

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
October 9, 2020

College Spring Plans

With things progressing well, COVID-wise, Midd College has publicized their plan classes for J-Term and the spring semester. J-Term will be primarily remote, but spring classes are scheduled to commence on March 1. You can read the full plan at the link below:

<https://www.middlebury.edu/office/midd2021/announcements/j-term-spring-semester-announcements>

Governor's Emergency Order

The order expires October 15. However, we fully expect the Governor to announce a continuation of the order as-is for another 30-day period at his media conference next week.

Halloween is On!

The Governor made it official yesterday, cancelling Halloween will not be included in his emergency orders.

If you decide to participate in the traditional door-door Halloween, take a minute to read the CDC information on how the disease is spread and take counter measures.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

Some counter measures:

- Control gathering points to avoid congestion (like front stoops or decks).
- Keep groups small
- Carry hand sanitizer and don't be afraid to use it
- Wear face coverings- no, that old plastic Howdy Doody mask with the rubber band on it from the attic won't suffice. This is a time for some fun initiatives on costume design.
- Accept only industry sealed treats
- Kids- don't sneak open the "fun size" (who came up with THAT name?) Hershey bar to munch on. Wait till you get home and a parent can sanitize the packaging first. After all, you really don't know where that candy bar has been.
- Wipe down the bags of candy before you open them for distribution- remember, they sat in a store – see airborne aerosols. Pretty remote chance for transmission but why take a chance?
- Wear nitrile or similar hand covering when giving out candy.
- Avoid the big bowl that can be rummaged through.
- Only go to homes that have a "welcome" light on
- Never go into someone else's home

Nothing overly complex here. Let's keep the marauding hobgoblins from being part of community transmission.

Vermont Schools Do Well In Reopening and Responding To COVID-19

Noting Vermont is exactly one month into the school year, state officials at Friday's press conference thanked the school communities for their hard work in opening schools and expanding in-person learning.

"We've had a few cases of COVID linked to schools in the last month — and we're certainly not out of the woods when it comes to this virus," Governor Phil Scott said. "But when these situations have occurred, as we knew they would, school leaders have responded quickly and worked closely with the Department of Health and Agency of Education to prevent in-school transmission."

The Agency of Education has sent a survey to school districts to gather up-to-date information on their reopening plans. Officials expect to be able to release those results next week.

Gov. Scott also recognized Vermont's child care system, which mobilized early on to make sure essential workers had care for their kids, and for quickly stepping up again to fill gaps on remote learning days when schools began to reopen.

Outbreak Update

Health Commissioner Mark Levine said the outbreak of COVID-19 among seasonal workers at Champlain Orchards now stands at 28 positive cases. (The SEOC at a briefing yesterday had reported 33, but this included the state total) The outbreak remains contained to the site. Dr. Levine emphasized that there is no risk to the public who were at, or may go to the orchards, and that it is safe to eat and use the apples and products.

The orchard workers will have access to paid sick leave, either through Families First Coronavirus Relief Fund, or paid by the employer for those in quarantine or isolation, Dr. Levine said.

The owners of Champlain Orchards, state agencies and partners have been working to make sure these workers have what they need to quarantine and isolate safely. Members of the community have also been offering supplies and words of support for the workers, several of whom have been returning to Vermont every year since Champlain Orchards opened in the 1990's.

They are being provided food, contact-less thermometers, face masks, as well as calling cards and cell phones, so that they can use What's App to communicate with loved ones back home and have telemedicine consults with the Open Door clinic.

We have made connections to ensure hospitals know there is coverage for all Vermonters who are seeking tests and treatment for COVID, regardless of insurance status or immigration status, Dr. Levine said.

"Our health care system has not left these workers out in the cold. They are essential to our economy, and important members of our communities," he said.

Finally, On a Not-So-Fun Note

The Governor pointed out a concern over a growing state of tension. He pointed out the recent effort by a "militia" in Michigan to kidnap the governor. Here in Middlebury the police are investigating, in concert with our federal and state partners, over 13 acts classified as "Hate Crimes" or "Bias Motivated" events since June . This involves two zoom bombings laced with white supremacist and racist invectives; the theft of lawn signs; tagging with neo-Nazi symbols, and white supremacist posturing. While this deviates from our normal bulletin material on COVID-19, it is none the less harmful. The police department encourages you to report these events as soon as possible. What a way to end a week, but we must remain vigilant. Free speech and open debate are the foundation of this country; hate speech and violent rhetoric are an anathema to freedom.