

STAY AT HOME TO FLATTEN THE CURVE: Orange County Issues ‘Stay At Home,’ Order Effective MARCH 26, 2020

Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings has ordered all non-essential retail and commercial businesses to close and all residents to stay home from non-essential travel. This order will take effect at 11 p.m. on Thursday, March 26 and will continue for two weeks until April 9 at 11 p.m. The order means that the entirety of Orange County is ordered to stay at home as much as possible, with exceptions for businesses and travel deemed “essential.” For the complete [Executive Order](#) visit this [webpage](#).

In order to slow the spread of COVID-19, all Orange County residents are ordered to limit travel to essential trips ONLY and to STAY AT HOME as much as possible. Orange County urges all residents to continue monitoring their personal health and the health of their families, practice social distancing and self-quarantine for 14 days.

The Order is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19.

“It’s our collective responsibility to take the necessary steps to slow the spread of COVID-19,” said Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings. “We’re working to save lives, and every Orange County resident needs to stay home and adhere to this order. Other mayors in the County are also deeply concerned about the welfare of all residents, and this decision was not made lightly.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ORDER:

When does the order go into effect and when will it expire?

The Order takes effect Thursday, March 26 at 11 p.m. The order ends on Thursday, April 9 at 11 p.m. Mayor Demings could extend the order if he believes it is necessary for the safety of residents.

To whom does this order apply?

The order applies to ALL INDIVIDUALS within Orange County. Unless you work for an essential business or are doing an essential activity, you MUST STAY HOME. The order is MANDATORY. Orange County residents MUST stay home and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What are considered “essential” businesses or activities?

Individuals can travel to and from grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, police stations, fire stations, hospitals, doctor’s offices and healthcare facilities. However, once these locations have been visited, residents NEED TO GO HOME. While inside these businesses, continue practicing social distancing. Try to stand 6 feet back from other customers in checkout lines, and continue good handwashing practices and using hand sanitizer before and after your trip.

The order details the difference between what is considered non-essential businesses and essential businesses. The outline for the differentiation can be found by accessing the [Executive Order](#). For example, financial institutions, hardware stores, government workers, licensed contractors, the media, etc. are considered essential.

Garbage pickup and public transit are also considered essential and will continue normal operations.

How will the order be enforced?

The Orange County Sheriff's Office will enforce the order. The Sheriff's Office does not intend to use the order as a mechanism for making arrests. The purpose of the order is to get residents in the right frame of mind to act responsibly for their health and the health of their families by staying in their homes whenever possible. The Orange County Sheriff's Office will respond to reported violations of the order. Violations can be reported to the Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at 407-836-4352. In addition, the Orange County Sheriff's Office will continue to temporarily suspend all eviction activities until further notice.

Will restaurants still be able to deliver or provide carryout service?

Yes, restaurants can continue to provide takeout and delivery services. You cannot dine in at a restaurant. Continue practicing social distancing if you visit these establishments for their carryout services.

Am I able to visit my friends and family?

You should not visit family or friends unless there is an urgent need (e.g., providing food, caretaking, medical reasons, etc.). Otherwise, STAY AT HOME. Continue to check on your loved ones electronically – by phone, text, FaceTime, email, etc.

What about doctor's appointments?

Yes. Individuals are permitted to travel to and from their healthcare provider.

Will I be able to visit COVID-19 Testing Centers?

Yes, but be aware of the qualifications for considerations for testing. For information on testing center criteria and information, visit www.ocfl.net/covid-19.

Will hospitals still be open?

Yes. Hospitals are considered essential business, and residents are permitted to travel to and from local health facilities. However, you SHOULD NOT go to an ER for a COVID-19 test. An ER should only be used for medical emergencies. An influx of unnecessary patients to an ER will overwhelm our hospital systems, and put healthcare workers and other patients at risk.

Will Orange County parks be open?

Yes. The open-space areas in Orange County parks are open, along with our trails. We closed all amenities, such as fitness centers, the swimming portion of Kelly Park, classes, other organized activities at parks, etc. For more information on operating hours, visit www.ocfl.net/covid-19.

Is it permitted to drive to the airport?

Yes. This is considered essential business, but only for essential travel.

Will grocery stores and pharmacies still be open?

Yes. Groceries and pharmacies are considered essential business.

Will hotels be open?

Yes.

Will I still be able to receive mail and online orders?

Yes, you will still be able receive USPS mail, packages, get groceries delivered and get meals delivered.

Will public transit, such as LYNX and SunRail, be available?

Public transportation will continue to operate but should only be used for essential travel.

Will garbage services still be provided?

Yes. Garbage pickup is essential business and will continue normal operations.

Will the Orlando International Airport still be open?

Yes. The Orlando International Airport will continue to be open, and essential travel is permitted.

May I take my pets to the vet or my dog for a walk?

Yes. You can seek medical care for your pets should they require it. And you can walk your dog outside. Practice social distancing while you are outside, and try and stay 6 feet away from other neighbors and their pets.

Am I able to exercise?

Yes. You can run, walk and ride your bike outside. Outdoor exercise is acceptable. However, gyms and fitness centers will remain closed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. While exercising outside, you still should practice social distancing by running or walking at least 6 feet away from other people.

What about the homeless?

Orange County Government is working with its partners to expand its services and be flexible with funding to address the homeless population. For example, one of our partners is reaching out to homeless camps asking and providing information to individuals there. Partners are working closely with camps and providing information to keep them safe.

Are my kids able to play at parks?

Families will be able to go outside and take a walk, run or bike ride, but they should continue to practice social distancing by remaining 6 feet away from other people. Playgrounds are closed to discourage people from congregating in large groups.

Will churches and places of worship be open?

Yes. However, religious leaders are encouraged to fully comply with all measures advised by the CDC, including limiting gatherings to not more than ten (10) people and practicing social distancing of at least six (6) feet between persons. Religious leaders are also encouraging to use online streaming services, if available.

Will laundromats be open?

Yes. Laundromats are considered essential business and will remain open.

Will salons and beauty shops be open?

No. These businesses will be closed during the order.

Will daycares continue to operate?

Yes, the Florida Department of Children and Families is the regulatory agency for childcare facilities. DCF has provided all licensed childcare facilities CDC guidelines as well as specific K-12 guidelines. The agency is also surveying to assess all closure tracking.

I am feeling anxious and scared about the order. Who can I talk to?

Aspire Health Partners is offering a dedicated telephone line to assist residents with mental health concerns related to COVID-19. Residents can call the helpline, 407-875-3700, to be connected with a caring mental health professional.

In times of stress, many times anxiety can overwhelm some of us, and this is understandable and normal. Residents are asked to stay calm, informed and measured as Orange County Government implements a proactive and planned response. Take care of yourself and your family – both physically and mentally.

