



**City of Tuscaloosa Update
Coronavirus (COVID-19)
March 5, 2020**

To my fellow citizens, as mayor, I am your voice at City Hall and my first responsibility is to ensure your safety.

In recent weeks, the Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has wreaked havoc globally, and has now arrived on our Nation's shores with many unknowns.

Unknowns generate fear and misinformation, which is why we are having this briefing today – Our citizens deserve as much fact-based information as possible.

So, let me share with you what I know to be true.

First, we are taking this situation seriously.

Although there are limited cases of COVID-19, and currently no known cases in Alabama, last week, in an abundance of caution, we activated our Incident Command to Level 1 with Fire Chief Randy Smith leading our efforts.

Second, cities are the centers of American life, and we know that if the national trend of infections continue, most major urban areas will experience the Coronavirus, including Tuscaloosa; therefore, we must have a plan of action.

I have authorized the purchasing of necessary supplies for our first responders, increased the frequency of cleanings in City facilities and required departments to prepare response protocols and contingency plans for the continuity of operations - **The City will not close.**

In addition, the City has been coordinating with the Tuscaloosa City Schools, DCH Regional Medical Center, Tuscaloosa County EMA, the University of Alabama, local governments and other agencies to have access to the most accurate information.



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Third, we know the most effective response will not be from local, state or federal governments. Rather, it will come from you by focusing on four key elements: Precaution; Planning; Communication; Common Sense.

Precaution

- If you are sick, stay home.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu shot to prevent the flu, which has similar symptoms to COVID-19.

Planning

It is important that you have a plan for your family and/or place of employment. Everything from telecommuting to having your prescriptions filled needs to be in your calculus. It is time to plan.

Planning will never be a perfect science, but the more you think through the potential issues, the more prepared you will be and the less unknowns you will encounter.

Communication

It is important that you seek information from reliable sources. I would encourage everyone to monitor the CDC and Alabama Department of Public Health websites.

The City has also compiled helpful information from multiple sources at [Tuscaloosa.com/covid19](https://tuscaloosa.com/covid19).

Just because something is posted on social media does not necessarily mean it is true –



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You're in control of what information you will use in the weeks and months ahead.

If you remember only one thing, remember this – Rely on facts and not Facebook or other social media platforms. In my opinion, fear is a more dangerous virus than COVID-19.

Common Sense

Lastly, let us apply common sense.

1. The precautions we use for the flu apply to the Coronavirus.
2. Although it is cold comfort to those who have lost their lives to the Coronavirus, severe cases are still relatively low.
3. For most of the American public, who are unlikely exposed to the Coronavirus at the time, the immediate health risk is still considered low.
4. Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19.
5. It appears we are only in the beginning stages and the Coronavirus may be with us for the near future. It is important to think long-term and not panic each time the breaking news banners flash.

I am a husband, dad and son. Tuscaloosa is my home and I will do everything in my power to protect our city as will every one of us who are charged to meet this challenge. Working side-by-side with our partners, and each of you, I feel confident that Tuscaloosa will meet this moment success.



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