local government and some non-profits for many costs associated with responding to COVID-19. Information on how to apply and eligible costs can be found on the VEM website at: vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster.
- Vermont Emergency Management is hosting a virtual emergency preparedness conference on September 29th and 30th. The conference will cover relevant emergency management topics in sessions running from 1pm to 5pm on both days. More information is on the VEM website: vem.vermont.gov/conference
 - We are looking for presenters for the breakout sessions. If you have an area of expertise and want to host a session, please [submit a proposal](#).

IV. Vermont League of Cities and Towns – Karen Horn

- Bill H.966 – titled “An act relating to COVID-19 funding and assistance for broadband connectivity, housing, and economic relief” – passed both houses of the Vermont legislature and is on the way to the governor’s desk, where it’s expected to be signed.
 - The bill includes \$13 million in grants for municipalities to reimburse COVID-19-related expenses incurred before the end of the year. The Department of Taxes is likely to administer these grants; the program will probably be up and running by the end of July.
 - The second component of this bill relevant to municipalities is \$2 million set aside for municipal digitization of land records. This program seeks to remedy how such records are largely inaccessible to property owners, title insurance firms, and attorneys conducting transactions if town offices are closed. This money should be available 10 days after the bill is signed by the governor.

V. QUESTIONS FROM CALL PARTICIPANTS

- The SEOC will look into signage on the interstate with information about travel quarantine restrictions.
- It is unlikely that the Department of Health will be able to post the number of people recovered from COVID-19 by county, though Dan Batsie will follow up.
- Isolated positive cases of COVID-19 in a local jurisdiction are not a cause for immediate concern. The Department of Health conducts contact tracing with every infected individual, to see if there’s a larger cluster or outbreak.