

Tri-County Health Department Stay at Home Public Health Order Frequently Asked Questions

What is the public health order that has been issued?

Tri-County Health Department, which has public health jurisdiction over Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties, has issued a Stay at Home Public Health Order to control and slow the spread of COVID-19. This is in addition to other recently issued public health orders that promote social distancing.

Why did this order come from Tri-County Health Department and not the city of Aurora?

Aurora resides in portions of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties. Tri-County Health Department is in charge of public health issues for these counties, and has the authority and duty to close schools and public places, prohibit gatherings of people, and establish, maintain and enforce isolation and quarantine to protect public health.

Why is this order necessary?

COVID-19 spreads from person to person, including people who may not even know they are sick, and widespread transmission of COVID-19 is happening throughout many parts of Colorado and the United States. The Stay at Home order is intended to further keep people from coming in contact with one another to slow transmission, prevent our healthcare system from being overwhelmed and save lives. Local public health agencies will look at measures of decreased transmission and improved capacity of healthcare facilities as indicators that this social distancing effort is working.

What are the specifics of the order?

Residents who live in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties are ordered to stay at home, except for residents who must leave home for essential activities or essential government functions or to operate essential businesses. Residents who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and those who are sick are urged to stay at home except to seek medical care.

When is the order in effect and how long will it last?

The order goes into effect at 8 a.m. Thursday, March 26, and will end at 11:59 p.m. Friday, April 17. The end date is subject to change based on this rapidly changing situation.

What does this mean for people experiencing homelessness?

Residents who are homeless are exempt from this order but are strongly urged to obtain shelter. Governmental and other entities are strongly urged to make shelter available as soon as possible and use COVID-19 risk mitigation practices in their operation.

When can a resident leave home?

Residents may only leave for the following reasons:

- Getting personal medical care or care for a family member or a pet or visiting a healthcare professional
- Obtaining medical supplies or medication
- Getting groceries, food (via takeout, drive-thrus, food banks/pantries and school grab-and-go programs) or other essential household items
- Obtaining necessary supplies to work from home
- Picking up materials from a child's school necessary for distance learning
- Going outside for physical activity or fresh air (while still social distancing from people who do not share the same household; all playgrounds, golf courses, tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas and similar areas are closed)

- Going to work at designated essential businesses, or doing work that contributes to essential infrastructure or essential government functions

What businesses/organizations are exempt?

Please see the order for a complete list. Exemptions include:

- Healthcare operations
- Businesses engaged in the retail sale of food (grocery stores, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores and similar)
- Liquor stores and marijuana retail stores
- Businesses providing food, shelter, social services and other life necessities
- Gas stations, auto supply, auto repair, bicycle supply and bicycle repair facilities
- Media services
- Hardware stores
- Banks, credit unions and other financial institutions
- Essential government functions
- Food and plant cultivation
- Licensed gun shops
- Mailing and shipping services
- Laundromats and dry cleaners
- Hotels, motels and short-term rentals
- Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, landscapers and other service providers that maintain safety, sanitation and essential operations of residences and other essential structures
- Professional services, such as legal, insurance, title companies, accounting services, real estate appraisals and transactions
- Faith-based establishments and houses of worship (allowing no more than 10 people at a time and adhering to social distancing requirements)
- Childcare facilities (following specifications of order)

What is considered essential infrastructure?

Utilities, public works construction, construction operations and projects, skilled trades, janitorial and private security services, airport operations, oil and gas operations, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection (including recycling and composting), and internet and telecommunication systems

What is considered essential government functions?

Public safety personnel, law enforcement, human services, fire prevention and response, building code enforcement, security personnel, emergency management and response, emergency dispatchers, court personnel, military personnel, state legislators, courts, city councils and county commissioners, city, county and district attorneys, other governmental boards, commissions and quasi-judicial proceedings, and public health personnel

Do residents need an official letter of authorization to go to work at an exempted business?

No

What is closed or not permitted?

- In-person public or private gatherings of any kind with people who live outside of your home
- Traveling, except to get essential services or medical care
- Carpooling with anyone outside of your residence
- Bars and restaurants (except for takeout, delivery and drive-thru)

- Hair and nail salons
- Tattoo shops
- Gyms and recreation centers
- Playgrounds, golf courses, tennis and basketball courts, and picnic areas
- Indoor/outdoor malls except to allow operation of and access to essential businesses

Are daycares still open? Can babysitters still go to a resident's home?

Yes, but only for children of parents working in essential businesses. Daycare centers must follow increased cleaning practices and distancing requirements as outlined in the order.

What are the social distancing requirements?

Stay at least six feet away from other people, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer if a sink is not available, cover coughs and sneezes with sleeve or into elbow (not hands), regularly clean high-touch surfaces and avoid shaking hands.

What are the penalties for not following the order?

It is unlawful for any person to willfully violate, disobey or disregard this order. Any person who does so may be guilty of a class 1 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, may be punished by a fine of up to \$5,000 and imprisonment in a county jail for up to eighteen months, per Colo. Rev. Stat. §§25-1-516 and 18-1.3-501. In addition, for residents who do not follow this order, Tri-County Health Department may seek a court order in Colorado state district court to enforce this order and/or to restrain or enjoin any violation of this order. If residents do not comply with this order pending the district court's decision, those residents may be subject to arrest and involuntary compliance.

What if a resident has a question about the order?

Contact the health experts at Tri-County Health Department call center at 303.220.9200 or visit TCHD.org.

What can residents do to stay connected with one another and maintain their health and well-being?

- Call or video chat with a friend, neighbor or family member.
- Go for a walk outside (maintaining social distancing).
- Plan a family game night with people who live in your home.
- Read a good book, listen to music or stream a favorite show.
- Cook a healthy meal.
- Tackle some spring-cleaning activities.
- Work on an arts and crafts project with what's available in your home.