

Bois Blanc Island Fire/EMS Team and Health Committee
Public Statement regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic
Last Updated: 03/18/2020 12:25pm

To Bois Blanc Island full-time residents, seasonal residents, families, businesses, and visitors:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has now been identified in most areas of the U.S., including northern Michigan. It is highly contagious, and is especially dangerous to those with compromised immune systems. As a result, health officials are discouraging travel of any kind, and local health providers strongly recommend against travel to Bois Blanc Island. Beyond the imminent threat of exposure from those traveling in from other parts of the state and country, the Island lacks the medical resources and facilities necessary to provide care to those who may be affected. In addition, services providing air and boat transportation to and from Bois Blanc will be significantly affected by COVID-19 responses and impacts, which will limit their ability to provide urgent medical transport and supplies when the need arises.

Unfortunately, this will impact the plans of those who normally return to Bois Blanc Island in the spring, as well as family members wishing to visit Island relatives, and other visitors. Full-time Island residents will encounter more difficulty in obtaining essential supplies, and travel on or off the Island will be strongly discouraged. Our Island businesses and services will also be forced to take special precautions to limit potential exposure and transmission of illness.

For those with no choice but to travel to Bois Blanc Island, including those residing on the Island who leave and plan to return, it is essential to take all of the following precautions for self-isolation:

- Abide by all COVID-19 precautions established by charter and commercial transportation companies serving Bois Blanc Island.
- Avoid exposure to other persons at the airports, harbor/marina, and all other points of access. Avoid sharing vehicles and/or riding in others' vehicles, where the virus can easily be transmitted.
- Upon arrival, plan to self-isolate by remaining on your private premises for no fewer than 14 days. Like elsewhere in Michigan, our food service establishments (currently closed for the season) will be unable to provide dine-in accommodations, by order of the Governor's Office, until COVID-19 precautions are lifted statewide.
- If you have signs or symptoms of flu-like illness, including fever, cough, congestion, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath, and/or body aches and pains, consult your physician immediately and before any travel. Please do not travel to Bois Blanc Island if you have any alternatives whatsoever.

Those who must transport and/or receive supplies from the mainland are asked to handle all supplies as if they are contaminated, i.e., use gloves and face/eye protection when possible, and keep incoming supplies isolated from other items and human contact. Upon receipt, supplies should continue to be handled with these precautions until they can be cleaned with CDC-approved cleaning agents, and any surplus packaging can be safely disposed. Set mailed or other

packages aside and unopened for 3 days if possible.

Bois Blanc Island should not be considered a “safe haven” for those seeking to avoid the Coronavirus. On the contrary, Coronavirus cases are likely to occur on Bois Blanc Island, and the consequences to those on the Island will likely be more deadly than in mainland locations with access to medical resources and supplies. The Island is home to numerous individuals with compromised immune systems, as well as many aging and elderly residents who are at greatest risk. Please do not increase the threat—for those individuals or for yourself—by coming to Bois Blanc Island, even if you are not currently showing any symptoms of illness.

Coronavirus testing will not be available on Bois Blanc Island. At this time, the Health Clinic will continue to operate based on the availability of the designated Nurse Practitioner from Mackinac Straits Health System, who will observe all travel precautions.

If you are already on Bois Blanc Island and feel that you, or someone else in your family, party or household, are experiencing flu-like symptoms, remain isolated in place (i.e., in your home or cottage) and contact your physician by telephone for further instructions. Avoid contact with other persons. If you experience an emergency requiring urgent medical attention, call 9-1-1 and alert the dispatcher if anyone in your party or household has flu-like symptoms.

Travel and self-isolation precautions will remain in effect for Bois Blanc Island until they are lifted statewide by health officials and state government.

We will update this statement periodically as appropriate.

For more information regarding Coronavirus precautions, response, and travel restrictions, visit:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Updates on COVID-19 (includes personal precautions) www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

State of Michigan Updates on COVID-19 (includes personal precautions and State of MI restrictions) <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

Mackinac Straits Health System: Preparing For and Preventing Spread of COVID-19 <https://www.mackinacstraitshhealth.org/how-to-prepare-for-covid-19/>

COVID-19 Statement from Fresh Air Aviation
www.freshairaviation.net/so/43N3aLzdf#/main

Bois Blanc Island Fire/EMS: www.facebook.com/bbifd

Bois Blanc Township: www.boisblanctownship.org

Quick Summary:

Travel to and from Bois Blanc Island should remain limited to emergencies and essential services or deliveries only. Incoming supplies and items should be handled as if they are contaminated, and should be disinfected accordingly.

Residents who must return to Bois Blanc Island should self-isolate in a private home or cottage, away from other persons, for a period of at least 14 days.

Air and boat transportation providers serving Bois Blanc Island are urged to establish COVID-19 response plans, and to abide by all recommendations from CDC and local health officials.

Air and boat services to and from the Island may be limited or possibly even temporarily suspended.

Anyone on Bois Blanc Island with flu-like symptoms should self-isolate in their cottage or home, and contact a physician immediately. If symptoms escalate into a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 and notify the dispatcher of the circumstances.

Anyone calling 9-1-1 for any medical emergency is asked to notify dispatchers of flu-like symptoms in their party or household.

Know the steps to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly; avoid contact with other persons; use anti-septic products on frequently used or exposed surfaces; avoid public places and gatherings; DO NOT travel unless absolutely necessary.