



Georgetown County, South Carolina

NEWS RELEASE – COVID-19 #3 Revised

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgetown County to close its buildings to the public beginning Wednesday

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — Georgetown County government will temporarily close the majority of its facilities to the public beginning on Wednesday, March 18. County staff will still report to work to continue serving the public via phone and online. Closures will be in place for an indeterminate amount of time as the county is in a State of Emergency.

The step is part of Georgetown County's effort to protect residents and employees as jurisdictions across the nation deal with the worldwide threat of COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus. The highly contagious virus has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and poses a significant threat to those in the county as it continues to spread. This threat led Georgetown County to declare a State of Emergency yesterday and close parks and recreation facilities.

"This is an unprecedented situation for us," said Georgetown County Interim Administrator Wesley Bryant. "We want to keep providing services to the best of our ability, but at the same time, we want to lead by example and do our part to keep our employees and our community safe. It's going to require some innovation and creativity on our part as we move forward and figure this out as the situation evolves."

A few key facilities will remain open with some alterations to normal operations to limit person-to-person contact and the spread of germs. Those facilities are as follows:

- The landfill and community recycling centers will continue to be open to the public for normal hours of operation. However, individuals are asked not to socialize at these facilities. Staff may elect to limit the number of users on site at any time. No loitering will be allowed. All swap shops will be closed until further notice.
- The Georgetown Airport and terminal building will remain open. Staff will take steps to limit the number of people in the facility at any time to less than 10.
- The Register of Deeds office in the historic courthouse will continue to allow very limited admittance, which will be by appointment only. See further details later in this

news release.

- The Georgetown County Office of Elections and Voter Registration will remain open for regular hours to accommodate filing for partisan elected offices, which opened yesterday. Staff will take actions to limit the number of people inside the facility at once. Call (843) 545-3339 for an appointment.

All other county facilities will be closed to the public. Hours of operation for most county offices will remain at 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., though some offices may reduce staff to accommodate illnesses, absences due to lack of childcare while schools are out, and to allow for a contingency plan to replace staff who become ill or who are required to be quarantined due to exposure to someone who has the virus. Some offices and departments that do not generally work directly with the public may direct staff to work from home. Office hours, email addresses and phone numbers for all departments are available at www.gtcounty.org. A directory of departments is available via phone at (843) 545-3063.

For residents who need to drop off documents, payments, permit requests or other business items, the county will establish a dropbox immediately inside the front door of its main building – the historic county courthouse, located at 129 Screven Street.

Additionally:

- **The Treasurer's Office** and **Auditor's Office** will extend the due date for taxes on all vehicles and watercraft due on March 31 to April 30. The S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles has agreed to waive penalties for the same period. Taxes may be paid online at <https://georgetowncountysctax.com> or by phone at 1-833-594-5241. For more information regarding tax payments, call (843) 545-3102 or email taxinfo@gtcounty.org.
- While the **Bureau of Aging Services** has cancelled its congregate dining programs, clients will receive regular wellness telephone calls from staff. Clients may also elect to transfer to the county's home delivered meal program until the congregate dining program is restored. To sign up, call (843) 325-6716. This service is open to all senior citizens, not just those who previously participated in the congregate dining program.
- **Georgetown County Circuit Courts** have postponed all jury trials. Individuals summonsed for jury duty for March 23-30 need not report for jury duty. Non-jury proceedings will be scheduled/held at the judge's discretion. All roll calls and other large gatherings are cancelled until further notice. Filings and payments (money orders, business checks or cashier's checks only) may be left in the dropbox located outside the entrance of the Judicial Center, 401 Cleland Street, Georgetown. The dropbox will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Call the number on the dropbox to notify the clerk's office. The documents will immediately be retrieved and processed. Clocked copies will be mailed to the attorney.
- **Georgetown County Summary Courts** have cancelled all court sessions until further notice. Parties will be notified by mail of their rescheduled dates. Those needing to make payments for any of the county's magistrate offices may do so at the drop box location at Central Traffic Court, 333 Cleland Street. No cash and no personal checks are accepted – money orders or cashier's checks only. Please include a copy of the ticket or case number with payment. Payments may also be made via the Georgetown County website, www.gtcounty.org.
- **Family Court** emergency hearings will be scheduled on an as needed basis. For any other Family Court concerns, call (843) 545-3215.

- Any **Probate Court** hearings for non-emergency matters shall be continued to a future date and time. Filings can be made by mail, or if time is of the essence, our staff will try to accommodate. Customers are asked to consider waiting several weeks to apply for marriage licenses. Please keep in mind that couples only have to observe the mandatory 24- hour waiting period to receive a license after applying, so there is no need to apply far in advance. However, for those who cannot wait, call the Probate office for specific instructions. For other needs or concerns, call (843) 545-3274 to see if staff can help you via phone or online.
- In the **Purchasing Office**, until further notice all bids must be submitted electronically through the Purchasing Department's Vendor Registry webpage. Please visit the County's Purchasing page at <http://www.georgetowncountysc.org/purchasing/> for instructions on how to submit bids electronically through this system. Any scheduled bid openings will still be opened at the designated date and time as listed in the bid document or related addendum. However, due to the office closure to the public, these bid openings will not be open to the public, but will be accompanied by at least one county staff witness. As usual, following the bid opening, bid tabulation results will be posted online for the public's viewing.
- Those seeking permits from the **Building office** may print permit application forms online at <http://www.georgetowncountysc.org/building/>. Completed applications and scanned copies of plans may be emailed to bldpermits@gtcounty.org. Credit card payments can be made by calling the Building Department at (843) 545-3116. Check payments can be mailed to Georgetown County Building Department, P.O. Drawer 421270, Georgetown, SC, 29442. For assistance, or if you are unable to access our permits online, please contact the Building Department at (843) 545-3116.
- Those seeking permits from the **Planning and Zoning Department** may print permit application forms online at <http://www.georgetowncountysc.org/Planning/> or <http://www.georgetowncountysc.org/Zoning/>. Completed applications and scanned copies of attachments may be emailed to plncomm@gtcounty.org. Credit card payments can be made by calling the Building Department at (843) 545-3116. Check payments and hard copies can be mailed to Georgetown County Planning Department, P.O. Drawer 421270, Georgetown, SC, 29442. For assistance, or if you are unable to access our applications online, please contact the Planning Department at 843-545-3158 or the Zoning Department at 843-545-3602.
- **The Register of Deeds Office** will allow paralegals admittance to the Record Room by appointment only. Admittance will be limited to three people at a time, limited to approximately four hours per appointment. Appointment times will be 8:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. and 12:45-5 p.m. To make an appointment, call (843) 545-3088. Those receiving appointments must remain at their assigned work station during their appointed time. Documents may be left in the dropbox at the front of the courthouse. The Register of Deeds staff will check this box several times a day and asks that all documents be in a marked envelope with clear directions for where and who it should be directed. Items dropped off without a paralegal's name on them will be recorded upon receipt.
- **The Sheriff's Office** is operating at full capacity, but will limit access to the public, as well as limiting non-essential responsibilities (.e. fingerprints, shooting range permits, etc.). Access to the building by the public will be limited to the lobby only. Any questions can be relayed to the front office by phone.

- All county board and commission meetings, with the exception of a Capital Project Sales Tax (CPST) Commission meeting scheduled for today, March 17, at 6 p.m., are cancelled until further notice. The CPST meeting will be conducted by phone. Media will be invited to participate via phone as well. County Council meetings will continue as scheduled, but may also be conducted virtually. The county will also strongly recommend that all state-appointed boards and commissions within the county cancel meetings until further notice.

The first confirmed case COVID-19 in Georgetown County was reported yesterday at Tideland Waccamaw Hospital. Cases have been confirmed in Horry and Charleston counties.

All individuals are encouraged to continue practicing the basic precautionary measures recommended by SCDHEC and the CDC, including:

- Washing hands frequently;
- Coughing and sneezing into a barrier, such as your elbow or a tissue;
- Avoiding touching of the eyes, nose and mouth;
- Avoiding contact with those who are sick; and
- Staying at home if you are sick.

Anyone with questions regarding COVID-19, please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/> or <https://scdhec.gov/health/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19> or call the SCDHEC Care Line at 1-855-472-3432.

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