



Washburn County Health Department
Washburn County Health and Human Services Department
222 Oak St. Spooner, WI, 54801 | Phone: 715-635-4400
co.washburn.wi.us



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Cheri Nickell, Washburn County Health Officer
715-635-4400

Answering Your COVID-19 Questions

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation and it can be hard to know what we should all be doing now to protect ourselves and our communities. The Washburn County Health Department is here to answer some of your questions. For more up-to-date information, visit the County's coronavirus outbreak page at co.washburn.wi.us.

Is the Governor's "Safer at Home" Order mandatory?

YES – this order is mandatory for all Wisconsin residents and businesses. Wisconsinites must stay at home as much as possible and non-essential businesses and operations must cease, with limited exceptions for minimum basic operations and working from home.

Is the Governor's "Safer at Home" Order enforceable?

YES – Any local law enforcement, including county sheriffs, can enforce this order under Wis. Stat. §252.25. Violation or obstruction of this order is punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both.

If I have questions about the Governor's "Safer at Home" Order, who should I call?

DO NOT call 911 or dispatch to ask if you are an essential business or employee. **DO NOT** call 911 or dispatch to ask if you can leave your home. Business questions should refer to www.wedc.org/essentialbusiness. Individuals do not need permission or travel papers to leave their home. Find more information on the order and exemptions on the county's coronavirus outbreak page.

Since Washburn County does not have any confirmed cases, do I have to care about social distancing?

YES – although we have not had a laboratory confirmed case in Washburn County (as of 1 p.m. Thursday, March 26), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is advising that all communities in Wisconsin should consider COVID-19 to be present in their community because it is considered to be spreading throughout Wisconsin.

Now that the order is in effect, why am I seeing people still driving around?

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL is exempt from this order. Essential travel includes:

- Travel related to essential business operations
- Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, other vulnerable persons, and pets in another household

- Travel to or from educational institutions to receive materials for distance learning or receiving meals
- Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the jurisdiction
- Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including transporting children pursuant to a custody agreement
- Travel for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside Wisconsin

We understand the concerns about traveling at this time, but we cannot know a person's reason for travel and law enforcement cannot pull vehicles over without cause. We hope that our community will remember everyone is making difficult choices during this unprecedented time and travel is occurring for the reasons above. We also hope that our second/seasonal homeowners are following our travel advisory and the Safer at Home order, understanding that Washburn County is not a safe haven from COVID-19 and our health care infrastructure is limited.

What should I do if I feel sick?

STAY HOME. Under the Safer at Home order, all residents should already be staying home as much as possible and practicing social distancing. If you feel sick and would not normally seek care for your level of illness, stay in your home and do your best to isolate yourself from other household members. If you feel sick and would normally seek care for your level of illness, call your provider. **DO NOT** show up to a hospital or clinic without calling ahead. More information about what to do if you are feeling unwell can be found on the county's coronavirus outbreak page.

It takes all of us to flatten the curve. If we all work together to stay home as much as possible, practice strict hand hygiene, follow health care facility guidance, and understand that this requires the whole community working together, we can protect our health care infrastructure and slow the spread of COVID-19. If we do this, then we can make sure fewer people get sick and those who do are able to get the medical care they need.

Questions? Call the Washburn County Health Department at 715-635-4400 or email your questions to health@co.washburn.wi.us