



MARTIN COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE

Martin County community update: April 24, 2020

Martin County Update Video with Commission Chair Harold Jenkins:

<https://youtu.be/qhM7k6plLWc>

RECENT UPDATES

***New* Racquet sports:**

At their April 21 meeting, the board approved a motion to allow singles and single player racquet sports at Martin County parks. The board requests that players participating in these sports adhere to social distancing guidelines on and off the courts. In addition, it's important for players to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces including rackets, tennis balls, court equipment and gate handles.

***New* Testing criteria updated:**

Cleveland Clinic Martin Health is performing drive-thru testing for COVID-19 by appointment only at Martin North Hospital, 200 SE Hospital Avenue in Stuart, and Tradition Hospital, 10000 SW Innovation Way in Port St. Lucie. **Anyone over the age of 16 who has a fever and respiratory illness (such as cough, runny nose, sneezing) or any patient with a fever and gastrointestinal illness (such as diarrhea, vomiting) is eligible for testing.** For an appointment, individuals must call 772-419-3360, between 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday and 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. Testing hours for both locations are from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday – Friday and 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. For additional information, visit www.martinhealth.org.

***New* School District:**

All Florida school districts will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year. All Martin County School District and school-related events, programs, athletic events and activities have been canceled for the same time period, **with the exception of high school graduation ceremonies.** More information about graduation ceremonies will be shared with seniors and their families soon.

***New* Paycheck Protection Program:**

A \$484 billion coronavirus rescue package has been signed into law and the bill includes over \$300 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, an initiative that offers loans to businesses that can be forgiven if the money is used to keep employees on payrolls. Updates will be provided [here](#).

***New* WIC Program:**

The Florida Department of Health in Martin County has announced that some clients of the Women, Infants and Children program may be able to receive some services over the phone. For more information about the WIC program, call 772-221-4986.

***New* Re-open Florida Task Force:**

Governor Ron DeSantis has established a Re-open Florida Task Force with working groups to address steps to re-open Florida's economy in the time of COVID-19. More info at www.flgov.com/covid-19/.

***New* Florida Department of Health (Long-term care facilities):**

The Florida Department of Health has published a list of long-term care facilities that have had a confirmed case of COVID-19 in staff and/or residents. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

***New* Local State of Emergency:**

The Martin County Local State of Emergency was extended to 4/27/2020 to include previously issued Emergency Orders. Read the most recent order [here](#).

***New* Special BOCC meeting:**

The next special meeting of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 29 at 9 a.m. in the John F. and Rita M. Armstrong Wing of the Blake Library. The meeting date is subject to change based on receipt and review of recommendations from the Governor's Re-open Florida Task Force. Meetings are open to the public and available on MCTV, Comcast Channel 20 and U-verse Channel 99. The meetings are also streamed on our website at www.martin.fl.us and on Martin County's Facebook and YouTube pages.

COUNTY INFORMATION

Park facilities and amenities:

Use of trails, pathways, boardwalks, fishing piers and open areas is permitted in county-owned parks. All programs, amenities, facilities and athletic complexes (with the exception of racquet sport courts) are closed, including water fountains and restrooms. Phipps Park Campground will remain open and will not accept any new reservations. County-owned beach parks and Martin County Golf Course are closed.

Golf courses:

Golf courses are allowed to remain open provided they restrict access and follow social distancing guidelines. At all Martin County courses, players will be required to show proof of Martin County residency or club membership as of April 1, 2020. Proof of residency includes a Florida ID with a Martin County address or a current utility bill with a Martin County service address. Guests are not permitted. For additional details, view [Emergency Order 20-03](#) and [Golf Course Recommendations](#).

- Golf courses that are exclusively used by members, and not open to the public, may only allow access to those who are existing club members.
- Golf courses that are used by members and are also accessible for public use are open to existing club members or Martin County residents.
- Golf courses that are open for public use are accessible only to Martin County residents.

Boating:

Martin County-owned boat ramps will be open for recreational boating activities on weekdays and be closed on weekends only. Ramps will close at 8 p.m. on Friday and reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday.

During the closure, those with state licenses for commercial marine activity will be permitted to operate 24 hours a day at the boat ramps in Sandsprit Park and the Jensen Beach Boat Ramp just north of Indian RiverSide Park. Users will be required to produce a copy of their commercial license, and/or a Martin County business tax receipt, to utilize the ramps during the weekend closure.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has closed sandbars located in the Intracoastal Waterway. An order by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has directed that recreational vessels shall have no more than 10 people on board and maintain a 50-foot distance between each vessel.

Public comment at BOCC meetings:

The new, fillable public comment form for Board of County Commissioners meetings can be found at www.martin.fl.us/BCCPublicComment. Commenters simply provide their name, the item they wish to comment on, enter up to 5,000 characters of text and then click submit. Once received, staff will review the comments to make sure they don't violate county policy. During the meeting, county staff will read the message into the record but will be limited to three minutes per the county's established public comment procedure. Comments for an item must be submitted prior to the end of the public comment period for that item to be read into the record. Staff will then provide the comments, in their entirety, to the Clerk to attach to the minutes as an official record.

Building closures:

All county buildings and constitutional offices (Tax Collector, Clerk and Comptroller, Supervisor of Elections and Property Appraiser) are closed to walk-in traffic but still providing service to the public. Residents are urged to utilize online, email and over-the-phone resources. For additional information, please visit www.martin.fl.us/coronavirus.

STATE ACTIONS**Governor's Executive Orders:**

All of Governor DeSantis' recent Executive Orders can be found on the county website at www.martin.fl.us/coronavirus under "Actions."

Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles:

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles authorized changes and extensions to driver licenses, identification cards, registration, delinquent fees and in-person interviews. Visit www.flhsmv.gov/covid-19 for more information.

Jury duty:

Based on the recent Florida Supreme Court Order, the next juror reporting date is Monday, June 1. Jurors who received a summons for March 23 through May 25 do not need to report for jury duty. No further action is needed. For more information, visit www.martinclerk.com/.

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS RESOURCES**CARES Act:**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, provides direct financial relief for families and assistance for small businesses.

CARES Act economic impact payment:

\$1,200 recovery checks will be sent to individuals earning up to \$75,000 or married couples earning under \$150,000. Benefits are reduced for income starting at \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for married couples filing jointly. Couples will also receive an additional \$500 for each child. Eligibility is based on 2019 (or 2018 if 2019 not filed) tax returns.

Economic impact payments will be distributed automatically and deposited directly into the same bank account reflected on 2018 or 2019 tax returns. Paper checks will be mailed to those who do not have direct deposit information on file with the IRS. For more information, visit www.irs.gov/coronavirus.

Social Security Administration economic impact payments:

The Social Security Administration announced that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients will receive automatic economic impact payments no later than early May. More information is available at www.ssa.gov.

Business resources:

The Martin County Business Development Board (BDB) has created a centralized online resource, [Martin County BIZHub](http://MartinCountyBIZHub), to help meet the ever-changing needs and interests of local businesses. It features announcements, updates, links to state and federal business loan programs, connections to small business, job and workforce development partners and more. Businesses can also call the BDB at 772-221-1380 or email info@bdbmc.org.

Support our local businesses:

We encourage you to support our local businesses by ordering from area restaurants that are offering take-out, delivery and curbside pickup services. For a list of restaurants offering amended services, as well as a variety of resources for small businesses, visit www.protectourparadise.com.

Reemployment assistance:

Governor DeSantis has waived the eligibility requirements for claimants currently seeking unemployment benefits. Claimants do not need to register with the state job search portal and do not need to submit the number of employers they contact each week. The suspension of these requirements has a retroactive start date of March 15 through May 2. For more, visit www.FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19.

For those having difficulty accessing the online application, you can now [download an application](#) and mail it to Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, PO Box 5350, Tallahassee, FL 32314-5350.

If you do not have internet access and need assistance completing the online application, please contact Martin County Health and Human Services at 772-288-5785. In addition, if you need help with finding employment, please visit www.careersourcerc.com or contact Career Source at 866-482-4473.

Florida Prepaid Plan:

To provide financial flexibility during this difficult time, all Florida Prepaid Plan payments have been deferred until July 2020. Depending on how you currently make your payments, you may need to take action. Please visit <https://myfloridaprepaid.com/updates> for more information.

Free tax filing:

Tax Day has been moved from April 15 to July 15. Through United Way's partnership with H&R Block, every household with a simple return can file their taxes free at www.myfreetaxes.com.

211:

211 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to connect residents with resources for food, paying housing bills, mental health services and more. For assistance, dial 2-1-1 or 561-383-1112.

Basic needs:

If you are unable to meet basic needs like housing, food and healthcare, call House of Hope at 772-286-4673 or Salvation Army of Martin County at 772-288-1471.

SNAP program:

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is allowing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to use their EBT cards to purchase groceries online. [Learn more.](#)

Crisis support:

If you are in need of crisis or mental health resources, counseling and/or emotional support during the COVID-19 pandemic, view the following link for a list of available [crisis resources](#).

Senior resources:

The Council on Aging of Martin County has resources for Martin County seniors in need. For more information related to meal delivery, the emergency food pantry, 24-hour hotline, caregiver counseling, case manager navigator and the Day Medical Center, visit their website at www.kanecenter.org.

Project: VITAL for seniors:

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs has launched Project: VITAL (Virtual Inclusive Technology for All) which will utilize virtual technology to relieve the difficult symptoms of social isolation for residents in assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Learn more at www.elderaffairs.org.

Food distribution:

House of Hope is distributing prepackaged food directly into client's vehicles. Clients on foot and bicycle will also be served. Information for those new to the service can be found at www.hohmartin.org/new or by calling 772-286-4673.

The Martin County School District's Food and Nutrition Services Department will provide free meals to children from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. through Friday, May 1. Meals will be served to children aged 18 and under at the following locations:

- Hobe Sound Elem. School: 11555 SE Gomez Ave., Hobe Sound
- J.D. Parker Elem. School: 1010 E. 10th St., Stuart
- Jensen Beach Elem. School: 2525 NE Savannah Rd., Jensen Beach
- Port Salerno Elem. School: 3260 SE Lionel Terr., Stuart
- Warfield Elem. School: 15260 SW 150th St., Indiantown

Treasure Coast Food Bank supports a network of local emergency food assistance programs. If you are in need of food, please contact one of our agency partners listed at <https://stophunger.org/findhelp/>.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County is providing free meals to children under the age of 18, regardless of whether or not they are club members. Free, ready-to-eat meals for families are also available. Meals can be picked up drive-thru style daily between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. Those picking up meals can arrive on foot, by bike or by car. Meals are available for pick up at:

- Cole-Clark Club, 11500 SE Lares Ave., Hobe Sound
- Bill & Barbara Whitman Club, 17375 SW Palm Beach St., Indiantown
- H. Wayne Huizenga Club, 1150 SW Martin Downs Blvd., Palm City
- John & Marge Bolton Club, 4731 SE Flounder Ave., Stuart
- Hobe Sound Mobile Village, 11411 SE Federal Hwy., Hobe Sound

PREVENTION REMINDERS

The Florida Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges everyone to protect themselves by using the following precautions:

- Stay home when you are sick and avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds or longer)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces often
- Call before visiting your doctor
- Follow guidelines for social distancing
- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

Visit www.martin.fl.us/Coronavirus, Martin County’s online resource for information related to COVID-19. Call 772-287-1652 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

For direct questions or guidance in reference to COVID-19, you can call the 24-hour Florida Department of Health (FDOH) Call Center at 866-779-6121 or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov. You may also call the Florida Department of Health in Martin County between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 772-221-4000, extension 9. Information is also available on the FDOH [website](#). For case count information, visit the FDOH COVID-19 [dashboard](#). For Martin County specific case information, check out the Martin County [dashboard](#).

Residents are encouraged to sign up to receive emergency alerts, including information about COVID-19, by phone, text and/or email. To sign up, simply text ALERTMARTIN to 888777 or [register online](#).

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