



7.31.2020

Business and their customers can work together to keep everyone safe from COVID-19 infection. [Count on Me NC](#) is a program to reinforce the mutual dependence we have on each other: businesses and patrons can register and encourage good practices throughout Pamlico County. To paraphrase Dr. Anthony Fauci, the guidelines developed by public health officials are the **vehicle** to fully reopening our County, **not** an obstacle to that opening.

**Read more about how businesses and patrons can support each other:**

With the number of COVID-19 cases in North Carolina now past 100,000 and deaths continuing to rise, it is easy to feel that nothing is working. But the truth is that in places where guidelines about social distancing and mask wearing have been embraced, and activities are taking place outdoors rather than indoors, the incidence of infection are not rising as quickly as in other places.

Pamlico County has seen a steep rise in cases recently and we now have had a total of 57 verified cases with one death. Even one death is tragic, and we want to avoid more infections that can lead to deaths and on-going debilitation. While our physical location near the end of Route 55 has probably helped isolate us, our own actions, and those of visitors to the county, influence the current situation.

You have probably heard stories about the challenges retail staff have faced while seeking to enforce store policies about wearing masks. The Provision Company in Oriental asked all shoppers to wear masks long before it was statewide guidance and you can read about their experience [here](#) (a subscription may be required for you to view this article): Wearing a face covering is a simple action that protects others if you are unknowingly infected and may provide some protection to you.

Businesses have put this policy in place to protect their customers, and most critically, protect the workers that are in an enclosed environment all day. The consequences for businesses whose employee(s) fall sick with COVID-19 can be disastrous for them and they may have to shut down temporarily, losing income and incurring additional cleaning costs. A recent example is [Tiebreakers Restaurant in Greenville](#).

As shoppers, we have choices about where we shop and should choose those businesses who are following the Statewide guidance:

- Require all employees and shoppers to wear masks
- Have markings in place to help everyone stay 6 feet apart
- Put in place hygiene protocols to include wiping down high touch surfaces, like counters, with disinfectant
- Provide hand sanitizer for customers

- Limiting store capacity to 50% of fire code capacity

In addition, customers should remember to wash or sanitize your hands as soon as possible after a shopping trip – keep hand sanitizer in the car.

As restaurant goers, we also have choices about where we eat. Take-out is widely available and is the safest option if you don't wish to prepare food at home. Eating outdoors is safer than indoors and, again, we should choose restaurants where the guidelines are being followed:

- All restaurant employees should be wearing cloth face coverings
- Patrons should wear face coverings except when eating
- Tables should be spaced to allow for social distancing such that no customer at any table is less than 6 feet from any customer at another table
- No more than 10 people are allowed at a single table unless they all live in the same household.
- Hand sanitizer should be available, and tables should be disinfected after use.
- Tables should not be pre-set with utensils; utensils should be rolled and placed when needed.
- Menus should be disposable.

Businesses who commit to following the statewide guidelines can sign up for Count on Me NC. Encourage the businesses you patronize to participate in the program. And if you want to support participating businesses, follow the link to [CountOnMeNC.org](https://www.CountOnMeNC.org) to see which businesses are following the guidelines.

If you have had a good experience in a shop or restaurant, tell them “thank you” and then tell your friends. If you use social media, give the store a shout-out and let the community know they are doing the right thing.

Working together we can change the trajectory of the COVID-19 infection curve in Pamlico County and North Carolina.

References: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>



The COVID-19 Community Task Force (CCTF) is a volunteer organization established to engage the community in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and to support and augment the County's efforts. The information shared by the CCTF is not an official communication from Pamlico County, its Health Department or the Pamlico County COVID19 Task Force.