

## 6/11/20 Municipal & First Responder Call Notes

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

- This is the weekly call for first responders, EMDs, RPCs, and municipal officials.
  - 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 Department of Health Deputy Commissioner Tracy Dolan and EMS Chief Dan Batsie. In addition, we have Lt. Tara Thomas from the Vermont State Police 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:** Incident Commander of the Health Operations Center/EMS Chief Dan Batsie

- Overall update on COVID-19 in Vermont
  - There were 83 new cases of COVID-19 in the state this past week, which is a sharp rise from previous weeks. However, there have still been no new deaths in Vermont related to COVID-19 in almost 3 weeks.
  - The spike of new cases this week were largely from the ongoing outbreak in Winooski, with very few cases reported elsewhere in the state.
  - The Winooski outbreak is still being investigated. There are no reported deaths or hospitalizations resulting from the outbreak. Only 17 percent of those infected are even reporting any symptoms. There is an aggressive testing campaign in Winooski, and the Department of Health is working with community partners.
- Testing/tracing updates
  - Testing for symptomatic individuals is still based on health care provider referrals. In addition, there are ongoing pop-up testing sites, for asymptomatic individuals without a referral.
  - There is also daily testing in Winooski this week.
  - For more information on pop-up testing, and to sign up, visit [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) or <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/popups>
- We received a question on whether Vermont will experience a second wave of COVID-19 infections, especially in the fall, and what municipalities should do to prepare.
  - We just don't know whether there will be a second wave of infections, nor when it would occur. Infections in Vermont have followed an optimistic trend, but it is unclear what will happen when schools reopen in the fall and people generally spend more time indoors.
  - Municipalities should review their continuity of operations plan and workplace policies to make sure they account for the novel challenges posed by COVID-19, such as numerous staff absences at the same time.
  - The Department of Health and Vermont Emergency Management are working on long-term plans to address the ongoing threat posed by COVID-19. Recommendations will be forthcoming in the next couple of months.

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- The advice won't change for the general public. Public health measures such as social distancing and wearing face coverings will continue to be important to lower the rate of COVID-19 infections, regardless of whether cases spike.
  - EMS Update
    - The Department of Health reached out to the EMS agencies that respond into Winooski, asking them to wear "full PPE" (i.e., gloves, a face mask, eye protection, and a gown) on all EMS calls in the city. This guidance is out of an abundance of caution; the Winooski outbreak is atypical because it rarely results in symptoms and most of those infected are young, making it harder to predict infections.
      - All other Vermont EMS agencies should reserve full PPE for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. On most EMS calls, just gloves, a face mask, and eye protection is sufficient PPE.
      - For further guidance, reach out to the EMS office.
    - There should be a decision on creating a standardized, statewide hybrid EMT course within the next week. This course would not replace pre-existing local courses, but rather provide another option.
    - The Vermont EMS Conference in October has been cancelled, due to ambiguity around what lodging, travel, and gatherings will look like in the fall. Current plans are for the conference to resume next year. In lieu of this year's conference, the Office of EMS will start twice-monthly virtual classes in August, featuring the instructors who would have been at the conference. The classes will be on Thursday evenings, and then recordings will be posted online.
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### III. SEOC Overview/ VEM Comments: Director Erica Bornemann

- **SEOC status:** The SEOC is now 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.
  - Vermont Emergency Management is thankful for the participation of all its partner agencies during this extended response.
- Yesterday, Governor Phil Scott said that he fully expects Vermont primary and secondary schools to offer in-person instruction in the fall.
  - There will be daily health checks for staff and students, among other new public health measures.
  - The Agency of Education will also work to strengthen the state's capacity for remote learning as a contingency.
- On Monday, ACCD introduced [new guidance](#) allowing recreational sports practice and intra-squad scrimmages starting June 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Inter-squad games are currently anticipated to be able to resume starting July 1st.
  - These activities are subject to public health restrictions, such as not sharing water bottles.
- On Friday, Governor Scott introduced [Addendum 17](#) to Executive Order 01-20, which:
  - Allows travel without quarantine restrictions, to and from the counties of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York with 400 or fewer active cases of COVID-19 per million, as [determined and publicized](#) by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) on a weekly basis.

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- The addendum also allows municipalities to enact stricter local requirements than the ACCD guidance regarding the operation of bars, catering facilities, and restaurants, to address an outbreak of COVID-19 in the municipality.
- Also on Friday, ACCD introduced [new guidance](#), allowing indoor dining in restaurants and bars. Such operations must follow an array of public health restrictions, such as limiting indoor seating to 25% of approved fire safety occupancy or 10 total customers and staff combined, whichever is greater.
- 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:**
  - The State has free hand sanitizer available to emergency response organizations. There is a limited supply, therefore each organization is limited to one gallon. Reserve yours by completing an online form, which is available on the [Office of EMS website](#).
  - The Alternate Care Site in Burlington is being demobilized this week, leaving one active site in Essex and one stand-by site in Rutland.
  - The Vermont Foodbank, the Agency of Transportation, and Vermont National Guard is distributing food to those in need at distribution points to ease demand on food shelves around the state.

- The next meal distributions:

| Date            | Town              | Location   |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Thursday, 6/11  | Brattleboro Area  | Specific location provided with pre-registration |
| Friday, 6/12    | Morristown Area   |  |
| Monday, 6/15    | Lyndon Area       |  |
| Tuesday, 6/16   | Grand Isle County |  |
| Wednesday, 6/17 | Dover Area        |  |
| Thursday, 6/18  | Randolph Area     |  |
| Friday, 6/19    | Chittenden County |  |

- Participants must register for the distribution sites by visiting [humanresources.vermont.gov/food-help](https://humanresources.vermont.gov/food-help) or calling 211 if they are unable to complete the form online.
- These distributions only consist of Farmers-to-Families perishable meals; they no longer are accompanied by FEMA boxed non-perishable meals.
- Further information, including a complete listing of dates and times, will be updated on VEM’s website: <https://vem.vermont.gov/pods>
- **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](https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster).
- 76% of Vermont municipalities have submitted revised Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs). Municipalities that have not yet submitted LEMPs will not be eligible for grants from Vermont Emergency

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Management or increased funding from the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) until it is submitted. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact your Regional Planning Commission.

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### IV. DFS Comments: Chief Peter Lynch

- We know that some fire departments are having trouble completing enough continuing education for their members to meet annual recertification requirements. In response, the Vermont Fire Service Training Council extended the period of submission for recertification hours by 6 months. Details will go out in an email.
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### V. QUESTIONS FROM CALL PARTICIPANTS

- The Department of Health will look into making the number of people recovered from COVID-19 available by county. There may be confidentiality concerns, due to the small number of cases involved.
- Other municipalities should learn from how effective organizational partnerships limited the extent of the Winooski outbreak. The outbreak is not bigger because the community, local organizations, and the Department of Health worked together. The Winooski City government and local organizations were exceptionally collegial and dedicated to doing the right thing. The Department of Health was able to mobilize resources and testing quickly because of these partners.
  - The SEOC coordinated wrap-around services for quarantined residents in Winooski, and can do the same for other impacted communities.
  - Although Winooski's high population density puts it at a higher risk for an outbreak, this sort of sudden spike in cases could happen anywhere in the state. It's important to remember that COVID-19 is still among us.