

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 the "Stay-at-Home" order issued Monday by Gov. Jim Justice.

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 West Virginia's Stay-at-Home order:

Q: When does this Stay-at-Home order take effect?

A: Gov. Justice's order is effective 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 24. It will remain in effect until terminated by subsequent executive order.

Q: What does this Stay-at-Home order require me to do?

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

Staying at home will help preserve public health and safety, and help West Virginia's healthcare system so it can serve all citizens in need and especially those at high risk and vulnerable to COVID-19

Q: When can I leave my home? What is an "essential service"?

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

Q: What will remain open as an "essential service"?

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

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

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

Q: What jobs are considered essential?

A: Jobs providing the services outlined above are considered essential.

Other essential jobs include:

- Manufacturing or delivering materials and products needed for essential services, including coal mining.

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 coal-fired electric generation facilities as well as home and commercial electrical and plumbing systems.
- Communications infrastructure and services, including media
- Garbage/sanitation

Q: What will be closed as non-essential?

A: Businesses and workplaces that do not fall under the above categories or are otherwise designated as essential shall close. 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 is 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 will this 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 will the Stay-at-Home order affect travel and transportation?

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

Q: Can I visit family and friends?

A: The Stay-at-Home order allows visits to the home of family members, and to other homes involved in the terms of a parenting or visitation plan or similar agreement. During such visits, interactions should be minimized as much as possible.

Q: What help is available for residents with Intellectual and developmental disabilities?

A: Services for residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities are considered essential and will continue under the Stay-at-Home order. The Bureau for Medical Services can provide additional information: **(304) 558-1700**.

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

A: Anyone who is not safe in their residence while under a Stay-at-Home order should 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 have partnered with W.Va. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (WV VOAD) and other community organizations to ensure safe shelter for our homeless population.