

Whitman Fire Department

Timothy J. Grenno,

Fire Chief

56 Temple Street
Whitman, MA 02382



Whitman Police Department

Chief Timothy Hanlon

20 Essex Street
Whitman, MA 02382

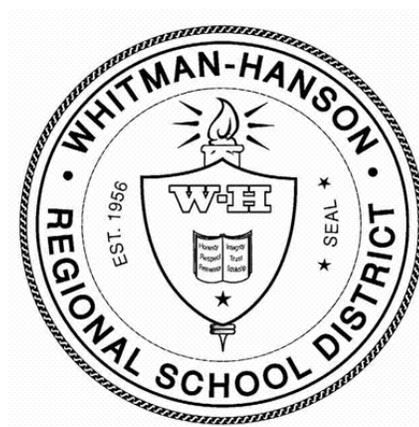


Whitman-Hanson Regional School District

Superintendent

Jeffrey Szymaniak

610 Franklin St.
Whitman, MA 02382



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, March 9, 2020

Contact: Benjamin Paulin

Phone: 781-428-3299

Email: ben@jgpr.net

Joint Release

Whitman Fire and Police Departments, Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Provide Information About Novel Coronavirus

No Confirmed or Suspected Cases in Whitman, Risk Remains Low Throughout Massachusetts

WHITMAN -- Fire Chief Timothy J. Grenno, Police Chief Timothy Hanlon and Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Superintendent Jeffrey Szymaniak wish to provide residents with the latest information regarding the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as federal and state officials continue to monitor the virus domestically and internationally.

As of Monday, March 9, there is currently one confirmed case and 40 presumptive positive cases of coronavirus in Massachusetts, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). **There are no confirmed or suspected cases of the virus in Whitman at this time.**

Health officials report that the risk of contracting the virus remains low, with the incidence rate significantly lower than the incidence rate of the seasonal flu.

The Whitman Fire Department remains in close contact with the Whitman Health Department and the DPH. Whitman Fire will be following all DPH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance to ensure the department is fully prepared to provide emergency services to the town should COVID-19 become widespread.

Additionally, during the recent February break the WHRSD Facilities Department performed a deep cleaning at all school facilities. Another deep cleaning is scheduled for the weekend of March 14. Additional custodial staff has been brought in to daily disinfect surfaces, door handles, railings and other high-touch areas.

Last month, the CDC reported the first cases of community spread of the virus in the United States in western states, and 19 people in the United States have since died from the virus. New cases of the virus nationwide have come to light this week as well, and as of Monday, March 9, the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) is reporting 423 cases of the virus in the United States, including those who contracted the virus from person-to-person spread, travel

and those whose cases are under investigation.

There are additionally 49 people with the virus who were repatriated to the United States from the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship and Wuhan, China.

According to the [CDC](#), symptoms of the virus appear within 2-14 days of exposure. The DPH reports that symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and pneumonia in severe cases.

If you suspect that you are ill with a respiratory disease, or have been informed that you have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your primary care provider immediately.

Precautionary Measures:

In an effort to prevent the spread of flu, colds and other respiratory illnesses, residents are recommended to take the following precautionary measures outlined by DPH:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Always cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Disinfect surfaces, especially high-traffic surfaces such as doorknobs or counter tops.

At this time, the DPH is not recommending people wear masks in public as the risk to the public remains low and there is no substantial evidence suggesting wearing a mask protects an individual outside of preventing someone from spreading a respiratory illness to others in a clinic waiting room.

The CDC is currently urging Americans to avoid nonessential travel to Italy, China, Iran and South Korea, which are designated "Warning Level 3." Additionally, the CDC and Governor Charlie Baker have stated that those who return to the U.S. after visiting any Level 3 country "should stay home and monitor their health during travel and for 14 days after returning to the United States."

For the most up-to-date information, visit the DPH's website by [clicking here](#) and the CDC's website by [clicking here](#).

Town officials will keep you informed of updates or changes as they are advised by local and state departments of public health.

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**A message from the Whitman Fire Department, Whitman
Police Department and Whitman-Hanson Regional School
District**

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**John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC
8 Prospect St.
Georgetown, MA 01833
617-993-0003**