

Town of Middlebury  
Emergency Management Bulletin  
December 22, 2020

### **What's That Squeaky Sound???**

Why, that's the Governor opening up the spigot a bit....but just a bit.

Hockey and other youth and scholastic sports- you may resume skills and conditioning practice with no contact. For these and other outdoor recreational activities the prior guidance remains in accordance with the acronym "APPLE" Arrive, PPlay, Leave. Okay the keyboard stuttered a bit there, but you get the point. (This is a government agency and we like acronyms). No malingering and socializing after the activity.

And while we're waxing bureaucratic with acronyms, here's another one relevant to the Governor's latest amendment to the orders: MASK. Yup, MAsk up- Social distance- Klean your hands.

### **Holiday Gathering Update**

There are important health benefits in gathering with others and Vermonters have worked hard to help stabilize new case counts.

Given the current plateau in our virus case numbers, and the other stringent mitigation measures in place, for the ten-day period of December 23 through January 2 the multi-household gathering restriction will be paused and gathering with one (1) trusted household will be allowed.

*Specifically: Small, two-household, gatherings for the holiday season will be allowed. Households may choose a single (one) trusted household to gather with during this period.*

While we are providing a path to very small holiday gatherings, we are not recommending them, **especially** for those over 65, with pre-existing conditions, or those who work with vulnerable populations such as in health care settings. Again, the safest thing to do is to not gather.

After a gathering with a household from inside Vermont we **strongly** encourage everyone to obtain a test 7 days after the gathering. Testing is free, easy and more accessible than ever before. You can pre-register for a test here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing>

See the ACCD Guidance site for all the latest amendments; they are in red, in keeping with the holiday spirit. <https://accd.vermont.gov/news/update-new-work-safe-additions-be-smart-stay-safe-order>

### **Real World Perspective**

What constitutes a household? Common sense prevails here folks, and you should follow the spirit and intent of the order. Big gatherings are the cause of the late unpleasantness with respect to COVID growth. Close contact and congestion in a warm, humid, holly jolly hugging and kissing and everyone talking and singing environment is a risk, ripe with COVID bugs floating in the airstream getting sucked into lungs through mouth, eyes, and nose. Hide the mistletoe!

On a personal note, I have a whole bunch of grandkids, we provide child care for the younger ones so Moms can work. We all take precautions and so far, so good. But the risk is there- moms go to work, kids go to school. Staggering visits on Christmas is how we keep things from getting congested and reduces the risks. The household rule, by the letter, would allow us to continue with childcare except on Christmas. Think about that. Like every rule, common sense prevails. Don't be the cause of an outbreak or a heartache. Three of the grandkids live out of state- we won't be visiting them this holiday or anytime soon. But the ones that are an intrinsic part of the household every day, we'll visit- staggered, and we'll strive to keep all safe. Besides, I'll have a better shot at getting some of those holiday cookies before the little hands scoop them all up.

**Let's End With a Little Cheer- Thanks to Our Own Mary Hogan School!**

They say that a single candle curses the darkness...how about an entire school - kids and teachers brightening up the holiday! Kudos to Mary Hogan, take a look:

<https://youtu.be/9Nq0wLS8I68>