



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
March 27, 2020

**RUTHERFORD COUNTY AND TOWNS ISSUE A
STAY AT HOME ORDER**

A new Stay At Home Order from Rutherford County, the Town of Bostic, the Town of Forest City, the Town of Lake Lure, the Town of Rutherfordton and the Town of Spindale directs residents to stay at home effective at 6:00 am on Saturday, March 28, 2020. This Order will be in place for three weeks until April 17, 2020 at 6:00 am. The Order limits activity, travel and business functions to only the most basic and essential needs. To the extent individuals are using shared or outdoor spaces, they must at all times maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person when they are outside their residence.

This Order was issued in response to the significant and increasing number of suspected cases of community transmission and likely further significant increases in transmission. The order defines essential activities as necessary for the health and safety for individuals and their families. **To read the full Stay At Home Order please go to: www.rutherfordcountync.gov** and click on the COVID-19 Alert Box on the homepage.

Any violation of any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat to public health and will be enforced by law enforcement as a Class 2 misdemeanor in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-288.20A. The Chairman of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners and the Mayors of each town will continue to assess the quickly evolving situation and may modify or extend this Order, or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19.

All individuals travelling to Rutherford County from areas experiencing community transmission of COVID-19 (especially including the states of California, New York and Washington) must self-quarantine at their home or place of residence for a period of fourteen (14) days commencing immediately upon their arrival in Rutherford County before entering the community.

Areas defined in the Stay at Home Order are clarified below:

Essential Businesses: businesses permitted to remain operational and open to the public during the period of this Proclamation.

1. Stores that sell groceries or medicine
2. Food cultivation
3. Manufacturing, distribution and supply chain for critical products and industries
4. Organizations that provide charitable and social services
5. Healthcare and public health operations
6. Media
7. Gas stations and businesses needed for transportation
8. Financial and insurance institutions

County Commissioners

Bryan A. King, *Chairman*
Alan Toney, *Vice Chairman*

Eddie Holland
Greg Lovelace
Michael Benfield

Steven W. Garrison, *County Manager*
Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board*
Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

9. Hardware and supply stores
10. Critical trades
11. Mail, post, shipping, delivery and pick-up services
12. Educational institutions
13. Laundry services
14. Restaurants for consumption off-premises
15. Transportation
16. Home-based care and services
17. Residential facilities and shelters
18. Professional services
19. Childcare facilities
20. Hotels and motels
21. Funeral services
22. Solid Waste
23. Outdoor Services
24. Government Services

Essential Activities: activities for which individuals may leave their home or place of residence.

1. For health and safety
2. For necessary supplies and services
3. For outdoor activity
4. To take care of others
5. For certain types of work

Essential Travel:

1. Any travel necessary or related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Government Services, Essential Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations.
2. Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons.
3. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
4. Travel to return to home or place of residence from outside the jurisdiction.
5. Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement.
6. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the jurisdiction of Rutherford County.

Social Distancing Requirements shall include:

1. Maintaining a distance of no less than six feet (6') between any and all individuals.
2. Washing hands with soap and water at least twenty (20) seconds as frequently as possible OR using hand sanitizer.
3. Covering all coughs and sneezes into the sleeve or elbow, not the hands.
4. Regularly cleaning all high-touch surfaces.
5. Not shaking hands.

Nonessential Gathering:

Any event or convening that brings together ten (10) or more people in a single room or single space at the same time, whether indoors or outdoors. A "single space" shall include facilities such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, conference room, meeting hall, theater or any other confined space whether indoor or outdoor. Businesses excluded from gatherings of ten (10) or more people include Essential Businesses and Essential Government Services.

If you have any further questions please see the Frequently Asked Questions below or you may contact the Public Information Officer at covid19@rutherfordcountync.gov. **To receive daily local COVID alerts, please text your zip code to 888777. ###**

RUTHERFORD COUNTY AND TOWNS STAY AT HOME ORDER

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On Friday, March 27, 2020, Rutherford County, Bostic, Forest City, Lake Lure, Rutherfordton and Spindale issued an Order requiring all persons currently within the jurisdiction of Rutherford County and the listed towns to stay at home or at their place of residents except as allowed by the Proclamation to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The order prohibits things like visiting the homes of friends and holding gatherings of any size and closes all nonessential establishments, including most retail, recreation and entertainment businesses. It does *NOT* prohibit essential activities like going to the grocery store, receiving medical care, or taking your pet for a walk. For more information on what this order means for you, please see below. This order goes into effect at 6:00 am on Saturday, March 28, 2020 and will be valid through April 17, 2020, at 6:00 a.m.

When does the order take effect?

The order will take effect Saturday, March 28th at 6 am EST.

Where does the Stay at Home order apply?

The order includes all of the unincorporated areas of Rutherford County, North Carolina, and all areas within the municipal limits of Bostic, Forest City, Lake Lure, Rutherfordton and Spindale. Unless you work for an essential business or are doing an essential activity, you should stay home.

Is this mandatory or just guidance?

This order is mandatory. To help prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in our community and protect our friends, neighbors, and vulnerable populations, please stay home.

How will this order be enforced?

Staying home is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in your community. Local law enforcement will enforce this order. Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every citizen to do their part.

I work in an essential service. How will the police know I'm allowed to be outside my house?

Law enforcement officials will not stop residents who are on their way to or from work or who are out for necessities like going to the pharmacy or getting groceries, or just taking a walk. Citizens should abstain from all nonessential activities. Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every person in Rutherford County to do their part.

Will grocery stores be open?

Yes, essential services will still be operational including, but not limited to:

- Stores that sell groceries or medicine
- Food cultivation
- Manufacturing, distribution and supply chain for critical products and industries
- Organizations that provide charitable and social services
- Healthcare and public health operations
- Media
- Gas stations and businesses needed for transportation
- Financial and insurance institutions
- Hardware and supply stores
- Critical trades (plumbers, electricians, etc)
- Mail, post, shipping, delivery and pick up services
- Educational institutions
- Laundry services

- Restaurants for consumption off-premises
- Transportation
- Home-based care and services
- Residential facilities and shelters
- Professional services (legal, accounting, real estate, etc)
- Childcare facilities
- Hotels and motels
- Funeral services
- Solid waste

How can I get medical care if I need it?

If you are feeling sick, call your doctor, the local COVID-19 medical screening hotline at (828) 289-1185 or an urgent care center. Do not go to an emergency room unless necessary. Nonessential medical care like eye exams and teeth-cleaning should be postponed. When possible, healthcare visits should be done remotely. Contact your healthcare provider to see what tele-health services they provide.

What if I still have to go to work?

Unless your work is an essential function (i.e. healthcare provider, grocery store clerk, first responder), you should stay home. If you have been designated essential by your employer, you should continue to go to work and practice social distancing.

What if I think my business should be closed but I'm still being asked to operate?

Essential businesses will remain open during the Stay at Home order to provide services that are vital to the lives of Rutherford County citizens. Those businesses include, but are not limited to those listed above. If you work for an essential business, you should continue to practice social distancing and should stay at home outside of work hours. If you believe your business is nonessential but are still being asked to show up to work, you may discuss with your employer.

Can I order food/groceries?

Yes, grocery delivery will be available as well as meal-delivery, drive through, and take-out options.

Will public transportation be available?

Public transportation is available and should be used for essential travel only. When possible, walk or drive yourself.

Will roads in and out of Rutherford County be closed?

No, the roads will not be closed in Rutherford County. You should only travel if it is essential to your work or health.

Can I visit friends and family?

For your safety, as well as the safety of those in your community, you should remain at home 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 supply of food.

What about my pet?

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

Does the Stay at Home order mean I can't take my kids to the park?

Families will still be able to go outside and take a walk, run, or bike ride but should continue to practice social distancing by remaining 6 feet away from other people.

What is the difference between the Stay at Home order and social distancing?

Social distancing is an important first step in preventing the spread of a disease like COVID-19 that allows people to go about their daily activities while taking extra health and safety precautions. The Stay at Home order requires people to remain in their homes unless they have an essential job or are doing an essential task like going to the grocery store or walking a pet.

Can I leave home to go to religious services?

“Nonessential Gathering” shall be defined as any event or convening that brings together ten (10) or more people in a single room or single space at the same time, whether indoors or outdoors. A “single space” shall include facilities such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, conference room, meeting hall, theater or any other confined space whether indoor or outdoor.

Can I leave home to exercise?

Yes. Outdoor exercise like running or taking a walk is perfectly acceptable; however, exercise gyms, fitness centers and associated facilities will be closed to reduce the spread of coronavirus. While exercising outside, you should still practice social distancing by running or walking at least six feet away from other people.

Can I pick up meals being provided by my child's school?

Yes. Schools that provide free food services to students will continue on a pick-up and take-home basis. However, if you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provided by your physician.

Can I go out to do laundry?

Yes. Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry service providers are considered essential businesses that will remain open. However, if you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provide by your physician.

Can I take my child to day care?

If you are considered an essential worker under the Order, you can take your child to a day care that is licensed on an emergency basis for the purpose of childcare for essential workers.

###