



May 6, 2020

Waterville Valley Covid19 Update

After six weeks of our NH "Stay at Home" and "No non-essential travel" orders, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) continues to report that our town, and many of the immediately surrounding towns, are reporting 1-4 total cases of the virus, and in some cases, zero cases. The latest report showing total **current active** cases shows Waterville Valley has none. This is a credit to the efforts of all of our community members, including residents, and non-resident property owners and renters, many of whom have been with us for the past six weeks. To protect privacy, only DHHS knows the identity of those who have Covid19. DHHS continues to conduct a very active contact tracing program.

Our WV population appears to be a bit higher than it normally is in a shoulder season, but with everyone's cooperation, we continue to do well. The DHHS report is updated daily, so we urge everyone to continue social distancing, hand washing, masking where appropriate, and traveling only for essential reasons so that we may all continue to be safe. You can also find the Governor's Executive and Emergency Orders concerning recommended behavior and allowed activities during this pandemic at www.nh.gov.

We have received inquiries from our non-resident property owners who would like to visit their properties or just plan a recreational escape to the mountains. Are they permitted to visit Waterville Valley and under what circumstances?

Elected officials and employees of the Town of Waterville Valley cannot do anything to advise or encourage anyone to break the law or violate state executive or emergency orders, in either NH, or any other state of residence, or regions through which someone passes, to come to Waterville Valley. Our primary concern, and our duty, is for the safety and health of the entire town and those who are living here.

All Waterville Valley property owners certainly have the right to visit and/or stay in their homes here. We encourage responsibility along with those rights should you make the personal choice to visit or stay in the Valley. Here are some points to consider when making that choice.

1. Assume you have the virus already. Since very few of us have been tested, and the test, if reliable, is only as good as the moment it is taken, and infected people can be asymptomatic, we just do not know who is infected. So assume everyone is. Further, it is a very safe bet that if you are coming in from outside of Waterville Valley, your home base has a higher number of cases and a greater opportunity for community spread than Waterville Valley. It is your responsibility to protect everyone else. A real example

for you — a man who hiked Loon Mountain recently came down with the virus and was hospitalized three days after returning home to Massachusetts.

2. Do you understand the executive orders regarding Covid19 in all the states through which you will be passing? They may all be slightly different and some may have hefty fines for offenders. The White Mountain National Forest Service has closed several hiking venues and has published their fine schedule. Here in NH, the Governor has requested those coming from out of state to reside in NH self-isolate for 14 days, and has asked that people avoid coming back and forth between states on a regular basis unless it is for essential travel. He has also stated that, while his stay at home order for state residents allows for outside exercise, the intent was for that exercise to be local, and as he put it, "hike local."
3. If you decide to visit Waterville Valley after consideration of the first two points, be especially careful in planning your trip. Nearly all of the rest stops on Interstate 93 are either closed or are located in the geographic region of the state with the highest prevalence of Covid19. Gassing up your vehicle, bathroom breaks, snacks or meals are all components of your trip. How will you accomplish those in the safest possible way?
4. If you make it to the Valley, welcome, and please observe all social distancing, handwashing, and masking recommendations while you are here, including social isolation for 14 days if you intend to stay for an extended period of time. There are resources in town that can assist you with shopping during your period of self-isolation. Our recent second home visitors have done an excellent job of following this guidance, and we hope you will do the same. Please do not park on the streets. Please also obey speed limits as more people than normal for this time of year are walking and biking around town. If going for a walk or hike, leave the car at home so that our trailheads do not become so crowded that the Forest Service closes them down. As AMC says, hike low and local.
5. We have an excellent emergency response and hospital system in the area, but it does not have the same breadth of resources that are available in areas with a higher population. You will see our EMS personnel in full PPE on their calls, again because they do not know who has the virus. PPE is like gold these days, so please limit your outdoor activities to those that represent minimum risk of injury. As always, Waterville Valley and Spereare Hospital are prepared to serve you if there is an injury or illness.

If you have any questions about this communication or any other Town matters, please direct them to townofwv@watervillevalley.org, or call 603-236-4730 and ask for the Town Manager. The Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen maintain close contact to understand both the questions and the responses given. You can also tune in to the 3:00 pm Wednesday weekly updates which are streamed live on YouTube. Access www.watervillevalley.org for the login link.

The Waterville Valley Board of Selectmen
Town Manager
Director of Public Safety