



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

Date: March 20, 2020
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FCSO Update on COVID-19 Precautions 3.20.2020

Video News Release available here: <https://youtu.be/ev6KYthATLo>

Good Afternoon. I'm Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly and in case your days are blurring together, it is Friday afternoon.

We received notification this morning from Flagler County Emergency Management that one person has tested positive for COVID-19 in Flagler County.

So why are the state maps still reporting zero cases for Flagler County? Public health officials attribute all COVID-19 cases to the state and county of residence for the individual that tests positive. In this case, the person tested positive in Flagler County, but they live in Volusia County so under the state reporting rules makes this a Volusia County case – even though the case was discovered in Flagler County.

I am just sharing this information with you to educate the public – the Sheriff's Office is not involved with the testing of patients and we do not receive information from the Health Department any faster than you do.

This afternoon, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced that all Florida restaurants and food establishments must suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers. This means you cannot eat or drink alcohol at restaurants. However, these restaurants can offer take-out and delivery options. Many local restaurants are developing curbside pick-up and delivery options. Check with your favorite restaurants to see what they are offering at this time and let's continue to support Flagler County businesses.

Governor DeSantis also ordered the closure of all gyms and fitness centers in the State of Florida. In the order the Governor directed the Department of Business and Professional Regulation as the authority to implement his orders but also directed law enforcement to assist. To report a complaint, call the DBPR complaint line at 1-850-487-1395. If you violate an Executive Order during a declared

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state of emergency you are committing a 2nd degree misdemeanor.

Our deputies are working with the cities, Flagler County and the DBPR to educate our business owners. I ask that all affected businesses comply immediately. Let's not make things worse by losing your business license or being given a Notice to Appear, which is just like an arrest, for violating the Governor's order. We don't want to do this as we are your neighbors, we eat at your restaurants and workout at your gyms. This is a difficult time for all of us.

Let's talk about the beaches - At this time, County and City Officials have not announced plans to shut down the local beaches. That said, we expect to have a weekend of beautiful weather in Flagler County. If you choose to visit the beach, know that all public facilities are closed. This includes restrooms and pavilions. Flagler Beach has asked our deputies to assist them in educating beachgoers on social distancing.

Please take the advice of the Health Department and the CDC seriously and practice social distancing, refrain from group gatherings, and stay at home if you have any symptoms of illness or if you are in a high-risk category.

Even if you are not in a high-risk category you have a serious risk of passing the virus onto someone who is. Florida has already had a six-year old test positive so this virus affects all ages. Everyone has a responsibility to help stem the flow of this virus. Please do your part.

The State Department has raised its travel recommendations to Level 4. That means they are recommending no travel outside the United States.

If you have a juvenile being held at a Juvenile Detention Center or Residential Commitment Program in Florida, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice issued an emergency order today suspending visitation at all state-operated facilities until further notice.

While you are practicing social distancing, there are local stores that are opening an hour early or reserving the first hour they are open to seniors-only or those with underlying conditions. Check with the stores where you shop to see if they are participating in this service.

We also want you to know about a few scams that are going around – at this point, none have been reported in Flagler County.

The first is an online scam asking you to fill out a form for government assistance that requests financial information. The government will not ask you to pay anything up front, should they decide to issue financial assistance to citizens during this pandemic. Never give out your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number over the phone to anyone soliciting funds.

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Another scam involves groups of people dressed in white lab coats and masks who are pretending to be from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These scammers are knocking on people's doors to talk about Coronavirus. Sometimes, they'll offer to test you for Coronavirus. In reality, they are attempting to rob the house once they get inside, sometimes by force. If you see someone approaching your house in a white lab coat or mask claiming to be a CDC worker, do NOT let them in. Call 9-1-1 immediately!

And finally, we have decided to postpone the spring session of the Sheriff's Citizens Academy. Those of you who enrolled will receive communication from our Community Outreach Team with a new date in the future.

As always, the men and women of the Sheriff's Office are working to serve and protect you. Stay up-to-date by following us on social media or visit flaglersheriff.com/coronavirus or you can download the Flagler County Sheriff's Office app in the App Store or Google Play.

Remember, we are a strong and resilient community. By working together and following the CDC guidelines and the Governor's orders we will get through this together.

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