



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO POSTPONES ST. PATRICK'S DAY WEEKEND PARADES AS
PART OF PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT HEALTH AND
SAFETY AMID CORONAVIRUS CONCERNS**

City announces major St. Patrick's Day parades will be moved to future dates as part of additional, precautionary measures to prevent further spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Governor JB Pritzker, and officials from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) today announced the City will postpone this weekend's St. Patrick's Day parades as a precautionary measure to prevent further spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The City will continue working with organizers from Chicago's downtown, South Side, and Northwest Side parades, as well as the annual Dyeing of the Chicago River to reschedule these events to a later date and ensure the health and safety of Chicago's residents and visitors.

The decision to postpone the official St. Patrick's Day parades follows guidance and information from public health experts, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and counterparts in other jurisdictions experiencing similar impacts from COVID-19. The St. Patrick's Day parades and associated activities present very unique circumstances for Chicago, drawing over a million attendees, many from outside of the city and across the country, and offering few opportunities for attendees to practice social distancing – a key recommendation by health experts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"The health and safety of Chicago's residents will always be our highest priority and like many other cities across the nation and globe, we are postponing this year's parades as a precautionary measure to prevent any additional spread of COVID-19," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I want everyone to rest assured that your City and State continue to work around the clock to stay ahead of this issue and ensure everyone remains protected, informed, and safe."



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As part of today's measures, the City will continue to work with state and county agencies on an ongoing basis to review all future non-essential, large gatherings and provide recommendations to the appropriate parties as needed. As it relates to other large planned events, the City's guidance and protocol for large events will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

"We all know what the St. Patrick's Day celebrations mean to us in the city of Chicago — but as elected leaders, we can't take any chances with the health of our residents," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Because of what we've seen nationally and across the world of the increased risk of large gatherings, this was the right call and I thank Mayor Lightfoot for her leadership in this difficult situation. Now that we've reached the stage where we're seeing regular new cases—reflecting additional spread within our communities—we have to make every effort to minimize further spread."

For anyone celebrating St. Patrick Day this weekend, the City's public health officials recommend practicing common sense health safety tips and social distancing, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. At this time, no special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning are necessary or recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness.

Vulnerable populations – consisting of those 60 years or older or with underlying health conditions – may be more susceptible to COVID-19. The City encourages members of vulnerable populations and anyone who is sick to remain home and not attend large gatherings.

"Protecting the health and wellness of both Chicago's residents and visitors is our top priority as we continue to learn more about the nature of COVID-19," said Dr. Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner of CDPH. "We want to be sure that everyone understands the daily measures they can take to keep themselves safe such as social distancing, routine handwashing and avoiding touching the eyes, nose and mouth. We remain in constant communication with the CDC as well as federal, state and local officials to determine the best protocol moving forward in this ever-evolving situation."



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To ensure the safety of residents celebrating Chicago St. Patrick's Day this weekend, OEMC will activate the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as part of an effort to monitor any activities and crowds as well as coordinate resource requests and responses to individual situations. Additionally, OEMC has established the COVID-19 Task Force in partnership with the Mayor's Office and CDPH to address essential areas of operations and collaborate with departments and sister agencies on preparedness and preventive measures.

"Ensuring that City's robust response plan is both efficient and effective for residents is our top priority," said Rich Guidice, Executive Director at OEMC. "To ensure that our City remains prepared in the wake of this fast-moving and evolving situation, OEMC has created the COVID-19 Task Force with 12 unique subcommittees to continuously address and update our response tactics."

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Illinois is increasing, and current information suggests that person-to-person spread will continue to occur and more cases will be identified in the United States and in Chicago. CDPH's goal is to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in Chicago by detecting new cases quickly, minimizing transmission and developing guidance to prepare communities to respond.

"Chicago's South Side Irish Parade is one of the community's most anticipated and celebrated traditions," said Alderman Matt O'Shea, 19th Ward. "While this decision will be disappointing to many, minimizing the potential for COVID-19's spread must be our top priority."

More information and updates on COVID-19 can be found on the IDPH website, the CDPH website, and the CDC website. You can also contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at coronavirus@chicago.gov.

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