

State of Emergency Declaration in Douglas County FAQs

Where can I read the Declaration?

www.celebratedouglascounty.com

What exactly does "Shelter in Place" mean?

The Centers for Disease Control defines "Shelter in Place" here:

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/shelterinplace.asp>

That definition is rather broad, in this emergency it can be simply summarized by saying; "stay at home."

Can I go to work or the grocery store? Can I go outside? Walk my dog? Go for a run?

The shelter-in-place order means everyone should remain in their homes except when traveling to locations outlined in the Declaration. People can travel to work, or the grocery store, or to a business as long as those locations comply with the Order's requirement of limiting groups of people to ten or fewer or can comply with the six-foot "social distancing" spacing as advised by the CDC.

Although a strict "shelter in place" means staying indoors, in this case going outside for a walk, yard work, or simply to get exercise is not a problem as long as you maintain the six-foot "social distancing" guidelines issued by public health officials.

Is Douglas County under a curfew?

No.

If I am heading to work or operating an "essential" business, do I need some sort of pass or permission letter?

Not at this time.

I run a "non-essential" business. Can I stay open?

The Executive Order allows businesses NOT on the "Essential" list to operate from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Any business that opens must also;

- Send any person home that exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19;

- Allow as many employees as possible to work remotely;
- Must take the necessary steps to restrict in-person contact and maintain a 6-foot “social distancing” buffer between individuals and no more than 10 people in the area at the same time.

Can daycares operate?

Under this Declaration, daycares - except those specifically outlined in the “essential business” category – should be limited to serving those workers in essential businesses, must abide by the hours in this Declaration. Each location must comply with the Declaration’s requirement of limiting groups of children to ten or fewer with a six-foot “social distance” spacing in order to continue to operate.

Are parks open? Can I walk on trails in the county?

All Douglas County parks facilities are closed to the public.

Can restaurants stay open?

There can be no dine-in service at any restaurant, brewery, or bar. They can offer take-out or delivery services, and those with an alcohol permit can sell unopened beverages during their normal operating hours. They must continue to take measures to ensure there are no alcohol sales to underage customers.

My business has suffered. How can I get help?

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). [Click for more info from SBA.](#) We also recommend businesses to contact www.douglascountygeorgia.com/douglasstrong [douglascountygeorgia.com]

What are the benefits and implications of declaring a state of emergency?

- The declaration empowers the Douglas Emergency Management Agency to act on behalf of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners to employ the resources and assets of state, local and private agencies to provide immediate assistance to local communities.
- The emergency declaration does not guarantee funding, but helps the county pursue requesting assistance from the state and federal government.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The County Administrator is hereby authorized to suspend any law, code provision or regulation prescribing the procedures for the conduct of county

business, or the orders, rules or regulations of any county agency, if strict compliance with any ordinance, resolution, order, rule or regulation would in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency or disaster, provided that such suspension shall provide for the minimum deviation from the requirements under the circumstances and further provided that, when practicable, specialists shall be assigned to avoid adverse effects resulting from such suspension.

What does that mean for Douglas County services?

- Douglas County Government has been under limited operations status since March 21, 2020. All online services are accessible through their website.
- All publicly-accessible buildings have been closed to the public or limited public access until further notice. Only essential employees are currently at work to ensure the continued delivery of services such as water system, road services and bus transportation. All public safety positions are fully staffed as your safety is a priority.

I have not been able to work. Will I lose my water service or get evicted?

- Douglas County Water System has issued a moratorium on termination of water service.
- The Douglas Judicial Circuit has ordered a delay in dispossessory hearings/evictions. Please contact the court system for further information. Douglas County Board of Commissioners does not have jurisdiction over judicial proceedings.

What about special events?

All permits for Douglas County special events, including park facility rentals are canceled for the next 30 days. All fees will be refunded.

Other special events such as family reunions, church services, weddings and funerals may continue as long as they include fewer than 10 attendees and maintain the social distancing restrictions.

When does the order take effect?

The Declaration takes effect Thursday, March 26 at 12:00 p.m. ET.

When does the order end?

The Declaration ends on Friday, April 10, at 12:00 p.m. ET, but could be extended if the outbreak warrants it.

Business-Related

What is an Essential Activity?

“Essential Activities” include providing or securing services or products for health and safety for your own household or to take care of others.

What is an Essential Business or Service?

Essential businesses and services are those that are required for both public health and safety as well as basic community well-being. Essential businesses are exempt from this Declaration. However, all businesses, including Essential Businesses should still follow the CDC guidelines to limit disease spread; their workers should still be encouraged to work remotely when possible and they are still expected to maintain “social distancing” among workers and customers, as much as possible.

Essential businesses include, but not limited to grocery stores and agriculture, public safety and first responders, pharmacies, hospitals, public health and doctor’s clinics, gas stations, utilities, transportation, information technology, distance learning educators.

If my Business is not considered an Essential Business, do I just have to close until April 10?

If your business is not defined as Essential, you may conduct business between the hours of 9am-6pm daily as long as you:

- 1) do not have individuals entering the workplace who are ill with COVID-like symptoms;
- 2) support employees who need to telework or shelter in place who have certain severe, chronic conditions (e.g., COPD, those undergoing cancer treatment);
- 3) always can maintain social distancing (at least 6 feet) between individuals (workers and clients);
- 4) prohibit mass gatherings of 10 or more people;
- 5) reinforce the shelter in place mandate for all individuals, except for during essential activities;

A list of essential and non-essential businesses as well as the emergency declaration is posted [on the county website](#).

What if I think my business should be closed, but they're still asking me to report to work?

All Essential businesses are asked to remain open during their normal operating hours during the order to provide services that are vital to the lives of

Douglas County residents and while following the social distancing guidance.

All restaurants, breweries and bars are asked to only provide take out or delivery and only be open at the earliest 6am and at the latest 9pm.

All Non-Essential Businesses may remain open between 9am and 6pm as long as they can comply with the social distancing requirements.

ALL businesses should utilize remote working to the best of their abilities and make sure that sick workers are not coming to work.

If you believe your business is not in compliance with this Order, first discuss it with your employer or visit www.georgia.gov click on "Contact Us" and then click on "Constituent Services".

A certain service is essential for me, but it is not included in the Declaration. What do I do?

The Declaration was issued to protect the health, safety and well-being of Douglas County residents and to reduce the dramatic spread of COVID-19 during the coming weeks. We know that this is a terribly difficult time for all of us and we are asking everyone to comply so that we can move through this outbreak more quickly and less severely than if we went about our normal routines.

Are Car Dealerships open?

Auto repair and maintenance are considered essential services and can remain open. Auto sales are considered a non-essential business and can remain open if they meet social distancing guidelines and limit hours of operation to between 6am and 9pm daily.

Are Hotels and Motels to remain open?

In general, hotels and motels come under the "housing" category and are considered an essential business. Hotels and motels may only engage in activities providing shelter and basic needs (such as rooms, carry-out/delivery/room-service food) and, in engaging in those activities, they

must limit guest-to-guest, guest-to-staff, and staff-to-staff interactions as much as possible. They may not provide additional in-house amenities such as gyms, pools, spas, entertainment faculties, meetings rooms or like facilities, or provide in-house dining.

Is Construction allowed under the Declaration?

Architecture and Construction are considered essential infrastructure services and may continue with special attention to social distancing restrictions.

Travel

I work for an Essential Business. Will I be allowed to travel to and from work?

Yes

Will public transportation, ride-sharing and taxis continue?

Public transportation, ride-sharing and taxis should only be used for essential travel.

Will roads in Douglas County be closed?

No, the roads will remain open. You should only travel if it is to provide or secure essential services.

Can I leave my home to do laundry?

Yes. Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry service providers are considered essential businesses and we encourage social distancing.

I have a landscaping business – can I still operate?

Landscaping services are considered a non-essential business in this emergency and can still operate between 6am-9pm as long as they are maintaining social distancing between workers and customers.

Food

Will the grocery store/pharmacy be open?

Yes, grocery stores and pharmacies are essential services.

Can I get my groceries delivered? Can I still get my online orders delivered?

Yes, you can still receive packages, get groceries delivered, and get meals delivered.

Recreation and Social

Can I go to the hair salon, spa, nail salon, tattoo parlor or barber shop?

No, these businesses should be closed because they are not considered an essential service and it is not possible for them to maintain the social distancing restrictions while they perform their work.

Can I get together with friends if we are outside?

Public gatherings — inside and outdoors — of more than 10 people are prohibited anywhere in Douglas County under this Order. However, we do encourage individuals to continue to exercise outside in very small groups while maintaining a safe distance.

Can I visit friends and family?

For your safety, as well as the safety of all Douglas County residents, you should remain at home as much as possible to help fight the spread of COVID-19. You may visit family members who need medical or other essential assistance, such as ensuring an adequate food supply.

Can I walk my dog or go to the veterinarian?

You are allowed to walk your dog and seek medical care for your pet should they require it. Practice social distancing while out on walks, maintaining at least 6 feet from other neighbors and their pets.

Can I leave my home to exercise?

Outdoor exercise such as running or taking a walk is encouraged. However, gyms, fitness centers and associated facilities will be closed to reduce the spread of the virus. While exercising outside, you still should practice social distancing by running or walking at least 6 feet away from other people.

Can golf courses and clubs remain open?

Golf courses are allowed to stay open for play while maintaining social distancing. Indoor facilities like clubhouses or restaurants must close for on-premises consumption, but may continue to offer food and beverage through walk-up service and other means expressly permitted by the order.

Can gyms that offer service by private appointment remain open?

All gyms are closed to use by members of the public, including for private appointments. Private training can occur outside while maintaining social distancing.

Religious Gatherings

Can I attend a religious service?

Large gatherings, including church services, will be canceled to slow the spread of COVID-19. Religious leaders are encouraged to continue livestreaming services while practicing social distancing with one another. Small group gatherings (less than 10) are allowable with social distancing, but it is also encouraged to participate in these by videoconferencing.

Our family has a wedding scheduled! What do we do?

Weddings can continue if held for less than 10 people in attendance. Many families are choosing to livestream the wedding ceremony to friends and family or choosing to hold a small ceremony now with plans for a large reception after the pandemic is over.

Do funeral homes have to close?

No, funeral homes are considered essential and will remain open. However, they are required to keep gatherings to less than 10 people and encourage social distancing.

Families are encouraged to hold small graveside services now and delay larger memorial services until after the pandemic is over.

Medical Care, Safety and Legal

How can I get medical care?

If you suspect you have COVID-19 and are having symptoms, please stay home and call your healthcare provider in advance so that proper precautions can be taken to limit further transmission. Older patients and

individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild.

If you have severe symptoms, such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, shortness of breath, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face, call 911 or contact your healthcare provider and seek care immediately, but please call in advance if possible. Your doctor will determine if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and whether you should be tested.

Preventive or elective medical care such as eye exams and teeth-cleanings should be postponed. When possible, health care visits should be done remotely. Contact your health care provider to see what telehealth services they provide.

How does this order impact my custody agreement or legal case?

Individuals may travel as required by law enforcement or a court order, and participate in emergency legal proceedings as outlined by Douglas' Orders of Judicial Emergency.

What if my home is not a safe environment?

If it is not safe for you to remain home, you are able and encouraged to find another safe place to stay during this order. Please reach out so someone can help. You can call the domestic violence hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or your local law enforcement.

Still have questions?

Residents with Douglas County operations-related questions can call the Douglas County Courthouse at 770-949-2000. The hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.