



Florida Keys Officials Urge Following COVID-19 Safety Protocols (Video)

Preparing for a busy July 4 holiday weekend, Florida Keys officials are urging visitors and residents to comply with health directives to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 throughout the community.

The county's tourist development council is supporting the effort with banners being hung on electrical transmission poles along the Florida Keys Overseas Highway and signage in other locations. They message three primary directives that include mandatory facial coverings and frequent washing of hands.

There's also outdoor advertising, a public service television spot and frequent social media posts. And the Monroe County Sheriff's Office is using its dynamic messaging signs to communicate coronavirus protection protocols.

Monroe County administrator Roman Gastesi and other officials are concerned about rapidly rising coronavirus infection numbers throughout Florida.

Many visitors and residents are not following protocols, Gastesi said, prompting officials to take actions to discourage the gathering of large crowds for the July 4 weekend.

"Unfortunately, we're going to have to close the beaches," Gastesi said. "We're going to have to close the parks and do some things that we didn't want to have to do."

"Especially on an important weekend that we have — on July 4 weekend," he said. "We want people to have a good time, but we want them to be safe."

Most of the public facility closures begin Thursday afternoon and continue until next Tuesday morning.

Gastesi pleaded for visitors and residents to follow protocols.

“Mandatory mask wearing is in effect right now. You should always wash your hands on a regular basis,” said Gastesi. “And social distancing, similar to wherever you are coming from. That’s all nationwide and worldwide.”