

Eau Claire COVID-19 Prevention and Control Order Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Is COVID-19 a disease or a virus?	Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a disease that is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).
Why was there a local order issued?	On May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the Safer-at-Home Order was not enforceable. This local order has been issued to minimize the risk of Eau Claire County experiencing a surge of COVID-19 cases that would surpass our healthcare system capacity.
How are public health departments able to issue a local order?	Chapter 252 of the Wisconsin Statutes specifically authorizes local health officers to respond as is “reasonable and necessary” to suppress and contain disease. This order is issued in accordance with that authority.
How will this order be enforced?	When enforcing this local order, the main goal is to provide education about safest practices for stopping the spread of COVID-19. If a person or business continues to violate the order after receiving education, local law enforcement has the authority to enforce the order, and the person or business may receive a citation.
Why is this important?	Immunity to the virus is uncertain, which means anyone who comes into contact with it could get sick. There is no vaccine to prevent people from getting ill, and people of all ages, from babies to elderly people, can get very sick from this virus. Certain people, including older adults and people who have severe medical conditions (heart or lung disease, diabetes) are at higher risk for more serious complications.
Why are other counties doing different things?	As required by statute, every local health officer must act as appropriate for the conditions in their jurisdiction, which may lead to differences between counties. If you have questions about actions another county has taken, please contact that county directly.

Travel, Gatherings, and Public Events & Spaces

Am I required to stay home?	No, you are not mandated to stay home. The order strongly encourages everyone to stay at home or their place of residence, minimize travel out of Eau Claire County, and keep the number of in-person contacts minimal to decrease the spread of disease.
Is it okay to hold religious services under this order?	Activities falling under 1st Amendment protections (such as religious gatherings or political assembly) are not included in the prohibition on mass gatherings and are permitted.

<p>What qualified as a mass gathering?</p>	<p>Mass gatherings are those planned or spontaneous events with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert, festival, conference, or sporting event. Any event fitting this definition with more than 10 people qualifies as a mass gathering. Also included are social gatherings such as wedding receptions, parties, celebrations, and funeral visitations.</p>
<p>How does this order impact schools?</p>	<p>The Wisconsin Supreme Court decision ruled that the K-12 school closure that was included in Emergency Order #28 remains valid. Therefore, all public and private K-12 school buildings remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year including instructional and extracurricular activities.</p>
<p>Am I required to wear a face covering?</p>	<p>In close contact situations cloth face coverings worn by all people involved may be protective. It is important to note that cloth face masks are not a substitute for physical distancing.</p> <p>The order requires the use of face coverings in one-on-one personal service settings that cannot maintain six feet of physical distancing because of the closeness needed to provide the service, such as at salons or body art facilities. Examples of situations in which face covering use may not be feasible include children under the age of 2 and other people that are unable to remove a mask without assistance. Additionally, persons with health conditions that make breathing difficult may not be able to wear a mask. In each of these situations, it is strongly recommended that these 1-on-1 services be discouraged if they are optional.</p>
<p>Does this order restrict landlord entry?</p>	<p>This order does not prohibit a landlord from entering a residence in accordance with all other legal requirements but does require that physical distance is maintained in such settings.</p>
<p>Does the order restrict outdoor sports?</p>	<p>Sporting events that result in a gathering of more than 10 people, including all spectators and participants, are prohibited by the mass gathering prohibition. Sporting events that result in a gathering of 10 or fewer people may be permissible if the nature of the activity allows for physical distancing to be maintained (e.g. tennis, golf).</p>
<p>Can parks, playgrounds, and other amenities be open?</p>	<p>Under this order, all businesses, facilities, playgrounds, campgrounds and other amenities may open and operate unless they are unable to meet and maintain the safety and protection measures outlined in the order. Local municipalities may make decisions based on their ability to carry out these procedures. Physical distancing should be maintained at all time when using any open facility and be aware that surfaces may need disinfecting prior to use.</p>

How does this order affect travel?	Travel for leisure is strongly discouraged but not prohibited. Please review the orders in the community that you are traveling to in order to determine local requirements, if any. If leaving Eau Claire County and breaking physical distancing or otherwise engaging in activities that may expose oneself to COVID-19, self-quarantine is encouraged for 14 days once you return, along with monitoring for symptoms.
Are car parades allowed?	Car parades are not recommended as they may create an opportunity for disease to spread between people. If car parades do take place, it is very important to make sure physical distancing (at least 6 feet between people of different households) is maintained, riders in cars remain in the vehicles, and the parade is not a hazard to public safety. Parades need to meet the requirements in #2 of the order .
Are garage/thrift sales allowed?	Garage sales that are held on private property are not considered public space or a mass gathering for the purposes of this order. However, hosts are strongly encouraged to consider incorporating physical distancing, routine cleaning, and other disease prevention measures during their sales. Additional suggestions for ideas to effectively host a sale are available here: https://coronavirus-and-covid-19-information-hub-eccounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/community-events-and-gatherings
Are window visits allowed at long-term care facilities/assisted living facilities/nursing homes?	Window visits are not recommended as elderly residents of these facilities are especially likely to get very ill from COVID-19. These visits create opportunities for potential spread of disease to our most vulnerable populations. Long-term care facilities should continue to implement policies and practices that are consistent with CDC and Wisconsin DHS guidelines.

Businesses and Employees

How do I know if my business can open?	This order relies on public health principles to guide business operations. If your business is unable to comply with the public health and safety practice provisions in section 2 of the order or is a venue for mass gatherings as defined in section 3, then those elements of your business should not be operating.
Is physical distancing required at my facility?	With limited exemptions, physical distancing must be maintained at any open public space and building to comply with this order. Please review Section 2 of the order for details .
How is the local order different for businesses than the Safer-at-Home order?	The local order does not make a distinction between “essential” businesses and “non-essential” businesses. The intent of the order is that all businesses can open if operating in compliance with the restrictions in the local order which is based on specific risk for the spread of COVID 19.

<p>What is incidental and brief contact as it relates to the physical distancing requirements?</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that maintaining 6 feet of physical distance at all times is not possible in all settings. Situations such as passing by someone in an aisle or walkway or completing a brief sales transaction are not prohibited by the order. However, measures are identified in the WEDC reopen guidelines to reduce risk for disease transmission in such settings, including but not limited to the installation of physical barriers.</p>
<p>What constitutes a public vs. private space or building?</p>	<p>A public space or building includes those spaces outdoors and indoors that are held open for public use and to which the public is invited. This generally does not include residential yards, or parking lots or portions of buildings reserved and signed for employee or resident use only.</p> <p>Private spaces or buildings involving gatherings of individuals outside of a household unit are encouraged to observe physical distancing at all times, and review and apply WEDC guidelines as appropriate.</p>
<p>How can I determine a safe occupancy limit for my facility?</p>	<p>Venues that host mass gatherings (defined earlier in this document) are unable to hold events of more than 10 people under this order, unless meeting a Constitutionally protected exception.</p> <p>Public spaces and business operations that do not fit the definition of a mass gathering, must meet the standards identified in section 2 of the order. 144 square feet of space is the required amount of public area (not including employee only areas) to allot per household. The intent of this number is to provide facility owners and operators with a preliminary number to calculate potentially allowable occupancy. However, each facility is responsible for ensuring that their facility can effectively facilitate physical distancing of 6 feet and must account for the actual layout and furnishing of their facility when identifying a suitable occupancy limit.</p>
<p>Are the WEDC guidelines a recommendation or required?</p>	<p>Businesses may operate if they are able to meet all of the requirements of the order. If businesses may operate under the order, then they must also review and apply the WEDC requirements as much as possible.</p>
<p>Can my business that provides one-on-one services (e.g. hair/nail salons, tattoo/piercing parlors) be open?</p>	<p>All businesses must meet the requirements of section 2 of the order to operate. One-on-one personal services that by their nature cannot maintain six foot physical distancing need to follow additional safety measures which are outlined in the order and listed on the covid19eauclaire.org website.</p>

<p>How many appointments are allowed at my facility each day if the facility provides one-on-one personal services?</p>	<p>Providers (individual practitioners, stylist, body artist, etc.) are limited to a maximum of 10 appointments per day with time being allotted to clean and disinfect between each appointment.</p> <p>In a single facility where multiple providers/practitioners conduct services at the same time, the number of providers/practitioners is also limited to the number that can operate with the required 6 ft physical distance being maintained between each practitioner’s workstation.</p>
<p>Can a grocery store provide self-service of food?</p>	<p>Grocery stores may allow self-service of unpackaged food, but salad bars or buffet-style offering of prepared food is not permitted.</p>
<p>How can I effectively monitor employees and customers for COVID-19 symptoms?</p>	<p>Employees should not work if they have any symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 or have been identified as a contact of an individual that has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Business owners are encouraged to implement policies and procedures to make being absent for illness purposes as simple as possible for their employees.</p> <p>Employers must adopt policies to screen and prevent customers, visitors, and guests from entering their premises that are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or have been identified as a contact of an individual that has been diagnosed with COVID-19. The order does not require any specific method for this and should not be interpreted as requiring any interviewing or evaluation of all visiting customers, although facilities may elect to implement such policies. Symptoms are listed on our website covid19eauclaire.org.</p>
<p>What should I do if someone at my business refuses to follow safety procedures?</p>	<p>It is the responsibility of each business owner to ensure that their facility complies with these principles. Facility owners have the right to restrict access and service to individuals that compromise their ability to comply the order.</p>