

State of Emergency Script (External)
March 17, 2020

Good morning, Columbus.

Our city is a very different place than it was a week ago. Governor DeWine has closed schools, restaurants and bars. He has prohibited mass gatherings leading to the cancellation of church services, concerts and community events. He ordered elective surgery be postponed.

These are drastic measures, but absolutely necessary for the health and well-being of our residents. We have heard Dr. Amy Acton of the Ohio Department of Health and Dr. Mysheika Roberts of Columbus Public Health explain the dire health emergency we are in and how what we do now will lessen the severity and duration of infections in our community.

A few moments ago, I signed a declaration of a State of Emergency for the City of Columbus drafted by City Attorney Zach Klein with the guidance and counsel of City Council President Shannon Hardin and City Auditor Megan Kilgore. This is necessary both for the city to continue to operate and for the protection of our employees and, ultimately, our residents.

A State of Emergency means that I can suspend purchasing and contracting requirements and enter into contracts for whatever supplies or services are necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Columbus.

It also means that I can suspend all regulatory provisions of the Columbus City Code as necessary to allow for us to continue to meet payroll, process insurance benefits and pay vendors during the time of the emergency.

Finally, this declaration allows me to require city employees to remain at home to protect both their health and the health of residents.

74% of our employees work on the frontline: police, fire, public health nurses, utility plant operators, refuse collectors, just to name a few. The critical city services delivered by these dedicated men and women **will** continue.

Starting today, the remaining 26% of the city's full-time workforce -- or 1,300 people -- has been asked to remain at home. Some will be able to work remotely.

All full-time city employees will continue to be paid, whether they can work remotely or not. Part-time employees will be paid for hours they work.

There is no doubt that this is a difficult time. We have little in history to compare it to.

But I believe in this city and the resiliency of its residents.

We can – and will – get through this together.

Thank you.