

March 19th 2020

COVID-19 Update 1

FROM H.E. THE GOVERNOR AND THE HON. PREMIER

It is vital that everybody has the **real facts** about COVID-19 and the state of our preparations in Anguilla. We will therefore use this medium to update you regularly on developments.

Confirmed cases/suspected cases – there is **NO** confirmed case of COVID-19 in Anguilla. There have been three suspected cases. Samples from each patient have been sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) Laboratory in Trinidad for testing. Two have tested negative for the virus. We are awaiting the result of the third test. We will advise you promptly of that result.

Health preparations - we have a highly professional health team. Any person suspected of having contracted COVID-19 will be accommodated in the dedicated isolation unit at Princes Alexandra Hospital (PAH). This unit's capacity is being expanded by repurposing an existing, but appropriate, building at PAH into a temporary isolation unit. This facility will be open early next week.

Travel restrictions – air and sea ports will close to passenger movements from 11.59pm on Friday 20 March. This decision was taken on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer. There will be **no exceptions** to this decision other than declared medical emergencies.

Border control – The Royal Anguilla Police Force, the Department of Immigration and the Customs Department have stepped up patrols by land, sea and air to curtail illegal entry.

Schools – schools closed last Friday and will remain closed until and including Friday 3 April. The Ministry of Education is in contact with regional examination boards about the implications of COVID-19 on the external examination timetables. They will provide clear information as soon as they know the position.

Day care centres – day care centres have not been closed. Parents can make their own decisions about their child's attendance and proprietors should follow the established guidance on hygiene.

Government of Anguilla Offices - with the exception of schools, all other public services are functioning normal. If there are any changes in the coming days, we will keep the public updated.

Banks and financial institutions: banks and other financial institutions are operating as normal, and we expect no changes.

Cargo movements – Anguilla relies on goods arriving by sea and air. Cargo movements – both sea and air - will not be restricted from entering Anguilla. We have assurances from French St. Martin that cargo movements are not included in the decision they took on Tuesday 17 March to close passenger movements to and from Anguilla. Similarly, containers continue to depart from the Port of Miami.



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Food and other supplies – the movement of cargo into Anguilla remains unrestricted. We have confidence that shortages should not occur. There is no need to hoard or to panic buy – that will only create artificial shortages. The same applies for petrol, diesel and cooking gas. Supplies have not been interrupted and we don't see this happening.

Price gouging - we are aware of reports of alleged price gouging. The public are requested to report any such incident to the Ministry of Finance.

Anguilla is no stranger to disasters – although this one is very different. We will, as always rise to the challenge through a united effort. That effort begins with us and how we adjust our behaviours. So, we take the opportunity to once again reinforce the messages that you are encouraged:

- not to congregate in crowds;
- to practice safe social distancing – the advice is to remain 3 - 6 feet apart from one another;
- to wash hands frequently and practice good hygiene;
- to cover coughs and sneezes with a disposable tissue or in the crook of a flexed elbow;
- to frequently clean and disinfect shared spaces and work surfaces; and
- to avoid contact with persons suffering from or exhibiting symptoms of acute respiratory infections such as the flu, coughs, and colds.

The Ministry of Health has established a hotline for the general public seeking information on COVID-19 and for persons who feel they have been exposed to COVID-19. The number is 1-264- 476-7627 or 476 SOAP.

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