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Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov or 608-219-7443

Gov. Evers Directs DHS to Extend Wisconsin's Safer at Home Order

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today directed Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to extend the Safer at Home order from April 24, 2020 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, May 26, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued. The order implements some new measures to ensure safety and support the progress we've made in containing COVID-19, but also allows certain activities to start up again. The order is available [here](#).

“A few weeks ago, we had a pretty grim outlook for what COVID-19 could mean for our state, but because of the efforts of all of you, Safer at Home is working. That said, we aren't out of the woods just yet,” said Gov. Evers. “As I've said all along, we are going to rely on the science and public health experts to guide us through this challenge. So, as we extend Safer at Home, I need all of you to continue doing the good work you've been doing so we can keep our families, our neighbors, and our communities safe, and get through this storm together.”

“Before we lift Safer at Home, the steps of testing and more robust public health measures must be in place,” explained Secretary-designee Palm. “These steps will help us reduce the risk of a second wave of the virus. If we open up too soon, we risk overwhelming our hospitals and requiring more drastic physical distancing measures again.”

The extension of the Safer at Home order includes a few changes. Some changes allow more businesses and activities to open back up, while other changes help make businesses safer for employees and customers. The changes in this order include:

Businesses and activities ramping up service and operations:

- **Public libraries:** Public libraries may now provide curbside pick-up of books and other library materials.
- **Golf Courses:** Golf courses may open again, with restrictions including scheduling and paying for tee times online or by phone only. Clubhouses and pro shops must remain closed.
- **Non-essential Businesses:** Non-essential businesses will now be able to do more things as Minimum Basic Operations, including deliveries, mailings, and curbside pick-up. Non-essential businesses must notify workers of whether they are necessary for the Minimum Basic Operations.
- **Arts and Crafts Stores:** Arts and craft stores may offer expanded curbside pick-up of materials necessary to make face masks or other personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **Aesthetic or Optional Exterior Work:** Aesthetic or optional exterior law care or construction is now allowed under the extended order, so long as it can be done by one person.

Safe Business Practices:

- **Safe Business Practices for Essential Businesses and Operations:** Essential Businesses and Operations must increase cleaning and disinfection practices, ensure that only necessary workers are present, and adopt policies to prevent workers exposed to COVID-19 or symptomatic workers from coming to work.
- **Safe Business Practices for Retailers that Essential Businesses and Operations:** Retail stores that remain open to the public as Essential Businesses and Operations must limit the number of people in the store at one time, must provide proper spacing for people waiting to enter, and large stores must offer at least two hours per week of dedicated shopping time for vulnerable populations.
- **Supply Chain:** Essential Businesses and Operations that are essential because they supply, manufacture, or distribute goods and services to other Essential Businesses and Operations can only continue operations that are necessary to those businesses they supply. All other operations must continue as Minimum Basic Operations.

Other changes include:

- **Schools:** Public and private K-12 schools will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.
- **Local parks and open space:** Local health officials may close public parks and open spaces if it becomes too difficult to ensure social distancing or the areas are being mistreated.
- **Travel:** People are strongly encourage to stay close to home, not travel to second homes or cabins, and not to travel out-of-state if it is not necessary.
- **Tribal Nations:** Tribal Nations are sovereign over their territory and can impose their own restrictions. Non-tribal members should be respectful of and avoid non-essential travel to Tribal territory. Local government must coordinate, collaborate, and share information with Tribal Nations.
- **Duration:** The changes in this order go into effect on April 24, 2020. The order will remain in effect until 8 a.m. on May 26, 2020.

If you have questions, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is available [here](#) for your review.

The public should continue to follow simple steps to avoid exposure to the virus and prevent illness including:

- Avoiding social gatherings with people of all ages (including playdates and sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors in your home, non-essential workers in your house);
- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching one's face; and

- Staying home.

This is a rapidly evolving situation, and we encourage you and the public to frequently monitor the [DHS website](#). We encourage you to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram](#). Additional information can be found on the [CDC website](#).

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