

Staying at Home in West Virginia

To prevent COVID-19 from spreading further, numerous communities and even entire states across the country have ordered their residents to stay home. West Virginians should already be taking such common-sense steps as limiting non-essential travel and maintaining social distancing. ***West Virginia residents should therefore be prepared to follow the rules of a “Stay-at-Home” order if one is issued for the state or the nation.***

To ready West Virginians, it is important to know:

- A Stay-at-Home order **is not martial law**
- A Stay-at-Home order **is not a lockdown**
- A Stay-at-Home order **does not close West Virginia roads, bridges or borders**
- A Stay-at-Home order **does not prevent West Virginians from leaving the state**
- A Stay-at-Home order **does not prevent West Virginians from returning from out-of-state**

Questions and Answers about a “Stay-at-Home” order:

Q: What would a Stay-at-Home order require me to do?

A: A Stay-at-Home order would require West Virginians to remain in their homes and residences and leave only for essential services. It would be mandatory, and not merely guidance or advice.

Q: When could I leave my home? What is an “essential service?”

Essential services include going to the grocery store or gas station; picking up a prescription or receiving medical care; and getting outdoor exercise for yourself, your children and your pets. They also include working jobs to provide essential services.

Q: What would remain open as an “essential service?”

A: Businesses and services that would remain open fall under several categories. **For all of these, including outdoor areas, the six-foot social distancing guideline would apply.**

- **Food**
 - Grocery stores
 - Convenience stores
 - Take-out and delivery restaurants
 - Farmers markets
 - Food bank and food pantries
 - Take-out and delivery meal services, including school-based

- **Health care**
 - Hospitals
 - Clinics
 - Doctor's offices and other health care provider facilities
 - Pharmacies

- **Public Safety**
 - Police stations
 - Fire stations
 - Ambulance services

- **Transportation**
 - Gas stations
 - Public transit

- **Other**
 - Banks
 - Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry services
 - Outdoor public spaces including parks and trails not specifically closed by prior orders.

Q: What jobs would be considered essential?

A: Jobs providing the services outlined above would be considered essential. Other essential jobs would include:

- **Manufacturing or delivering materials and products needed for essential services**

- **Essential government services (local, state, and county)**
 - Programs and services that support essential operations and functions
 - Hotlines or helplines, including for Medicaid, SNAP benefits, etc.

- **Other critical infrastructure**
 - Public utilities and related infrastructure, including home and commercial electrical and plumbing systems
 - Communications infrastructure and services, including media
 - Garbage/sanitation

Q: What would be closed as non-essential?

A: Businesses and workplaces that do not fall under the above categories or are otherwise designated as essential would be closed. Those already closed by Executive Order include:

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues including casinos and performance halls
- Barber shops and hair and nail salons

- Gyms and fitness centers

Q: What about working from home?

A: Working from home would be encouraged wherever possible.

Q: What if I'm told to report to a job that is non-essential?

A: If you believe your business is nonessential but are still being asked to show up to work, you should discuss that with your employer.

Q: How would a Stay-at-Home order be enforced?

A: Law enforcement officials would **not** stop residents on their way to or from work or from obtaining essential services as outlined above, including recreation. People gathering in any size group would be asked to social distance or go home. **The West Virginia National Guard would not be involved in enforcing any Stay-at-Home order.**

Q: How would a Stay-at-Home order affect travel and transportation?

A: West Virginia should drive themselves when possible or walk. Public transportation and ridesharing would be for essential travel only. The same goes for air travel. **Roads, bridges and borders would remain open.**

Q: Would I still be allowed to visit family and friends?

A: Visits to other homes and residences would be limited to caring for the elderly, minors, dependents, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable persons. In such circumstances, visitors should minimize interactions as much as possible.

Q: What help would there be for residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

A: Services for residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities would be considered essential and continue under a Stay-at-Home order. The Bureau for Medical Services could provide additional information: (304) 558-1700.

Q: What if my home is not a safe environment?

A: Anyone who would not be safe in their residence while under a Stay-at-Home order should consider planning now to find an alternative safe place. The West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence can help. Visit <http://wvcadv.org> or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233).

Q: What about people who are homeless?

A: State, county and local government agencies and officials will partner with W.Va. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (WV VOAD) and other community organizations to ensure safe shelter for our homeless population.