

Wake County FAQs

[en español](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 in Wake County

(Updated Monday, March 30, 2020, 3:35 p.m.)

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Stay-at-Home Order FAQs

What is NOT allowed under the stay-at-home order?

The stay-at-home order includes the following mandates:

- All non-essential facilities, services, operations and retail businesses must close.
- Gatherings of any size are prohibited.
- People of any age with medical conditions should not leave their homes except to get medical care.
- Social distancing must be practiced while in public.
- Public transportation should only be used if necessary. If public transport is a person's primary way to get around, they should abide by social distancing best practices, standing and sitting at least six feet apart and using sanitizing products.

What is still allowed under the stay-at-home order?

The stay-at-home does not restrict activities such as:

- Shopping for food at the grocery store or picking up take-out meals from a local restaurant
- Operating businesses that provide critical services like hospitals, government agencies and financial institutions
- Caring for a family member or pet in another household
- Providing childcare for parents who have to go to work at jobs that are considered essential
- Utilizing plumbers, electricians, exterminators and others who help maintain the safety and sanitation of residences
- Visiting a local park, greenway or nature preserve while practicing social distancing

What types of gatherings are banned?

All gatherings of any size – public or private – are banned. That applies across the board. Do

not go for a walk with your neighbor, schedule a play date for your children or visit a friend. The only exceptions are for family members and roommates who share a single household.

Can I still go to the grocery store or pharmacy?

Yes. Grocery stores and pharmacies are essential services.

Can I still order food for delivery or takeout from a restaurant?

Yes. We encourage residents to support local restaurants while they are closed to dine-in patrons.

Can I still get my online orders and other packages delivered? What about groceries?

Yes. Deliveries are an essential service. That includes private carriers and the U.S. Postal Service.

I live in Wake County and work in another county. Can I still go to work?

Wake County residents may only travel to work if their place of business is an [essential operation, service or facility](#). That's true whether the you work in Wake County, or if you travel to work in another county for work.

I'm traveling to my essential job, to take care of a family member or for another essential trip. Do I need to carry proof that I'm allowed to travel?

No. Law enforcement will not ask you for proof if you are traveling for essential purposes.

What if I split custody of my child with another parent?

People may travel to transport family members and pets to another home.

Can construction and landscaping continue?

Yes. Residential and commercial construction and landscaping are essential services.

Can I still attend church or another religious service?

The ban on gatherings applies to all places of worship, including churches, temples, synagogues and mosques. An essential crew may assemble to broadcast or stream services to a remote audience, but they should practice social distancing as much as possible.

We had a death in the family. Can we hold a funeral?

Yes, but only family members can attend. Funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries and providers of mortuary services are essential services.

Are pawn shops and pawnbrokers considered an essential business?

Yes. Pawnbrokers and pawn shops are defined by law as financial agencies, which are essential services.

Are gun retailers allowed to operate?

Gun stores implementing social distancing requirements for employees and customers as defined in the order may remain open. Large box retailers that have a gun department are allowed to remain open solely to conduct exempt retail activity, such as gun purchases, but all non-exempt retail activity must be suspended.

What types of sporting activities are allowed? Can I play golf or tennis?

Public and private gatherings of any size are prohibited. However, spending time outdoors and exercising are important for maintaining physical and mental health. While private sporting facilities are closed as nonessential businesses, we encourage families to take advantage of public recreation areas for activities that allow proper social distancing. For instance, basketball and soccer games are off limits because everyone touches the same ball and players come into close contact. Families may play golf or tennis, provided facilities are open and social distancing is practiced at all times.

What areas of the county does this apply to?

The stay-at-home order will apply to all of Wake County. We coordinated with our partners at the city and town levels to develop these new restrictions, and we will work together to make sure everyone knows about the new rules and follows them.

How does this apply to people experiencing homelessness?

The restrictions do not apply to people experiencing homelessness. We urge them to find shelter and practice social distancing as much as possible. If you or someone you know needs help, call [Oak City Cares](tel:984-344-9599) at 984-344-9599 or visit the facility at 1430 South Wilmington St. in Raleigh.

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

Essential businesses will remain open during the stay-at-home order. If you believe your business is nonessential but you are still being asked to show up to work, you should discuss it with your employer.

How is “Stay at Home” different than “Shelter in Place?”

“Shelter-in-place” is a term we use when people need to stay put for the duration of a natural disaster, such as a tornado or hurricane, or a nuclear event. In these instances, residents need to find a safe place to take physical shelter until the danger passes. Unlike a shelter-in-place order, which may last a few hours or days, we need people to stay at home for at least a few weeks.

“Stay-at-home” means just what it says. To stop the spread of the virus, we need people to stay in their homes except to make the most essential trips. Essentially, this is just a stricter version of the social-distancing guidelines we’ve all become familiar with in the past weeks. COVID-19 spreads when people are close to one another, so we’re banning gatherings and nonessential business operations and trips.

What if the state's Stay at Home order differs from Wake County's Stay at Home order?

When you see differences between the [state's Stay at Home order](#) and Wake County's [Stay at Home order](#), the stricter regulation is the one you should adhere to. For example, the state prohibits gatherings of more than 10 people. Wake County prohibits gatherings outside a single household. Wake County residents should follow Wake County’s order.

Is public transit still operating?

GoTriangle is continuing to [update its bus and shuttle services in response to COVID-19](#). Changes affect the routes run by GoRaleigh, GoCary and GoWake Access, as well as routes that run beyond Wake County. Riders may call 919-485-RIDE for info.

Other COVID-19-Related FAQs

How is the virus spread?

[According to the CDC:](#)

“The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.”

The primary way COVID-19 spreads is from person-to-person, but “...spread might be possible before people show symptoms.”

Can the COVID-19 virus live on surfaces?

According to the [CDC](#), it may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by first touching a surface or object that has the virus on and then touching their face.

Who is most at risk for contracting COVID-19 in Wake County?

While anyone can contract COVID-19, adults older than 65, people with underlying health conditions and pregnant women should take extra precautions as they may be at higher risk for developing serious illness associated with the disease.

I'm worried about getting COVID-19. What can I do to keep myself and my family safe?

Some ways to lessen your risk for getting COVID-19 include:

- Staying home and using teleworking technology when possible.
- Washing your hands.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Practicing social distancing and staying away from sick people.
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Staying home if you're sick and avoiding close contact with others for three days after symptoms resolve.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is a public health strategy that prevents close contact between people with the aim to reduce opportunities for disease transmission. Tactics that people can use to support social distancing include maintaining six feet of space between each other when in public and avoiding events with large numbers of people. The goal is to slow the spread of COVID-19 so that spread is contained as much as possible and there's less strain on our healthcare system to care for sick people. View more information and further explanation [here](#).

I have spent a lot of time with the people who have COVID-19. What should I do?

If you do not feel sick, you should stay home for 14 days, as much as possible, and monitor yourself for symptoms. If you develop symptoms, self-isolate for seven days after the onset of symptoms and at least three days after symptoms resolve. If you develop serious illness, call your primary care doctor for evaluation. If you experience difficulty breathing, call 9-1-1.

Do I need to wear a mask to protect myself while in public?

Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

I'm sick with a fever, cough and shortness of breath. What should I do?

If you do not fall into the high-risk group, you should self-isolate for seven days after the onset of symptoms. Once symptoms resolve, remain at home without fever for three additional days.

If serious illness develops, call your primary care provider. If you trouble breathing, call 9-1-1.

My relative lives in a nursing home. I'd like to visit her, but is that safe?

Beginning 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, visitors will not be permitted to visit nursing homes, independent and assisted living facilities for 30 days as ordered by [Gov. Roy Cooper](#).

I'm a caregiver for a senior citizen. Should I do anything different than usual?

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services has posted [a guide for individuals and families](#) to avoid spreading COVID-19 within the home. Just like the general public, caretakers and those who share a home with someone in the increased risk group should take steps to limit their exposure to all kinds of contagious diseases, including COVID-19. If people think they've contracted COVID-19, they [should take steps to avoid spreading the virus](#) to anyone else, including those in their home or care who are in the higher-risk group. The CDC has [additional resources for families](#) to avoid spreading the disease among themselves.

I am concerned that I may have COVID-19. How can I get tested?

Now that community spread has been confirmed in North Carolina, testing by Wake County is being focused on those most at risk of developing serious illness, including those over the age of 65, people with underlying health conditions and pregnant women.

If you have symptoms, self-isolate for seven days after the onset of symptoms. If you develop serious illness, call your primary care doctor for evaluation. If you experience difficulty breathing, call 9-1-1.

What is community spread?

Community spread means that there are COVID-19-positive people who do not know how or

where they became infected with the virus.

Why are healthcare workers focusing on testing at-risk populations?

The purpose of the initial approach was to see where, exactly, COVID-19 had entered our community with the goal of containing its spread. Now that we know that the virus has spread throughout the county, we must be more vigilant about conserving resources, like personal protective equipment for our healthcare workers and direct testing to those more likely to become seriously ill.

Which Wake County phone number should I call to ask questions about COVID-19 or share my concerns?

Call our dedicated COVID-19 information line at 919-856-7044. You may have used other numbers to call Wake County in the past, but this is the fastest number to get the answers you need about the virus.

If you are a business and have a business-related question, call 919-856-7420.

I'm concerned about kids who don't have access to nutritional meals now that school is closed. How can I help?

The Wake County Public School System, Wake County and its partners are working together to make sure that [food is available to hungry students](#) during these unprecedented times. If you would like to volunteer to support food distribution sites, please complete the [Food Security and Access Volunteer Form](#).

Please direct all food donations to the [Interfaith Food Shuttle](#) or [Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC](#).

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