



## Responding to winter weather

The Municipal Services Department, which represents the previous Public Works and Water Pollution Control departments, is ready and waiting to respond to winter storms in our area. The 2020 snow season was fortunately light so far but here are a few important reminders.

There are now three street levels:

- **Priorities** - Roadways that carry the highest volume of traffic. They generally have 3 or 4 lanes.
- **Secondaries** - Streets that connect priority roadways to residential streets.
- **Residential** - Residential streets that include cul-de-sacs and dead-ends.

Crews will work through streets starting with the priorities in each storm. You can follow these efforts on the Snow Event Tracker here, [bit.ly/38KMoC2](https://bit.ly/38KMoC2)

Our Municipal Service Department crews are proud to provide this service during the winter months but they would like to offer these tips:

- Please allow plenty of room around plows working the streets to keep you and the crews safe.
- Give yourself additional time to make your morning commute.
- Slow down more than normal when making turns, or coming into intersections. Even if you have the right-of-way other vehicles may lose control and slide through stop signs and traffic lights.
- Give plenty of distance between yourself and vehicles in front of you to allow for gradual braking.
- If you lose control of your vehicle **DO NOT SLAM THE BRAKE**, let off the gas while steering into the turn and once you are back under control use rhythmic pumping of the brakes to slow down.
- When it is below freezing temperatures, pavement that looks wet may actually be ice. Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses, and in shaded areas.

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### Learn more at:

-  [indep.us/facebook](https://indep.us/facebook)
-  [@CityofIndepMO](https://twitter.com/CityofIndepMO)
-  [@cityofindependencemo](https://www.instagram.com/cityofindependencemo)
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CityScene is published by the City Manager's Office, located at 111 E. Maple Ave., Independence, MO, 64050.  
For information, call (816) 325-7086.

## Answering utilities bill questions

On December 7, City Manager Zach Walker announced the City had discovered an apparent ransomware attack which resulted in technological challenges for the City throughout the month of December, including the utility billing system and online payment portal. On December 23, the online payment portal was restored. However, there are many questions from customers. Here are some of the most frequently asked:

1. **When will bills go out?** Paper and electronic?  
Paper and electronic bills will both go out when billing resumes. We anticipate customers should start receiving those

billing statements after the Christmas holiday.

2. **How many days will this bill cover?**  
Once billing resumes those customers who have not received a November statement will receive those statements. No customers will receive a December billing statement. The January billing statement will cover both December and January. The days in the billing cycle will vary depending on when they were read last. The information for the number of days the bill covers will be listed on the billing statement for the customer to see. Customers will be

# Utilities bill questions continued...

able to request an extended payment arrangement to cover this longer-than-usual billing cycle by contacting Customer Services at (816)325-7930 or [utilitycustomerservice@indepmo.org](mailto:utilitycustomerservice@indepmo.org).

3. How much time do I have to pay?  
No penalties will be assessed until further notice. Customers are encouraged to make payment toward their account and the payment period for this statement will be extended.
4. Were bills estimated or meters actually read?  
The city makes every effort to obtain meter readings monthly, unless inclement weather or technical problems prevent us from doing so. If you have questions about your bill please contact Customer Services.
5. I had a credit before this event, will I still have it?  
Any credit on the customer's account will apply toward any new charges.
6. When will my electronic payment be deducted?  
Electronic payments (auto bank drafting) will resume immediately after access to the City's system has been granted. We anticipate funds to be withdrawn before the end of the year.
7. When will we get bills back on track?  
As soon as the system is available, billing will resume. Unfortunately December statements will not be generated. January statements will cover usage from November through the customer's cycle read in January.
8. I received a shut-off notice at the beginning of December. Are you shutting things off?  
There are no shut-offs for commercial or residential customers through at least Jan. 30, 2021.
9. How can I pay now?  
All payment forms will be accepted

beginning Monday, Dec. 28. The Independence Utilities Center is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 AM – 5PM ; drive thru is open Monday through Friday 7:30 AM – 5PM. There is a night drop box available 24 hours/7 days a week for customers to leave payments at City Hall. All City offices are closed on Monday, Jan. 18, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

10. I cannot pay the full amount. Are there services to help me?  
Customers are also encouraged to contact Customer Services to make payment arrangements if and when needed.
11. How can I verify my usage v. my bill?  
The meter readings are listed on your bill along with the date read. You can read your meter at any time and compare. Electric meters are typically located outside of the homes, water meters are either located in a meter pit or in the home itself.
12. Are there late fees or penalties?  
No, all late fees and penalties have been waived until further notice.
13. Are there credit card fees?  
No, all fees have been waived until further notice.
14. I am a level pay customer. Will this impact my payments?  
No, this will not negatively impact level pay customers. Please contact Customer Services for information specific to your account.
15. Was my personal or banking information impacted?  
Payment information for City Utilities accounts is provided directly to the City's payment processor and is not maintained in the City's systems.

If your question was not answered above, or if you have questions specific to your account, please contact Customer Services at (816)325-7930 or [utilitycustomerservice@indepmo.org](mailto:utilitycustomerservice@indepmo.org).

## Share the love

For a \$25 donation you can buy a personalized 24x24" heART for your Valentine that will be mounted to an outdoor pole running along the streets connecting the Englewood Arts District to downtown Independence Square (Winner Road and Lexington Street) during the month of February.

HeARTs may be purchased online through

January 26 and at select businesses in both districts. Proceeds from the sale benefit Englewood Station Arts District, WestIND Connection and the Independence Square Association.

Learn more at [westindconnection.com](http://westindconnection.com) or [theindependencesquare.com](http://theindependencesquare.com).

## Get fit in the new year

Check out the Parks/Recreation/Tourism website for details on fitness classes in January! We are following local guidelines including social distancing and requiring masks to be worn at all times while in the facilities. Come join us for a socially distanced workout with friends at the Sermon Center or Truman Memorial Building.

Find updated information on classes available here, [bit.ly/3hr8GwI](https://bit.ly/3hr8GwI)

## Winter Market

Mark your calendars for the Winter Farmers' Market at the Independence Uptown Market, 211 W. Truman Rd. The Winter Market will occur on the first Saturday each month, December through April. The hours will be 9 AM to 1 PM and will take place on the following dates.

- February 6
- March 6
- April 3

Follow the Independence Uptown Market Facebook page, [facebook.com/IndependenceUptownMarket](https://facebook.com/IndependenceUptownMarket), for updates and details related to vendors at these events.

## Annual MLK Event goes virtual

This year's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. event will be presented virtually on the City's YouTube Channel, [bit.ly/2JAW21T](https://bit.ly/2JAW21T), Facebook page, [facebook.com/CityOfIndependence](https://facebook.com/CityOfIndependence), and City7 at 7 PM on January 18.

This event will include musical performances, the presentation of the middle school and high school essay winners, and more.

## Help shape City's future

Share your priorities with the City Council in this quick survey - <https://bit.ly/3oxOWK1>

Look for updates on the Strategic Plan later this spring.



# Explore the Gingerbread Trail

Looking for a fun, socially-distanced outdoor activity? The Gingerbread Trail is on display along the walking trails of the George Owens Nature Park. Park hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Here are a few of the great Gingerbread people you can see right now.



## Free Saliva-based COVID-19 Testing beginning Saturday, Jan. 9

The City of Independence will once again be offering free, saliva-based COVID-19 testing on Saturdays for four weeks, beginning on Jan. 9. Testing will take place at the [Independence Athletic Complex](#), 17800 E Salisbury Rd, from 11AM to 2 PM.

You can find registration information here: [bit.ly/2Xix2zy](https://bit.ly/2Xix2zy). Registrations are required. Testing is limited to individuals over the age of 18.

Please do not eat, drink, smoke, use tobacco or brush your teeth for 30 minutes prior to your appointment.

The current dates are:

- Jan. 9
- Jan. 16
- Jan. 23
- Jan. 30

Weather cancellations or changes will be emailed to registrants and shared via social media as soon as possible.

Look for updates on future food box and testing opportunities on the City's social media platforms and in future CityScene editions.



Looking for regional COVID-19 testing opportunities? Please visit the [PrepareMetroKC.org](https://PrepareMetroKC.org) website below for updated regional information, times, and locations.

Testing calendar: [bit.ly/2Kq5dCv](https://bit.ly/2Kq5dCv)

## Volunteers needed



The City of Independence Health Department is preparing for COVID-19 vaccination efforts in the coming months. This will be supported through volunteers. Here are some of the roles volunteers can assist with at this time:

- Those with medical training and certification can help administer the shots themselves.
- Administrative paperwork, scheduling, and patient coordination.
- Traffic control and logistical support.

To register and learn more about these volunteer opportunities and needs, please fill out the application here [bit.ly/2L5zjkY](https://bit.ly/2L5zjkY)

## Public Meetings are virtual in January 2021

All public meetings in the City of Independence will be conducted virtually throughout the month of January 2021. Citizens and stakeholders can watch these meetings live on the City's YouTube channel here, [bit.ly/2JAW21T](https://bit.ly/2JAW21T). You can also watch live on City7, channel 7 for Comcast/Xfinity customers.

If you subscribe to the City's YouTube channel you will receive notifications when these meetings start.

You can continue to sign-up to speak during City Council meetings or public hearings by contacting the City Clerk by noon on the day of the scheduled meeting. Call (816) 325-7010.

Look for updates on upcoming meetings and plans on City social media.



# COVID-19 vaccine on the way

The State of Missouri began receiving COVID-19 vaccines in mid-December. At the time of this publication, there are three distribution phases. As of Jan. 1, 2021, we are in phase 1A. This includes long-term care facility residents and staff, and healthcare workers (those that work directly with patients). Phase 1B is expected to begin in mid to late February 2021. This will include high-risk individuals between ages 18 and 64, and all individuals over the age of 65. It will also include first responders, childcare workers, teachers & education staff, water/wastewater workers, energy workers, critical manufacturing workers, and food & agriculture workers.



plan at [covidvaccine.mo.gov](https://covidvaccine.mo.gov)

The City of Independence will provide updated information on local distribution plans, times, and locations on the City's COVID-19 website which can be found here, [bit.ly/2Mi4pjL](https://bit.ly/2Mi4pjL)

This is one of the largest vaccination efforts in modern history and it will take time to administer the doses needed to stop the spread of COVID-19. To assist healthcare workers and our first responders, please continue to wear a mask when in public, limit unnecessary outings, keep gatherings small, regularly wash your hands, and if you are sick stay home.

It is estimated, to reach herd immunity at least 70 percent of the population will need to be vaccinated. Vaccines are not yet available for children under the age of 16. Please take time to review the information available on the State's website, CDC FAQs ([bit.ly/3aPJK0v](https://bit.ly/3aPJK0v)), and verified articles from reliable sources with peer-reviewed information. Together we can stop the spread of COVID-19 and move forward in 2021.

Distribution of the vaccine will depend heavily on availability. At this time there are only two approved vaccines provided by Pfizer and Moderna. These companies are working quickly to provide the supply needed for the demand across the globe. You can learn more about the approved vaccines and the Missouri COVID-19 vaccine distribution

## CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Eileen Weir (816) 325-7027  
City Council Office (816) 325-7022

Online at [indep.us/citycouncil](https://indep.us/citycouncil).  
Email at [citycouncil@indepmo.org](mailto:citycouncil@indepmo.org).

### Councilmembers

John Perkins	District 1
Brice Stewart	District 2
Mike Steinmeyer	District 3
Daniel Hobart	District 4
Karen DeLuccie	At-Large
Mike Huff	At-Large

### City Manager

Zachary Walker (816) 325-7170

## Where can I...

### Pay my Jackson Co. property taxes:

Historic Truman Courthouse  
112 W. Lexington, Suite 114  
Independence, MO 64050  
Phone: (816) 881-3232

### Apply for a marriage license:

Historic Truman Courthouse  
112 W. Lexington, Suite 30  
Independence, Missouri 64050  
Phone: (816) 881-4608

### Apply for a business license:

Independence City Hall  
111 E. Maple  
Independence, MO 64050  
Phone: (816) 325-7079

### Pay a ticket issued by the City:

Independence City Hall  
111 E. Maple  
Independence, MO 64050  
Phone: (816) 325-7230  
Some tickets may be paid online at [indep.us/paytickets](https://indep.us/paytickets).

For more information on Jackson County offices, visit [jacksongov.org](https://jacksongov.org).

For more information on City offices, visit [indepmo.org](https://indepmo.org).

## CITY7 City of Independence Government Access Television

### City Council Meetings

Live meetings: 6 p.m. on Mondays  
Replays: 9 a.m. on Mon., Wed., Fri.  
1 p.m. on Sun.

### Planning Commission Meetings

Live meetings: 6 p.m. on 2nd & 4th Tues./month  
Replays: 10 a.m. on Tues. and Thurs.  
1 p.m. on Sat.

Learn more at [indep.us/city7](https://indep.us/city7)

### Numbers to Remember

Animal Shelter	325-7207
Adopt-a-Street	325-7602
Barking Dogs	325-7213
Building Permits	325-7401
Business Licenses	325-7079
City Council Office	325-7022
City Manager's Office	325-7170
Crime Stoppers Tips	474-8477
Drop-Off Depot/Trash	325-7600
Drugs	325-6272
Graffiti	257-7824
Mayor's Office	325-7027
Municipal Court	325-7230
Neighborhood Watch	325-7643

Parks & Recreation	325-7843
Park Vandalism	325-7208
Police Non-Emergency	325-7300
Fire Non-Emergency	325-7123
Potholes	325-7624
Report Power Outage	325-7550
Street Lights	325-7535
Stormwater Pollution	325-7727
Utilities	
Customer Service	325-7930
Pay by Phone	325-SERV
Payment Assistance	254-4100
Weeds, Trash	325-7193

## Regional Animal Shelter

Help them find a forever home.  
Adopt a homeless pet.

21001 E. Hwy. 78, Independence  
Call (816) 325-7207 to set up an appointment today.



Always spay or neuter.

