



## **COVID- 19 Update**

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Wednesday March 18, 2020

The COVID 19 virus is called a “novel” coronavirus which is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. Being a “novel” virus, the actions taken in response to this pandemic are constantly and rapidly evolving. Laurens County Government is a political subdivision of the State of South Carolina.

On Wednesday March 11, 2020 the Governor of South Carolina was quoted as issuing a statement:

“There remains no cause for public alarm in South Carolina,” McMaster said. “Schools should continue to remain open and provide instruction. State government offices in all 46 counties will stay open. South Carolinians should remain calm and continue their daily normal routines and responsibilities.”

Within 24 hours on Thursday March 12, 2020 the Governor of South Carolina requested \$45,000,000 from the State budget be available immediately to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in South Carolina.

The following day on Friday March 13, 2020, Governor Henry McMaster issued Executive Order 2020-08 declaring a State of Emergency and closing of schools in Lancaster and Kershaw Counties.

On Sunday March 15, 2020 the Governor issued Executive Order 2020-09 closing all public schools in the State of South Carolina.

Late Tuesday March 17, 2020 the Governor issued Executive Order 2020-10 affecting public gatherings.

The rapid spread and response to the COVID-19 virus has kept your local government in Laurens County very busy. Below is a brief update of just a few of many actions your local government has taken. Our primary focus and efforts are to ensure the continuity of your Government’s Operations with a particular emphasis on ensuring our Emergency Services remain fully functional. As of this writing we know of NO CONFIRMED cases of COVID-19 in Laurens County.

On Saturday, March 7, 2020 an email was sent to all the news media and local industries highlighting preparations taken by the Laurens County Government.

On Monday and Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, the Laurens County Emergency Services Team analyzed several strategic responses and scenarios to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Laurens County based on our EMD (911 Emergency Medical Dispatch) protocols for cold and flu calls and CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidance.

Laurens County Public Works teams began instituting extraordinary measures to prevent a spread of the COVID-19 virus within our buildings through disinfectant cleanings of our facilities including door handles. Notices were placed on all buildings requesting sick Citizens do not enter our facility. Hand sanitizer stations were ordered and put in place.

On Wednesday March 11, 2020 First responders from Laurens City Fire Department (FD), Laurens County Sheriffs Office (LCSO), Laurens County Fire (FD), Laurens County Emergency Management Agency (LCEMA), Laurens County 911 Center (LC911), Laurens County EMS (LCEMS), and Clinton FD met to review specialized sanitizing equipment and materials. The primary focus was to ensure our Emergency Services remain fully functional.

On Friday March 13, 2020 a meeting was held with Nursing homes representatives, all the First Responders, City of Laurens and Clinton Emergency Services Teams, and the Laurens County Emergency Services Team. This meeting was held to coordinate protocols, equipment and supply needs, as well as to clarify our coordinated response to protect the Citizens of Laurens County.

A second meeting was held with the Laurens County Emergency Services Team where the County Administrator directed the lock down of our Emergency Services 911 Center and Stations prohibiting non-essential personnel. The Laurens County Emergency Services Team also continued our internal plans for our collaborative response to protect the Citizens of Laurens County.

During this period and over the weekend, the Laurens County Emergency Services Team met with a local industries in response to their concerns with potential employee exposures. Consistent contact with SCDHEC officials also took place.

On Sunday March 15, 2020 the LCEMA met with municipal first responders to inventory response equipment that they had in stock.

On Monday March 16, 2020 (0900) the Laurens County Government held a department head meeting to discuss our continuity plans for continued services to our Citizens in the event that the COVID-19 pandemic escalated and we would be forced to close access to our buildings. We refined our continuity of operations plan and prepared for a potential

escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic. A DHEC Representative gave a presentation on the activities in South Carolina and our coordinated efforts.

On Monday March 16 at (1100) a meeting was held at the Younts Center in Fountain Inn with several major private sector employers, a SCDHEC representative, representatives of the City of Fountain Inn, Congressman Jeff Duncan, and several Local Government Emergency Services organizations to discuss our coordinated efforts to protect the Citizens of Laurens County during this COVID-19 pandemic.

On Monday March 16 (1430) the Laurens County Emergency Services Team met again to discuss our continued coordinated efforts to protect the Citizens of Laurens County.

On Monday March 16 (1600) the Laurens County Emergency Service Team held a meeting with the Cities of Laurens and Clinton to plan our continued coordinated efforts to protect the Citizens of Laurens County.

On Tuesday, March 17 the Laurens County continued our coordination and efforts for protecting the Citizens of Laurens County as well as preparation for an escalation in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At 2200 the Governor of South Carolina issued EO-2020-10 (Executive Order). Based on the guidance of this EO the County issued a directive to close our governmental facilities (limited access for critical functions). We then began the process of implementing our plans for implementing our continuity of operations contingency plan.

On Wednesday March 18, 2020 (0800) we implemented our continuity of operations contingency plan.