

Good afternoon - thank you for joining me.

The Emergency Measures Organisation met earlier today to assess and review our critical and essential operational protocols and processes as Bermuda navigates the COVID-19 pandemic.

I recognise that there is quite a bit of angst and anxiety in our community as it relates to COVID-19 (coronavirus). However I can assure the people of Bermuda that this Government is working around the clock to put safeguards in place to protect and keep our community healthy. For the purposes of ensuring concise and key information, I will outline each of the areas where we have pertinent updates as an outcome from this morning's meeting.

As you are aware, a COVID-19 helpline has been established to provide support to those who may have concerns and questions about the virus. That number is 444-2498. We have had no significant changes since our last health update from last evening and you. But, should we need to update you on any critical developments, we will do so as a matter of urgency.

#### **Airport/Dock Operations:**

We want to reiterate that the L.F. Wade international Airport will close for incoming passenger flights on Friday, March 20 at 11.59 P.M. for the next two weeks. Only returning residents will be allowed on flights to Bermuda today and tomorrow. Non-residents will not be landed on the island as of today. Cargo flights will not be affected. Let me repeat... cargo flights will not be affected.

All seaports are closed to visiting vessels.

But essential cargo operations bringing food, medicine, medical supplies and other essential goods will still continue to arrive in Bermuda and cargo services on the Hamilton docks are operating as normal today.

As a note for Bermudians or students living or working in the UK or Europe who require immediate assistance they should contact the Bermuda London Office at +44 (0) 207518 9900 or email [londonoffice@gov.bm](mailto:londonoffice@gov.bm). All returning Bermuda residents can now complete the travellers screening form online. Go to [forms.gov.bm/covid19](https://forms.gov.bm/covid19). Completing and submitting the form ahead of time will make the arrivals process easier.

#### **Education:**

Schools are closed. However the Ministry of Education is working towards implementing a robust remote learning for our public school students. The Ministry will provide an update on these developments in due course.

#### **Government Offices:**

The public bus and ferry services are suspended until April 6.

**Government has not shut down** and given the need to increase social distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19 that has now reached our shores, we must work differently. This would include persons working from home when they are able to do so. So essentially, Government Offices are working at a reduced level.

However the following Legal Affairs departments are operational: National Drug Control and Child and

Family Services, residential treatment services will remain in operation. All other departments in the Department of Legal Affairs will have reduced operations.

In all cases, we are asking for the public's patience as they seek to get specific public services done.

**Private Sector Organisations:**

As we indicated yesterday, we are strongly advising bars, social clubs, restaurants, gymnasiums and other social establishments to significantly scale down their operations and enforce social distancing. Essential retail outlets will continue to operate, such as food and medicines.

**Ministry of National Security:**

The Royal Bermuda Regiment is embodied to provide support to emergency personnel. The Bermuda Police Service has issued a series of guidelines on how they will assist the community.

At the Department of Corrections, all visits will cease, and only visitors who are pre-approved by the Commissioner will be allowed entry for a closed visit.

**Lastly, let me just say that this is now our new normal.** I know it is uncomfortable and unfamiliar and daunting.

But we need to do things differently.

All residents need to adopt social distancing in an effort to slow down community spread.

Ultimately, I believe that we are a resilient people. And as we have proven so many times before, we will rise to meet the challenges to overcome this latest adversity – and we will be stronger for it.

We will continue to ensure you are updated on the latest developments regarding health and public services. The public is encouraged visit [www.gov.bm/coronavirus](http://www.gov.bm/coronavirus), the Government 'Treefrog' App, as well as our social media pages for official Government information. To watch live feeds of the Government's press updates visit our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/bermudagovernment](https://www.facebook.com/bermudagovernment).

Thank you.