



## CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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### PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release – March 13, 2020*

## **South Portland Closes Several Facilities in Response to COVID-19, Urges the Public to Limit Visits to Other Public Facilities**

Effective Saturday, March 14, the City of South Portland will close four City facilities to the public out of an abundance of caution due to the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus in Maine. These facilities include:

- Main Library
- Branch Library
- Redbank Community Center
- Community Center

Please note that the City will continue to provide before and after care programs for school children both at the schools and in the Community Center, as well as the drop-in teen program at the Redbank Community Center. Should the South Portland School Department decide to cancel schools, these programs will also be canceled for that same duration. The terms of the closure of these four facilities to the public are indefinite. We will be working with state and local officials and monitoring this evolving situation on a daily basis to determine when these facilities will reopen to the public. The City is also exploring ways to provide library materials to those who request them but as of now this service is not available.

We regret the inconvenience this will cause some members of our community but we believe it is in the best interest of public health to help stop the spread of this disease, especially amongst the high-risk populations, which include the elderly and people with certain health conditions. The City has no reason to believe any of our staff have been exposed to the coronavirus or anyone with the COVID-19 disease so our closure of these facilities should in no way cause alarm amongst residents. We are following what we feel are best practices to limit gatherings of large groups of people and believe closing these popular locations is a prudent step toward our social distancing efforts.

In that same vein, the City is asking that members of the public not attend any public meetings unless absolutely necessary. While we have yet to cancel any public meetings, we are working on ways where members of the public can participate in City Council and Planning Board meetings “virtually”. This technology will enable members of the public to see and hear what is happening and address City Council and Planning Board members when an agenda item is opened for public comment. Members of the public can continue to watch both of these meetings live on SPC-TV (Spectrum channel 1301) or via [live stream on our website](#). And members of the public can also call or email their City Councilors with comments on agenda items prior to each meeting. A listing of Councilor contact information is available on the [City Council page](#) of our website.

Telephone (207) 767-7606 • Fax (207) 767-7629  
[www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org)

Finally, the City is also asking residents to limit use of public buildings that, for the time being, remain open for public business. Please only come in to transact business in person if absolutely necessary to help us prevent the further spread of the coronavirus. Many services are available online or can be transacted over the phone. Our [website](#) has a full directory of contact information for each department and you can also find a complete list of online services by [clicking here](#). **If you are sick, regardless of what the illness is, please stay home.**

We continue to encourage residents to obtain the latest information from the [Maine CDC](#) and [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#). We also recommend taking precautionary measures like a person would for cold and the flu. Examples include staying home when you are sick, covering your cough and sneeze (into your arm), and practicing good hand washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. Residents and visitors to South Portland can stay informed of our efforts via the following methods:

- Visit the [COVID-19 page](#) on our website;
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#);
- [Sign up](#) for phone, text, and/or email alerts via the City's CodeRED service (aka Reverse 9-1-1). You can also download the CodeRED mobile app for your phone; and
- Stay tuned to local TV and print media for local, state, and national news regarding COVID-19.

The City of South Portland will continue to work closely with other agencies to provide additional updates and information as it is available and applicable.

For more information, please contact EMA Director/Fire Chief James Wilson at 207-799-3314 or [jwilson@southportland.org](mailto:jwilson@southportland.org).