



PUBLIC ADVISORY

March 23, 2020

March 23 Public Health Order: FAQs

On March 23, 2020, New Mexico Department of Health Secretary Kathy Kunkel announced a new public health emergency order **effective at 8 a.m. Tuesday, March 24**, closing all businesses and nonprofit entities except for those deemed essential, and further restricting mass gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All New Mexicans must immediately heed the directive to stay home except to maintain continuity of functions critical to public health and safety.

Read the Executive Order [here](#).

See the full list of what businesses and services are deemed essential [here](#).

Find the below FAQs online [here](#).

BASICS

Q: When should I leave my house?

A: You may leave your home for these reasons:

- If you work for an “essential business”
- If your job is part of essential government services that cannot be conducted through telework (the latest order does not change this)
- To conduct “necessary activities” - obtaining medicine or seeing a doctor, purchasing necessary supplies such as groceries and personal hygiene products, picking up educational supplies from your child’s school or providing necessary care and supplies to family members in another household.
- You may leave your house to take a walk, or jog, or to walk the dog. But you may not do these things in groups. And you should limit your time outside to only what is essential.

Q: What’s open?

A: Essential businesses and nonprofits, as defined in the order, will remain open. These include:

- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food providers: Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, school meal distribution sites and restaurants (but only for delivery and take-out).
- Banks
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Farms, ranches and other food cultivation operations

- Essential state and local government functions, including law enforcement and emergency management services
- Homeless shelters
- Health care operations
- Child care facilities necessary to provide services to workers employed by essential businesses and essential non-profit entities.
- Utilities
- Essential state and local government functions, including law enforcement and emergency management services
- U.S. government and military installations

The full list is available [here](#).

Q: Are there additional closings because of this order?

A: Yes. If a business does not fall under one of the “essential” categories, employees must either telework or it must suspend operations.

Q: The new order revises what’s considered a prohibited mass gathering. What’s the new rule?

A: This order defines a mass gathering as any public or private gathering that brings together five or more individuals in a single room or connected space or an outdoor space where people are within 6 feet of each other.

Q: Are there any exemptions to the 5-or-more rule?

A: Yes. If five or more people live together, they are exempt inside their residence. Also exempt are churches, synagogues, mosques or other places of worship.

Q: What’s closed?

A:

- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios
- Public events and gatherings
- Convention centers
- Hair and nail salons
- Casinos and horse-racing facilities

And more

Q: How long will this order be in place?

A: This order is in place through 8 a.m. April 10, 2020, unless otherwise amended.

Q: What about government services?

A: This order does not change the status of state and local government operations. Previous orders exempted all persons necessary to maintain the operations of state and local governments. State government has already moved to a largely telework system; local government agencies are strongly encouraged to do the same.

Q: Is there a curfew associated with the order?

A: No.

Q: My employer has asked me to come to work at a non-essential business – what do I do?

A: The main line at newmexico.gov, 833-551-0518, will soon have a reporting mechanism to report non-compliance to the state.

SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE

Q: My school is providing free grab-and-go meals, instructional materials and supplies, and child care. Are those still open?

A: Yes.

Q: Are child care services still open? Can my babysitter still come to the house?

A: Yes. Child care facilities necessary to provide services to workers employed by essential businesses and nonprofit entities may continue to operate. Child care services are also available to serve families with young children when the parents are involved with protective services, behavioral health and/or juvenile justice services.

Child care facilities that remain open must employ heightened cleaning and distancing requirements; guidance will be released shortly.

Babysitters may travel to homes to care for the children of parents working in essential sectors.

OTHER SERVICES

Q: Can I go to the park?

A: No, you should not.

Q: Will public roads be closed?

A: No. All streets, roads and highways will remain open.

Q: What about public transportation?

A: Public transportation is considered an essential service; it will continue to operate.

Q: How does the order affect people who are homeless?

A: Previous orders exempted those who are homeless, and that has not changed. Like everyone, they are encouraged to practice social distancing of at least 6 feet.

Services that provide for the homeless, like shelters, may remain open.

Q: Can I still get my mail and deliveries?

A: Yes. You will still be able to get mail and other deliveries at your home. Mail is considered an essential government function, and businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences are considered essential businesses.

HEALTH CARE AND HELPING SICK RELATIVES

Q: Can I visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or other residential care facility?

A: The Department of Health's March 13, 2020, public health order states that visitors are only allowed at nursing homes and other facilities that care for seniors if they are receiving end-of-life care and the visitor meets certain conditions (i.e. temperature taken at the entrance).

Many hospitals are implementing modified visitation policies at this time. Check with the specific hospital location about what the policy is at this time.

Q: Since health care is a necessary activity, may I keep my appointment for an eye exam or a dental cleaning?

A: Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning and elective procedures should be postponed. If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.

Q: May I still go out to get my prescriptions?

A: Yes. Pharmacies remain open, as do medical marijuana dispensaries.

Q: Can I leave home to care for family members or friends who have disabilities, or who require assistance to care for themselves?

A: Yes. Be sure that you protect them and yourself by following social distancing guidelines such as washing hands before and after, using hand sanitizer, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance when possible, and coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue and then washing your hands. If you have any symptoms of a cold, however, please stay away.

OUTDOOR RECREATION/EXERCISE

Q: Can I still go outside for a hike or walk?

Yes, but you must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet with those outside of your family unit. Gyms, fitness centers, recreational centers, golf courses, swimming pools and skating rinks are all closed.

New Mexico State Parks have been temporarily closed to protect public health.

PETS

Q: Can I walk my dog? Take my pet to the vet?

A: You may walk your dog. You may also take your pet to the vet; emergency veterinary services are exempt from the orders.

OTHER

Q: Have any other states done this?

A: Yes. As of Sunday, March 22, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Illinois had issued similar orders.