



JOINT NEWS RELEASE: Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg and Town of Christiansburg first responders may begin wearing masks or face coverings

April 4, 2020: Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg and Town of Christiansburg first responders are taking precautionary measures in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Police, fire and rescue personnel have been encouraged to wear masks or face coverings when responding to calls and interacting with the public.

This change will not affect how public safety personnel operate. All police, fire and rescue agencies in Montgomery County and the two Towns will continue to respond to calls, but this added precaution will help ensure the safety of the first responders and the public.

“First responders never know the exact nature of the calls they’re answering, but they always answer the call regardless,” said Blacksburg Police Chief Anthony Wilson. “Not knowing what they’re walking into places them at a higher risk of potential exposure. By protecting them, we’re protecting the public and our healthcare system, and it helps keep us all safer.”

Please continue to do your part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- washing your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer,
- keeping household surfaces clean (including cell phones),
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue (and discard it) or your elbow,
- avoiding touching your face,
- practicing “social distancing,”
- avoiding shaking hands,
- remaining at home if you’re sick,
- avoiding others who are sick, and
- staying home except in extremely limited circumstances.

Should you feel ill, please follow the guidelines outlined below:

(Symptoms of coronavirus - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>)

- CALL your health care provider or your local health department (do not go to the emergency room).
- The New River Health District has activated a local public health hotline at 540-267-8240, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. – noon; Sunday, noon – 4 p.m.
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH) also has a public health hotline at 877-ASK-VDH3, available weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Call 2-1-1 Virginia

For updates related to coronavirus and the impact on our community, visit www.montva.com/coronavirus.

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Melissa Demmitt
Public Relations Director
Town of Christiansburg
540-382-6128
mdemmitt@christiansburg.org

Heather Browning
Community Relations Manager
Town of Blacksburg
540-443-1091
hbrowning@blacksburg.gov

Jennifer Tatum Harris
Public Information Director
Montgomery County
540-381-6887
harrisjt@montgomerycountyva.gov