

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
July 10, 2020

Renters, Landlords, Mortgagees

Difficulty with rent or mortgage payments due to the pandemic? Are you a landlord who hasn't been able to collect rent? Starting Monday, help is here- to help payments and make up for lost rental income. Applications for assistance go on line on Monday, July 13. If you need help with a mortgage payment, you can find the information at: <https://vhfa.org/map/>. Grants for mortgage payments will be sent to the institution that holds the mortgage. If you need help with rent, here's the link for you: <https://www.vsha.org/rental-housing-stabilization-program/>. There are, naturally, conditions with these programs and you must be qualified. For landlords and renters you can also call the Middlebury office of the Vermont State Housing Authority at 388-1005. There are income limits, housing must meet all housing standards. Rent assistance will be sent directly to the landlord.

The current moratorium on evictions remains in place. These programs will help landlords make up lost income and preserve homes for renters and those with mortgages. However, the moratorium will end 30 days after the Governor's emergency order expires, which is not likely anytime soon.

Spigot Opening

It's Friday, and we usually get announcements on opening up more of the state. Not today, though. Vermont is proceeding under a reduced speed caution light. This is due to the rapid rise in infections in the Mid-Atlantic states, in the south, and in the west. Vermont's COVID numbers remain very low and very stable. There hasn't been a reported infection in Addison County in 17 days and no statewide deaths in several weeks. There are no known cases of COVID 19 in Middlebury at this time. The number of counties outside New England for which quarantine is not required has shrunk due to large increases in infection. Here is a link to the colorful cross-state travel map: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>

The Mask

No, this is not a review of or a link to the Jim Carey movie. Some concerns have arisen over the protective value of the mask relevant to the arrival of college students. It is true that non-medical half masks (the technical term for whatever you cover your nose and mouth with) are not intended to be an impervious barrier against exposure to aerosols contaminated with COVID-19. They serve more to prevent the wearer from contaminating others with aerosols they generate by talking, coughing, sneezing by trapping them in the covering.

In a heavily contaminated environment, "atomized" aerosols with an exposure time of 15 minutes or more still create a risk of infection. If you combine social distancing, good mask management, and wearing the mask you reduce that risk. These masks, stuffy as they are in the heat, do not provide a seal nor filtration, and they do not protect your exposed skin from contact.

You can make those masks more effective when combining good hygiene which includes rigorous soapy hand washing, and as a field expedient method, the proper use of a hand sanitizer. It's like neutralizing and removing contamination from surfaces with which it came in contact. The more distance you put

between yourself and the source (or potential source) of contamination and the more barriers you put between yourself and contamination the lower your risk is. Handling a contaminated mask is another way to raise the risk of infection. In other words, don't set it down and use it as a napkin to set your ham sandwich on. A mask removed should be stored in a paper bag or hung in the open air.

It's the combination of a lot of little things that provide the protection. If you don't have the mouth and nose covering on you have no protection at all. Think of masks in terms of the rail tunnel project. "Jersey" barriers protecting the bridgeless void are like the N95 surgical mask- pretty robust at stopping anyone from driving into the pit. The cloth masks are like wooden saw horse barricades and signs. Effective to a point, but there's always a possibility of a vehicle crashing through them if one isn't otherwise careful. Jim Gish thanks us for including an analogy of the rail project in this bulletin!

It May Be All COVID All The Time, However...

A coastal tropical storm is on the way. It may bring high winds and heavy rain. Stay tuned to your preferred source for weather updates. If you subscribe to VT ALERT you'll be provided with updated warnings and bulletins. We could be in for some nasty weather on Saturday, July, 11. For those along the Middlebury River corridor, we'll assign the police to make periodic checks of the river but be aware of the sudden flash flood potential.