



OFFICE *of the* GOVERNOR

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## **Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Statewide Stay at Home Order**

Updated: Sunday, March 22, 2020

On Sunday, March 22nd, Gov. Edwards signed a Stay at Home order directing all Louisiana residents to stay at home as much as possible for the next several weeks to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Louisiana. The number of cases and deaths continues to rise in Louisiana, and it is necessary to take additional aggressive action to prevent the spread of illness and protect the health and safety of the public. What Louisiana is doing through mitigation measures like closures and restrictions is sometimes called “flattening the curve.” These actions aim to reduce the number of cases in Louisiana so that our state does not overrun its health care capacity.

### **What is a Stay at Home order?**

A Stay at Home order is the Governor directing people to avoid going out in public unless it is absolutely necessary.

### **Why is this Stay at Home order necessary?**

Right now, COVID-19 is spreading rapidly throughout our state and some of our communities and, without taking additional measures, Louisiana’s health care system will have more sick people than it can care for. The state is working to increase its health care capacity, but people also need to take measures to prevent the spread of this illness. Our medical community is working overtime to take care of people who are sick, but it needs help from the public to keep even more people from needing care.

### **When is it okay for me to leave my home?**

People can leave their homes to do things like buy groceries or food, pick up medicine or go to work if their job is essential. If you have to go out, make sure you practice social distancing measures and keep 6 feet between you and the people around you. Also: people are encouraged to go outside and to stay active during this time, as long as they practice social distancing when they are around their neighbors.

## **What if I need to get tested for coronavirus or to go to the doctor?**

People can leave their homes for medical treatment or to get testing, but they should call their health care provider or doctor before doing so for advice. Your doctor may be able to help you via telemedicine or decide if you need to be tested by asking you questions on the phone. Do not show up to a testing site without consulting a medical professional first, because you may need a doctor's order to qualify for a test. Unless it is an emergency, do not go to a health care facility without calling first, because you may put yourself at risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

## **What businesses and jobs are considered essential?**

Health care workers, public safety employees, some government workers, staff of grocery stores and restaurants and employees of some business are generally considered essential workers. Businesses like manufacturers and utilities have to continue operations to support our communities.

In general, the state of Louisiana follows guidance from the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) about what infrastructure and businesses are "critical" during the COVID-19 outbreak. For more detailed information from CISA, visit this site: <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>

## **How will this order be enforced?**

The state is working with local law enforcement to support the order. There have been rumors about military control or martial law being declared. These rumors are false.

## **Why is this order statewide? There are not a lot of cases confirmed in my area.**

COVID-19 is rapidly spreading throughout the state and we know that some people do not show symptoms for 14 days, even if they are sick. Just because no one has tested positive in your community doesn't mean that no one is sick. By enacting this Stay at Home order statewide, Gov. Edwards is working to slow the spread of COVID-19 and flatten the curve.

## **Is the Governor closing Louisiana's borders and declaring martial law?**

No. This is a rumor and is not based in fact. Members of Louisiana's National Guard are deployed in Louisiana to help support local testing sites, so you may see members of the military in your community. Martial law has not been declared. Louisiana's borders are not closed.

## **When is the Stay at Home order going to be lifted?**

The Stay at Home order is in place until the morning of Monday, April 13, which is when schools are scheduled to re-open. Governor Edwards will re-evaluate the order before it expires to make sure that it doesn't need to be restricted.

## **Where can people get more information about what the State of Louisiana is doing in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak?**

The Governor's office is constantly updating its website at [gov.louisiana.gov](http://gov.louisiana.gov), as is the Louisiana Department of Health at [ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus](http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus). You can also call 211 for general information about COVID-19 and to get connected to help and resources.