



# THE CITY OF ERIE

JOSEPH V. SCHEMBER, MAYOR

Media Release

For Immediate Distribution

Contact: Frank Strumila, City of Erie Media Strategist (814) 651-1989

## **City of Erie Closes Public Areas, Parks, and Playgrounds**

ERIE, PA (March 20, 2020) – The City of Erie is upgrading our action steps to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Effective today, March 20, 2020 at 2 p.m. all City of Erie Parks, Playgrounds, and athletic courts are closed.

The City of Erie Public Works Department cannot disinfect playground equipment and benches between use, and we know that COVID-19 is extremely contagious and spreads through droplets and that those droplets can remain on surfaces for days.

Additionally, all programming is temporarily suspended, including:

Recreational activities, indoor/outdoor sports leagues, instructional courses, and group sessions.

All public park restrooms will be closed until further notice.

We understand that residents need to get outside to exercise and walk their dogs.

Even though parks themselves will be closed, the running trails and walking paths will be available for residents to walk, jog, or exercise — but please keep your distance from others. People should not gather in groups of 10 or more or participate in team sports. People should maintain a distance of six feet away from one another. Children should not be using playground equipment.

Below is an excerpt from the [National Recreation and Park Association \(NRPA\)](#) prepared in support of the safe use of parks and open spaces during the COVID-19 outbreak.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has flagged mental health as a top concern associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. We recognize that social distancing may take a toll on our mental health, especially during high-stress and anxiety-producing global public health emergencies.

We also know that parks provide a connection to the outdoors and green space as well as opportunities for physical activity which studies demonstrate reduces stress and improves mental health. We believe that many parks, trails and open spaces can continue to be used in a safe manner that allows people to enjoy the mental and physical health benefits these spaces provide.”



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Residents should not call 9-1-1 or the police non-emergency line if they see people in the parks. The Erie Police Dept. will monitor residents in the parks through continued patrols. We urge all residents to only call 9-1-1 in the cases of actual emergencies.

We encourage you to visit the Public Health website for information and guidance, available in multiple languages, on COVID-19: <https://www.health.pa.gov/>. We also strongly encourage you to take everyday actions to prevent the spread of germs.

- Stay calm, stay home, stay safe.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer.
- Limit close contact with people.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact (814) 651-1989 or [fstrumila@erie.pa.us](mailto:fstrumila@erie.pa.us).