

COVID Announcement 2020-04-02

I want to take a minute to talk in general about the changes I'm making due to this emergency. The first emergency I responded to was in 1973, a boat in distress off the coast of Maine. I've been responding to emergencies ever since. I've learned a few things. During an emergency there are three priorities - Life Safety, Incident Stabilization (keep it from getting worse) and Property Conservation. These are the priorities I'm using. In the pandemic the first two are intertwined. Life Safety - how do we (you and I) keep you from getting infected; Incident Stabilization - how do we prevent spread of COVID-19? You've heard the general answer to both of these, wash your hands, cough into your sleeve, stay away from others, stay home if you're sick etc. Property Conservation during the outbreak means maintaining as close to a normal routine as we can. Another thing I've learned is "Think fast, act quickly, evaluate the results, adjust as necessary and repeat".

The changes at the transfer station show all of this in action. On a Saturday, March 21st, congestion beyond normal at the transfer station backed traffic onto Route 154 and crowded people together. An immediate ban on bulky waste was issued. Congestion went down but people complained about the ban. (My thanks to everyone who did. Your feedback is vital.) Not surprisingly, many of us were using our time at home to do spring cleaning and yard projects. Also, I was told that some years ago bulky waste collection was suspended and mattresses, brush clippings, etc. were just dumped by the side of the road. I didn't want that to happen again. Your feedback led to the change to accept bulky waste on Wednesday; a return to a more nearly normal routine. We'll see how this goes and adjust as needed.

I think concern over the transfer station possibly being closed may have led to the crowding on that Saturday. Keeping the transfer station open is important for sanitation so it will only be closed as a last resort. On a more general level, I'll do my best to give you notice before a change goes into effect. I did that with the decision to accept bulky waste but not household garbage on Wednesdays. The change was put on our website this week, March 31st, it becomes effective next week on April 8th. I did the same when we discontinued the shopping trips with the senior van.

I know there's some concern about people coming here from New York. Please, if you see a car with a NY license plate in your neighborhood, stay away from the people. And by the way, if you see a car with a CT license plate in your neighborhood, stay away from them too. My point is anyone can be contagious. Stay at home, maintain social distance and wash your hands!

Please sign up for email Alerts through our website if you haven't already. Encourage others to do so when you can. This is how we get important information to you in a timely fashion. We'll soon start using a new system, Everbridge, to send voice and text alerts to your phones as well as email. Please register for that when it's available.

The CDC has added a page to their website to help us deal with the stress we're all feeling. It's worth visiting, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>.

Current projections call for the outbreak to peak in mid-April. Again, this is a best guess but let's hope it's accurate. The next two weeks will be difficult, expect bad news. I'm sure there will be more changes that are inconvenient but are intended to keep us all safe. Please help your neighbors and support our local businesses. We will get through this.