



A Little Less Alone, Together

I am thrilled to kick-off this month's banner with some joyful news. Please join me in congratulating my Senior Administrative Assistant, Vivian, on recently welcoming her newest grandchild!

As you have probably heard, Palm Beach County (PBC) was able to loosen up on some restrictions and closures in a coordinated plan to reopen limited recreational facilities and activities within parks and natural areas, marinas, boat ramps and docks, and golf courses.

The decisions to reopen are not arbitrary. They are based on analysis of scientific data which reflect a downward trend in hospitalization, positive test rate, daily death rate and use of ventilators. These results support the county beginning to slowly reopen the county in a measured and phased approach. These openings ***do not in any way mean we are back to normal***. If the numbers start creeping back up, closures could again be issued. I know I can count on you to do your part and adhere to some simple rules.

Parks and natural areas are open sunrise to sunset for one-way walking, running and biking, equestrian riding, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and use of lakes while practicing social distancing. Basketball and volleyball courts are for individual practice only. Pickleball and tennis courts are for singles play only. Playgrounds, dog parks and picnic pavilions remain closed until further notice. Park visitors must practice social distancing, remain out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet from others when possible.

Park visitors are expected to follow CDC's guidelines on personal hygiene prior to visiting parks or trails: do not use parks or trails if exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19: be prepared for limited access to public restrooms or water fountains: share the trail and warn other trail users of your presence as you pass. Face coverings are strongly encouraged and should be worn whenever possible. Honestly, this is something everyone should be adhering to at all times.

Restrictions and conditions for reopening beaches are still being coordinated with Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. For now, all beaches remain closed.

Restrictions were altered for private golf courses as well as community tennis courts and pools with very specific conditions. County-operated golf courses will reopen to the public on Monday, May 4, with significant modifications for single play. For the full list of restrictions in this and future Executive orders, as well as up-to-date county information on Covid-19 as it relates to emergency orders and much more, please visit <http://discover.pbcgov.org/coronavirus>.

Worth mentioning are the specific conditions for community pools, including limitations on pool capacity, pool deck seating and lounging, closure of shower and locker room facilities, restroom sanitation, and compliance with CDC social distancing guidelines. Also included is a requirement for on-site supervision to monitor. The association that is responsible for the pool is responsible for enforcing the conditions. If that is not possible, the pool should not be reopened. It will be acceptable for staff or management to delegate monitoring and compliance responsibilities to board members and community volunteers if they believe the pool can be operated safely and in compliance. Similar conditions must be enforced for tennis courts.

We have all worked hard to flatten the curve. I urge you to remain vigilant. None of us want to see a second tour of closures, and worse, any more lives lost than can be avoided. I thank you in advance for your continued cooperation.

As always, I invite your comments on any issue of interest to you. As your Commissioner, I am here to help you. You may write me at 301 N. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, 33401 or at MBerger@pbcgov.org. You can call me or my staff at 276-1310 or toll free at 877-930-2205. Please visit me on the Web at www.pbcgov.com/d5.

Yours in Public Service,