

UPDATED - March 17, 2020

The City of Benson is constantly monitoring the developments concerning the coronavirus (COVID-19). In an effort to have people not gather in groups that put our employees, citizens and the surrounding community at risk, we encourage you to contact the City via phone and/or email. Utility payments may be made by phone or by dropping off payments in the drop box in our parking lot. Permitting is another function that can be done online (for questions and assistance, please contact us by phone).

Furthermore, the CDC issued a recommendation on Sunday to cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 or more people for the next eight weeks. That recommendation was then reiterated by Governor Ducey, who also ordered the closure of all Arizona K-12 public schools until at least March 27. Today the White House announced guidelines to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.

“This recommendation is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus,” the CDC says on its website.

Although there have been no confirmed cases of COVIA-19 in Cochise County at this time, the City of Benson is supporting common sense efforts to prevent and limit its spread. Our citizens’ health and safety are in the forefront of our minds as we take proactive measures locally.

Changes the City is implementing at this time are:

- **Library – reduced services at the library. Patrons will be distanced from each other while using public computers and will be limited to one session per day. Patrons are encouraged to take advantage of the online library catalog to check out digital materials like eBooks and digital audiobooks. The online catalog is available at www.cochiselibrary.org. Patrons can also download the free Libby app from their app store to easily access the catalog on their smart phones.**
- **Police Department – will not offer fingerprinting service to the public.**
- **Event cancellations or postponements – All city-sponsored events will be cancelled for the recommended 8-week period. This will include the BINGO program, which is attended by those most vulnerable.**
- **The City of Benson has revoked all permits for special events occurring at City facilities during the recommended 8-week period with anticipated attendance of 50 or more people.**

Additional guidance was received regarding restaurants, dining establishments, and bars; the CDC guidelines have not included local-mandated closures, and we continue to

recommend following the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

ADHS strongly recommends that dining establishments in areas of known community spread discourage dine-in traffic and instead provide curbside pick-up or drive-through service.

If dine-in options are provided, social distancing measures should be implemented, providing space for customers to be placed at least 6 feet apart, and limiting space for customers to congregate in areas of the restaurant. Restaurants should also establish a procedure that allows their employees to be distanced from one another.

- Restaurants should establish protocols that allow customers to have food delivered to their cars.
- Restaurants should maintain high hygiene standards and require frequent handwashing between each customer interaction and should institute symptom checks for workers before they are allowed to enter the establishment.

Restaurants not in an area of community spread are strongly encouraged to develop plans to implement these recommendations should community spread be identified in their community

Recommended Resources:

- Community and Business Partner Recommendations: (<https://azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-community>). Feel free to share with businesses in your communities. Here is Governor Ducey's tweet (<https://twitter.com/dougducey/status/1239967188041138176?s=20>) about these guidelines.
- Arizona DHS COVID-19 Homepage: Your go-to resource for Arizona-specific guidance (<https://azdhs.gov/index.php>).
- Center for Disease Control Homepage: Latest recommendations including President Trump's guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation evolves, the City of Benson's response to it must also evolve. We will continue to assess the situation as it develops and will adjust our response as appropriate. Please use the above recommended resources for information and please check back for other changes in the service the City may implement.

We continue to remain vigilant and encourage preparedness over panic; knowledge (and good hygiene!) is power.