

# COVID-19 Update

Talbot County Emergency Services  
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[www.talbotdes.org](http://www.talbotdes.org)



Talbot County Health Department  
Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer  
<https://health.maryland.gov/talbotcounty/>

## Key Points for April 15

- ✓ The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the state of Maryland now exceeds 10,000. In the past 24 hours, 564 new cases were reported bringing the total to 10,032.
- ✓ Monday and Tuesday were the deadliest 48 hours in Maryland, with 47 COVID-19 related deaths overnight. This brings the total to 349 deaths.
- ✓ Governor Larry Hogan announces it is now required to wear masks when in retail stores or using public transportation. Retail stores are now required to have their staff wear masks and practice social distancing amongst staff and customers. ([04/15/2020 Executive Order](#))
- ✓ Long-term care and assisted living facilities continue to see an increase in COVID-19 cases, with 1,833 of the state's total cases coming from these establishments.
- ✓ Despite conflicting reports from other sources, the Talbot County Health Department confirms that Talbot County still counts only 13 cases.
- ✓ University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Easton will begin screening all staff for signs of flu-like illness including temperature checks before they enter the building.
- ✓ Choptank Community Health System has administered more than 300 COVID-19 tests. "Choptank has been a fantastic source of testing and making sure that cases are well managed," according to Dr. Fredia Wadley.
- ✓ Approximately 88% of Talbot County's Public Schools students are able to participate in online learning activities when they can get access to mobile or drive-up WiFi hotspots. Officials are exploring options for deploying buses for increased access.

**For Immediate Release**  
**April 15, 2020**

## Wear a Mask When Out in Public, Health Officials Recommend

Should I or shouldn't I? Many people are asking this question about wearing masks as the COVID-19 pandemic drags on and cases continue to rise.

"Some have taken this recommendation seriously and some have not," says Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer for Talbot County. "The CDC has recommended, and Governor Larry Hogan is now requiring, that we wear cloth masks in public when there is a high probability you will encounter others. Wearing a mask says, you are showing that you are serious about protecting your own health and that of others you contact."

Studies show that some people with COVID-19 will never have symptoms, but they can still spread the virus. Those who ultimately develop symptoms can also transmit the virus before they actually get sick. This means that someone who coughs, sneezes, and even speaks in close proximity to another person can spread the virus without even knowing it.

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Social distancing remains the most important means of slowing the spread of the disease, but the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings where social distancing measures may be difficult to maintain. Most local grocery stores and pharmacies have implemented plans to limit interaction between customers, but 100% compliance is difficult to maintain.

“You don’t need a surgical mask or N-95 respirator to go to the grocery store,” says Dr. Wadley. “We need those critical supplies for healthcare workers and other medical first responders. A simple cloth mask will do. Masks help catch moisture and viruses as we breathe out.”

The Talbot County Health Department officials have been visiting local businesses to check social distancing plans and other cautionary practices. Dr. Wadley recently released additional guidance for business owners and managers, which includes the recommendation that employees wear masks too.

Dr. Wadley offers these tips for businesses:

1. Establish one store entrance and station monitors at the entrance to limit the number of customers allowed in building.
2. Tape floors to indicate appropriate social distancing guides, particularly at checkout points where customers gather. Some local stores are allowing one-way traffic only on select aisles.
3. Place plastic shields between cashiers and customers.
4. Require employees to wear cloth masks during working hours.
5. Clean hard surfaces and shopping baskets several times a day.
6. Ask employees to encourage customers to practice social distancing while shopping.

## Talbot County Public Schools

The next TCPS meal and CarePack distribution will be on Friday, April 17 from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at all school sites.

The TCPS Instructional Technology Help Desk will be open on Friday, April 17 from noon - 3:00 p.m. at Easton High School and St. Michaels Elementary School. Please email [helpdesk@talbotschools.org](mailto:helpdesk@talbotschools.org) for virtual support or to schedule a help desk appointment for iPads or laptops.

The Maryland State Board of Education held a meeting on Tuesday, April 14. The Talbot County Board of Education will meet on Wednesday, April 15 and will review several waivers that resulted from that meeting. We will evaluate local policies that parallel State policies which have been approved for potential waivers. This may include some assessments and service learning requirements for the Class of 2020 which may be waived. The Board will also look at local policies we might be able to adjust, and will be considering a waiver request of school days for the 2019-2020 school year as MSDE recommended.

Thanks to Easton Utilities and the TCPS Technology Team for setting up additional hotspots around the community and in school parking lots. We have also received a grant from the Talbot Family Network for an additional 100 hot spots which are on order. As of today with these measures in place, 88% of TCPS students are able to access on-line learning either in their home or by going to a hotspot. We have also purchased equipment to establish hotspots on our school buses. We are continuing to mail packets to make sure we are reaching every child in our school system.

“I will be recording a video after tonight’s board meeting to provide an update on actions taken, as it is important to remain transparent and continue to communicate in order to support our children,” said Dr. Kelly Griffith, Superintendent. “I want to thank everyone for their continued patience and support. Our seniors were born during 9/11,

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so this is the second major community crisis they've endured, and we must keep this in mind as they navigate this situation."

## Unemployment Claims

### **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

Effective April 1, 2020 claimants are encouraged to file according to a new system, which has been designed to make the process easier for claimants. We are encouraging individuals to please use these new procedures.

To file an initial regular unemployment claim [online](#) or through our call centers, please file your claim according to your last name as detailed below:

- If your last name starts with A-F, file your claim on a Monday.
- If your last name starts with G-N, file your claim on a Tuesday.
- If your last name starts with O-Z, file your claim on a Wednesday.
- Filing is open to all by phone on Thursdays and Fridays; online on all Thursdays through Sundays.
- Filing later in a week will not delay your payments or affect the date of your claim.

Claimants are strongly encouraged to utilize the online [NetClaims application](#) to file claims. This online application is available 24/7. It is strongly encouraged to file during non-peak hours (8 p.m. - 7 a.m.) for faster processing.

Claim center telephone hours have been further extended and open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. To contact a center, please call 410-949-0022.

Claims may only be filed by phone or online, not by email.

### **IF A CLAIMANT IS HAVING PROBLEMS FILING**

If someone is having difficulty placing a call or accessing the website, he or she can email [ui.inquiry@maryland.gov](mailto:ui.inquiry@maryland.gov). Employers can email [dluiemployerassistance-labor@maryland.gov](mailto:dluiemployerassistance-labor@maryland.gov) or contact 410-767-2412.

### **RESOURCES**

- If someone's job or business has been impacted by the coronavirus, please read [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- To learn more about the work-search requirement exemption, please visit [Work Search FAQs](#).
- To learn about the federal "CARES" Act, please see [FAQs](#).
- To find additional information about Maryland's unemployment insurance program, please visit the [Unemployment Insurance webpage](#).
- For information about programs to support Maryland businesses, please visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information for Businesses](#). This site also includes a [FAQ](#) sheet.

### **WAIT TIMES**

Please be aware that the Division of Unemployment Insurance's website and call centers are currently experiencing an unprecedented volume of users due to COVID-19. This may result in long wait times. We understand claimants are experiencing trouble getting through. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank callers for their patience during these uncertain times.

Please be assured that Maryland does not have a waiting week like many other states do. No matter when or how a claimant files, he or she becomes eligible for benefits starting the day after they separated from employment. If a claimant is eligible, he or she will be paid for all benefits due.

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## Where to Find More Information

- **CDC COVID-2019 Website:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Talbot County COVID-19 Information** [www.talbotcovid19.org](http://www.talbotcovid19.org)
- **Shore Regional Health COVID Information** <https://www.umms.org/shore/patients-visitors/coronavirus>
- **Maryland Department of Health Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx>
- **Talbot County Health Department Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/talbotcounty/Pages/home.aspx>
- **Talbot County Health Department Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/TalbotHealthMaryland/>
- **Talbot County Department of Emergency Services Website:** <http://www.talbotdes.org/default.asp>
- **Talbot County Department of Emergency Services Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/talbotdes>