

Stay At Home Order Frequently Asked Questions

On Sunday, March 22th, under the direction of Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH issued a director's order to require all Ohioans to stay in their homes to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 beginning at 11:59 p.m. EDT on Monday, March 23, 2020 until 11:59 p.m. on April 6, 2020. Dr. Acton issued a new stay at home order that begins on April 7, 2020 and lasts through May 1, 2020. This order prohibits holding gatherings of any size and closes all nonessential businesses. It does NOT prohibit essential activities like going to the grocery store, receiving medical care, or taking your pet for a walk. Residents can return home from out of state and can leave the state.

For more information on what this order means for you, please see below.

Frequently Asked Questions

When does the order take effect?

The order will take effect at 11:59 p.m. EDT on Monday, March 23rd

Where does the Stay at Home order apply?

The director's order includes the entire state. Unless you work for an essential business or are doing an essential activity, you should stay home. Work from home is permitted and encouraged where possible.

Is this mandatory or just guidance?

This order is mandatory. To help prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in Ohio and protect our friends, neighbors, and vulnerable populations, please stay home.

Will the Ohio National Guard be enforcing this order?

No. The Ohio National Guard will not be enforcing this order.

I work in an essential service. How will the police know I'm allowed to be outside my house?

Law enforcement officials will not stop residents who are on their way to or from work or who are out for necessities like going to the pharmacy or getting groceries, or just taking a walk. People gathering in any size group may be asked to physically distance themselves or go home. Ohioans should abstain from all nonessential activities. Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every Ohioan to do their part. We are in this together.

Will grocery stores be open?

Yes, essential services will still be operational including, but not limited to:

- Grocery stores
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Police stations
- Fire stations
- Hospitals, clinics and healthcare operations
- Garbage/sanitation
- Public transportation
- Public benefits (i.e. SNAP, Medicaid) hotlines

These stores, including big box stores, must determine, display and enforce the maximum capacity of people permitted in any store at one time to safely and comfortably maintain a six-foot distance from each other. If a line is present inside or outside a store, a six-foot distance must remain among those not living in the same household. Every store must ensure carts and baskets are properly cleaned between uses.

How can I get medical care if I need it?

If you are feeling sick, call your doctor, a nurse hotline, any telehealth hotline set up specifically for COVID-19 (check with your insurance company) or an urgent care center. If you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provided by your physician. Do not go to an emergency room unless necessary. Nonessential medical care like eye exams and teeth-cleaning should be postponed. When possible, healthcare visits should be done remotely. Contact your healthcare provider to see what tele-health services they provide.

What if I still have to go to work?

Unless your work is an essential function (i.e. healthcare provider, grocery store clerk, first responder), you should stay home. If you have been designated essential by your employer, you should continue to go to work and practice social distancing. If you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provided by your physician.

What if I think my business should be closed but I'm still being asked to operate?

Essential businesses will remain open during the Stay at Home order to provide services that are vital to the lives of Ohioans. Those businesses include, but are not limited to, pharmacies, certain government offices, and restaurants providing take-out meals. If you work for an essential business, you should continue to practice social distancing and should stay at home outside of work hours. If you believe your business is nonessential but are still being asked to show up to work, you may discuss with your employer. The amended order provides for enforcement of the order by boards of health of a general or city health district, health authorities and officials, officers of state institutions, police officers, sheriffs, constables, and other officers and employees of the state, or any county, city, or township, shall enforce quarantine and isolation orders, and the rules the department of health adopts.

Can I order food/groceries?

Yes, grocery delivery will be available as well as meal-delivery, drive through, and take-out options.

Will public transportation and ridesharing be available?

Public transportation and ridesharing should be used for essential travel only. When possible, walk, or drive yourself.

Will roads in Ohio be closed?

No, the roads will not be closed in Ohio. You should only travel if it is essential to your work or health.

Can I take a flight out of state?

Planes and any other form of travel should only be used for essential purposes. When you return from out of state, you should quarantine yourself for 14 days.

What if my home is not a safe environment?

If it is not safe for you to remain home, you are able and urged to find another safe place to stay during this order. Please reach out so we can help. You may call the Ohio Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-934-9840 or contact your local law enforcement.

Can I visit friends and family?

For your safety, as well as the safety of those in your community, you should remain at home to help fight the spread of COVID-19. However you may travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons. If possible, it is recommended that you drop off supplies, food, and medication to those relatives in need of assistance, but minimize interaction.

What about my pet?

You may walk your dog and seek medical care for your pet should they require it. Be sure to practice social distancing while out on walks, maintaining at least 6 feet from other neighbors and their pets.

Does the Stay at Home order mean I can't take my kids to the park?

Families will still be able to go outside, including to parks and outdoor spaces that remain open, and take a walk, run, or bike ride but should continue to practice social distancing by remaining 6 feet away from other people. Playgrounds are closed because they pose a high risk of increasing transmission.

What is the difference between the Stay at Home order and social distancing?

Social distancing is an important first step in preventing the spread of a disease like COVID-19 that allows people to go about their daily activities while taking extra health and safety precautions. The Stay at Home order requires people to remain in their homes unless they have an essential job or are doing an essential task like going to the grocery store or walking a pet.

Can I leave home to exercise?

Yes. Outdoor exercise like running or taking a walk is perfectly acceptable; however, exercise gyms, fitness centers and associated facilities are closed to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

While exercising outside, you should still practice social distancing by running or walking at least six feet away from other people.

Can I pick up meals being provided by my child's school?

Yes. Many districts and schools are continuing to support students by providing breakfast and lunch in non-congregate settings. To find a meal site near you, use the Ohio Department of Education's [interactive map](#) or check your local district's website or social media channels for meal distribution locations and times.

Can I go out to do laundry?

Yes. Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry service providers are considered essential businesses that will remain open.