

Valparaiso Amplifies COVID Message and Restrictions

In recognition of the accelerated spread of COVID 19 nationwide and locally, the City of Valparaiso is amplifying its message of prevention as well as announcing modifications to city activities. “While we do see better days ahead in the not so distant future, we must work together to do all we can to slow the spread of this virus and protect our most vulnerable populations,” said Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy. “What we’re seeing is that people are being careful in their public interactions – at work and at school -- but letting their guard down in private settings. We’re asking that everyone work together to slow the spread by maintaining distance, even among those we’re all missing right now,” he said.

In addition to modifying City of Valparaiso events, the City is supporting restrictions outlined by the Porter County Health Department, including enforcement of masking and social distancing mandates.

To support the local restaurant, retail and small business community, the City of Valparaiso is printing door signs that reinforce the city’s mask mandate, including a Porter County Health Department phone number to call with questions or concerns. Signs will be available at City Hall beginning Tuesday, Nov. 17 and city staff will also be visiting local businesses to distribute the signs. In addition, Mayor Murphy is hosting two Zoom conversations on Wednesday, Nov. 18 where businesses will have an opportunity to share concerns and ideas.

- **Restaurants** are encouraged to participate at 10:00 am on Nov. 18 at <https://zoom.us/j/99414607971> or by dialing in at 1-312-626-6799 and using Meeting ID: 994 1460 7971.
- **Retailers and other small businesses** are encouraged to participate at 11:00 on Nov. 18 at <https://zoom.us/j/99029542473> or by dialing in at 1-312-626-6799 and using Meeting ID: 990 2954 2473.

Mayor Murphy will also host a live **Community Conversation on COVID** at 4:00 pm on Monday, Nov. 23 on Facebook Live at Valparaiso Now.

Based on Governor Eric Holcomb’s executive order and Porter County’s dramatic increase in COVID cases and positivity, Porter County is now at a red COVID alert level. In accordance with Governor Holcomb’s executive order, the Porter County Health Department has issued new restrictions for Porter County, including the City of Valparaiso. The restrictions include:

- Social gatherings of any kind, inside or outside, are limited to 25 people.
- The PCHD is not permitting any gatherings over 25 people. Any events planned in Porter County must contact PCHD to discuss safety protocols.
- The PCHD is discouraging family gatherings for birthdays, weddings and even Thanksgiving.
- Attendance at winter indoor K-12 extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including IHSA sports, is limited to participants, support personnel and parents/guardians.
- PCHD strongly discourages gatherings with anyone not in your household, this includes at bars and restaurants, before and after sporting events, before and after services of faith and getting together with friends.

- Valparaiso bars and restaurants remain open with masking required for all patrons unless seated and dining. Businesses are required to have increased distancing plans in place, including spacing patrons 6 feet apart.
- Community recreational sports leagues and tournaments may continue with participants, required personnel and parents/guardians only.
- Senior care activities are suspended.
- Common areas and break rooms should be closed.

CLOSURES AND MODIFICATIONS

In compliance with state and county mandates to protect the community, Valparaiso announces the following closures and modifications:

City Hall

- City Hall will remain open with masks required for all who enter. Public meetings will be available to the public via live stream and virtual options on the city's Facebook page, Valparaiso Now and recorded for later viewing on Valpo.us. (see "Watch Public Meetings"). The public is encouraged to call City Hall at 219-462-1161 to learn of ways business may be conducted remotely via phone and online.

Fire Department

- The Valparaiso Fire Department is suspending inspections until further notice.

Parks

- Central Park Plaza Ice Rink opening will be postponed, and an opening date will be announced at a later date.
- Central Park Plaza Ice Rink Learn to Skate and Youth Hockey programs will be modified. Call Parks at 219-462-5144 for details.
- Valpo Parks Foundation First Skate event is postponed until further notice.
- Winter Fest & Tree Lighting event is canceled; however, everyone is invited to view a virtual holiday message premiering on Saturday, Nov. 28 on the Valpo Parks Facebook page.
- The Christmas Tree and downtown holiday lights will be illuminated starting Saturday, Nov. 28 until the first week in January.
- Discovery Cottage Preschool will continue to hold classes at limited capacity.
- Youth and Adult Volleyball are postponed until further notice.
- Creekside Golf Course and Training Center and Forest Park Golf Course are open with modifications. Please visit Valpo Parks Golf Facebook page for updates
- Staff along with park visitors are required to wear a mask in indoor public spaces and outdoors where 6 feet of social distance may not be maintained.
- Parks and pathways are open.
- Playgrounds are open.
- Park restrooms are closed for the season.
- All hard surface courts are open.
- Fitness Equipment located at Fairgrounds Park is open.
- Social gatherings of up to 25 people are allowed. All indoor rentals will continue to follow CDC social gathering guidelines.

- Banta Activity Center will remain closed.
- ValPAWraiso Dog Park is open.
- Creekside Trails are open.
- The Park Admin Office is closed to the general public. Appointments are required. For general inquiries related to registrations or scheduling, email Jane Grennes at jgrennes@valpo.us.
- Start dates for future events and programs will be announced as they become available.

Police

- The Valparaiso Police Department has suspended fingerprint services at the VPD station.
- The VPD encourages online reporting for non-emergency calls for service or filing of reports that are not in progress.
- Police reports or vehicle crash reports are available at the VPD Records Division, which will remain open Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, with a daily closure from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm for cleaning.
- To assist with social distancing, the VPD is asking that only two people enter the lobby at a time.

Transit

- Valpo V-Line, ChicaGo Dash and Transit Connect will continue to run with added cleaning procedures. Passengers and drivers are required to wear masks. For schedules and details, visit ValpoTransit.com.

If additional information on other City of Valparaiso government closures or changes, please visit <https://ci.valparaiso.in.us/1674/COVID-19-Response>