From:	Farrell, Robert
To:	DOF-ALL EMPLOYEES
Subject:	The Branch
Date:	Monday, December 14, 2020 4:18:30 PM
Attachments:	2020-12-14 Branch.pdf

VDOF Family,

The promise of a COVID-19 vaccine just in time for the Holidays brings us hope and joy. **BUT this does not mean that our collective fight against Coronavirus is even close to being over.** The number of cases is the highest it's been in Virginia, and the actions each of us takes now can help reduce the spread of the virus and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed.

Thursday, Governor Northam released Executive Order Seventy-Two which directs Virginians to stay at home between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., implements a universal mask requirement, and lowers the limit on social gatherings from 25 people to 10 people. Please read the guidelines and restrictions of this Executive Order at the link below and follow them, not only for your own wellbeing, but for those around you.

https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-72-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Nine-Common-Sense-Surge-Restrictions-Certain-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf

After the Thanksgiving holidays, the previous number of COVID-19 positive cases at VDOF tripled. We can expect to see the same or worse following the upcoming holidays unless each of us does our part to limit the spread of the virus. Gatherings with family and friends who do not live with you can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. The safest way to celebrate the winter holidays is at home with the people you live with. Please revisit your holiday plans, abide by the guidelines for wearing masks, limiting gatherings to no more than 10 people, and staying home, and learn key strategies for staying safe before, during and after the holiday period from the provided link below.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html

Our agency expectations have not changed. Everyone at VDOF must maximize teleworking, staggered schedules and avoid employee gatherings/face-to-face meetings. We are not clear to socialize in workspaces, lunch meetings or engage in any activity that places two or more employees in a situation where a spread can occur because people are unable to social distance or wear a mask.

Pandemic fatigue is real; we've been dealing with this for nine months now. Feeling stressed, depressed, tired and anxious is not uncommon and can impact life at work and home. The holidays can be a stressful time, especially so during a pandemic. The following link has resources to help you cope. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/mental-health-non-healthcare.html

Pick whatever analogy or metaphor you like - it's halftime and we have a tied score – or we have the fire 70% contained but the forecast is calling for continued winds. However it helps you to think about it, now is the time for each of us to dedicate ourselves to the fight. We have to acknowledge and accept that this is a long haul, recommit to the strategies that have gotten us this far and to protecting each other for as long as it takes.

Rob Farrell
State Forester
Virginia Department of Forestry

Headquarters
900 Natural Resources Drive, #800
Charlottesville, VA 22903
office (434) 220-9047

cell (757) 810-6943
fax (434) 220-9140

rob.farrell@dof.virginia.gov

www.dof.virginia.gov