



# Borough of Chatham

BOROUGH HALL  
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*Office of the Mayor*

March 21, 2020

Fellow Residents:

Today, Governor Murphy announced a statewide “Stay at Home” order and the mandatory closure of all non-essential businesses in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. These actions, which the Governor emphasized are not taken lightly, are essential to reducing the huge surge (i.e. “flatten the curve”) of anticipated hospital patients that we’ve seen overwhelm medical facilities elsewhere including increasingly so in New York City.

This order came as New Jersey today announced 442 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the state’s total to 1,327 cases, including 16 deaths. Morris County itself now has 64 confirmed cases and Chatham Borough 3. Of the three known cases in the Borough, none is hospitalized and two involve a married couple. The Health Department is now performing the requisite contact tracing to identify and notify those persons who may have come into contact with the infected parties.

An increase in positive test results is now expected in the coming days, both across the state and here in Chatham Borough, due to aggressive testing increasingly coming online. The epidemiological modeling points clearly to this being an enduring public health emergency. It is essential, therefore, that we take seriously the measures being implemented to support a robust practice of social distancing.

The following is an overview of the Governor’s directives provided this afternoon by Morris County officials:

- (I) New Jersey residents are to remain at home. Allowable exceptions include:
- Obtaining goods or services from “essential” businesses
  - Picking up “takeout” meals
  - Seeking medical attention
  - Visiting family members as a caretaker

- Reporting to or performing one's job
- Engaging in outdoor activities (social-distancing permitting)
- Safety purposes
- Direction of law enforcement or a government agency

(II) The following businesses are considered "essential" and may remain open:

- Grocery stores, farmers markets, farms that sell directly to customers, and other food stores
- Pharmacies and dispensaries
- Medical supply stores
- Gas stations
- Convenience stores
- Ancillary stores within healthcare facilities
- Hardware and home improvement stores
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Laundromats and dry-cleaning services
- Stores that sell supplies for children under five years of age
- Pet stores
- Liquor stores
- Car dealerships, but only for auto maintenance and repair services
- Auto mechanics
- Printing and office supply shops
- Mail and courier delivery stores
- Educational institutions providing online-only learning

(III) The following businesses or services shall function at a limited capacity:

- Public transportation, which should be used only as a last resort
- Schools, which may remain open only if operating on a limited basis for food or essential care services that are non-educational
- Essential businesses or services where employees cannot work from home, in which case on-site personnel should be reduced to the minimal necessary number. This applies to:
  - Law enforcement, fire fighters, and first responders
  - Cashiers
  - Construction, utility, and repair workers
  - Warehouse workers
  - Lab researchers and information technology maintenance workers
  - Janitorial and custodial staff
  - Necessary administrative staff

(IV) The following businesses and activities are prohibited:

- Parties, celebrations, or social events involving guests from other homes

- Non-essential retail businesses
- On-premise consumption of alcohol
- Gyms and fitness centers
- Movie theaters, performing arts centers, concert venues
- Public libraries and computer labs
- Indoor retail shopping malls
- Children's play centers
- Bowling alleys
- Personal care services that require an absence of social distancing (e.g. barbershops, hair salons, spas, etc.)
- Social clubs such as the VFW, American Legion, etc.
- Public, private, and parochial preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools (except for online instruction)
- Institutions of higher education (except for online instruction)

I realize this list contains the potential for ambiguity that may require clarification. If you have any questions, please email me at [tkobylarz@chathamborough.org](mailto:tkobylarz@chathamborough.org). I will see to it that your query is directed to the appropriate party.

Before closing, I wish to issue a plea to Chatham Borough parents *not* to allow your teenage children to congregate in public spaces in violation of the prescription for social distancing. There have been increasing reports of such activity around town, particularly during recent warmer weather. In light of the Governor's clear determination to step up the practice of social distancing, it is vital that his directives be painstakingly observed.

Please make every effort to assist in this herculean task of suppressing the spread of this insidious virus. The threat of overwhelming our medical facilities through a large surge of infected patients is very real. I've now participated in nearly a dozen calls over the past week with numerous public health officials at both the county and state level and I can tell you that every single one of them is very concerned. However, we still have a chance to mitigate the considerable harm this contagion may do. So please pitch in.

And as always, please stay well.

Thank you,

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*Thaddeus J. Kobylarz*  
*Mayor*

