



Stay Home - Work Safe Order FAQ

Q: Why is there a Stay at Home Order?

A: There is substantial community transmission of the virus, which is easily spread between people. Many people who have it don't have symptoms or have mild symptoms, but they can easily spread the virus even if they don't feel very bad. Some who get the virus, especially those over the age of 60, those who have weak immune systems, and those with various medical conditions, can end up with serious complications and could need medical intervention such as oxygen or help breathing.

Because the virus spreads so easily, without intervention like this Order, many people could need medical attention, placing a strain on our hospital system. There may not be enough beds or equipment to adequately care for the most seriously ill. It is critical that to do everything in our power to slow down the spread of the virus and "flatten the curve" to avoid overwhelming our health care system. If this succeeds, it means that there will be health care available for those who get sick with COVID-19 or who need emergency medical care for accidents, heart attacks, strokes, and other serious medical conditions.

Q: How long is the Order effective?

A: The Order goes into effect at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, March 24 and continues through April 13, 2020, unless modified, to further contain the spread of COVID-19 in Austin and Travis County.

Q: Who issued the Order? Is the entire State of Texas impacted by it?

A: Austin Mayor Steve Adler issued an Order for the City of Austin. [Travis and Williamson Counties](#), [Cedar Park](#), and [Round Rock](#) issued similar orders. The orders apply within each jurisdiction and not statewide.

Q: Should I stock up on essentials such as food and medicines?

A: No. Grocery stores and pharmacies are considered essential businesses and will remain open and accessible. We urge the public to continue their normal shopping routines.

Q: Are childcare facilities impacted by the Order?

A: Childcare facilities may continue to operate if they serve employees that work for essential businesses, in essential governmental functions, or in critical infrastructure. Childcare facilities must comply with social distancing requirements by keeping the same groups of 10 or fewer intact, and keep [those same](#) children in the same group, with the same caregiver and not change the [children](#) from group to group or [between groups](#).

Q: Will schools be shut down?

A: Educational institutions that facilitate distance learning are considered essential businesses. More information on schools can be found on district websites.



Q: Can I visit friends and family?

A: Yes – visits with friends and family who are residing within your own household are not limited by this Order. Telephonic or virtual visits are also unaffected and highly encouraged! Caring for a family member, the elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons in another household is considered an essential activity and is not impacted by the Order.

Otherwise, all public and private gatherings—including gatherings of friends and family residing in different households or dwelling units--of any number of people occurring outside a single household or dwelling unit is prohibited, with exception to essential activities and essential work or members of a household or dwelling unit.

The more we can limit the number of person-to-person interactions, the more we can hope to contain the spread.

Q: Can I walk my pet or exercise?

A: Yes. Individuals may go on a walk, get exercise, or take a pet outside to go to the bathroom, as long as at least six feet of social distancing is maintained. City of Austin parks will continue to operate.

Q: Can I go to my place of worship?

A: The public may gather at their place of worship if their service cannot be conducted at home or through remote services. In a setting where people gather outside their place of residence with members who are not in the same household, they must observe the social distancing requirements described in Section 6 of the Stay Home Order. This order was changed due to Governor Abbot's executive order issued on April 2, 2020.

Q: Can I go to the laundromat?

A: Yes. Laundromats, dry cleaners, and laundry service providers are considered essential businesses. However, you should still maintain social distancing from others as best as possible and wash your hands.

Q: Will mail and delivery services continue to operate?

A: Yes, these are essential businesses and will continue to operate, unless discontinued by the company or the federal

Q: Am I allowed to travel?

A: Travel including on-foot, bicycle, scooter, motorcycle, automobile, or public transit, is solely authorized for purposes of performing essential activities or going to work in an essential business, government service, or critical infrastructure and essential travel needs. Essential travel includes traveling to work for an essential business, engaging in an essential activity, moving out of an educational institution, court-ordered travel, such as to comply with a child visitation order, and clergy and their staff traveling to set up and remotely officiate a religious service.

University students can and should continue moveout process while maintaining social distancing.



Public transit riders and employees must comply with social distancing requirements. CapMetro services will continue to operate.

- Visit [CapMetro](#) for updates and changes on schedules and other information.
- Visit [Austin-Bergstrom International Airport](#) for latest information regarding changes to flights and airport operations.

Q: What mental health resources are available for people in distress?

A: Your emotional needs are important and if you are worried or upset, there is help. You may be feeling anxiety and worry, sleeping troubles, over or under eating, or sadness and depressed mood. If you have any of these symptoms, please reach out to:

- Integral Care 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 512-472-HELP (4357)
- National Alliance for Mental Illness Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or text NAMI to 741741
 - Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. ET
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-8255

Q: What if my home isn't a safe environment?

A: If it is not safe for you to remain home, you are urged to find another safe place to stay during this order. Please reach out to:

- [SAFE](#): 512-267-7233
- [Hope Alliance](#): 800-460-7233
- [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-877-863-6338

Q: How does the Order impact people experiencing homelessness?

A: Homeless individuals are not subject to the shelter in place order but are encouraged to seek shelter. The City will continue to work with state and local partners, to maximize available resources for the homeless population.

FAQ Re: Enforcement

Q: How will the Order be enforced?

A: The best way to enforce this Order is through personal responsibility and reducing non-essential person-to-person interaction as much as possible. Efforts will be made to first educate and assist you with compliance with this Order. However, if necessary, this order may be enforced by peace officers, City of Austin Code Department inspectors, and the Office of the Austin Fire Marshal. Violations of these orders are a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 or confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days.

Q: Is Code involved in enforcing the Stay Home - Work Safe Order?

A: Yes. Austin Code Department is working with Austin Police and Austin Fire Departments to facilitate implementation and enforce the Order.

Q: My neighbors are having a party. What can do?

A: If you see groups of people gathering, please call 3-1-1 to report it. Remember to provide an address so that our teams can come out to verify the complaint and work with the community to come into compliance with the Order.



Q. What happens after I call 3-1-1 to report people not following the Order?

A. The call is logged into the system. We have inspectors in the field following up on complaints from the hours of 7am –11pm. COVID-19 related calls are a priority and an inspector will be at the address provided as soon as possible.

Q. The Order says that people may face fines or jail time. How many people have been fined or arrested?

A. Currently, we are focused on educating and informing the community about the Order. We have had overwhelming voluntarily compliance.

Q. My neighbor's weeds are taller than 12 inches. Will the City do anything about that while the Orders are in place?

A. Yes. Austin Code Department is still completing most inspections that are not COVID-19 related. However, given the increased demand of our inspectors, it may take a little longer for an inspector to get out to verify non-COVID-19 complaints. These cases are currently responded to at a lower priority. Notices that have been sent to property owners will include information regarding the compliance timeline adjustments due to the COVID case responses.

Q. Is it safe to have an inspector in my home under the current Orders?

A. To keep residents and our inspectors safe, we have temporarily suspended interior inspections of occupied dwellings except when there is an immediate threat to life or safety.