

**STAY HOME.****STAY SAFE.****SAVE LIVES.****BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA  
#STAYHOME #STAYSAFE****FOR COVID-19 INFO + COMMUNITY RESOURCES,  
VISIT [BUNCOMBECOUNTY.ORG](https://www.buncombecounty.org) OR DIAL 2-1-1**

## **Buncombe County's Stay Home – Stay Safe Superseding Declaration**

### **Interpretive Guidance**

**April 8, 2020**

#### **Purpose**

Buncombe County issued a “Stay Home – Stay Safe” Supplemental Declaration that went into effect Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 8:00pm. The intent of that supplemental declaration was to minimize opportunities for exposure and transmission of COVID-19 across the county. That declaration will expire, as scheduled, on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 6:00am. At that time, a new Superseding Declaration will go into effect for the county. This Superseding Declaration will be referred to as ‘The Stay Home – Stay Safe Order’ in this document.

This document is intended as interpretive guidance to assist the public’s understanding and interpretation of the new Stay Home – Stay Safe Order. In general, this new local Order closely aligns Buncombe County guidance with Governor Roy Cooper’s Executive Order No. 121- “Stay at Home” Order. However, there are some notable exceptions where Buncombe County guidance is more restrictive or more extensive than the Governor’s Order. Those exceptions will be detailed in this document.

In addition to those exceptions, this document will also summarize what Buncombe County Citizens can do and should not do. It draws distinction between essential and non-essential travel. It defines and summarizes what businesses are deemed essential vs. non-essential. It attempts to answer some Frequently Asked Questions.

### **Why a Stay Home – Stay Safe Order?**

COVID-19 is more contagious and spreads faster than the flu and spreads from person to person. We also know that COVID-19 is currently spreading in our community. We don't have a vaccine for COVID-19, so we have to change the behavior of our entire community to act as a social vaccine. This is fundamentally done in two ways:

- Not Getting Infected
- Not Infecting Others

We do this by washing our hands, coughing and sneezing into our elbows, cleaning high contact surfaces more often, staying home when we are sick and especially by keeping our distance and avoiding close contact with people outside our household.

This idea of staying at least 6ft away from others to the best of our ability is called social distancing (and more recently physical distancing). It's is a specific strategy proven by data to slow the spread of contagious diseases like COVID-19 and right now it's the best tool we have for decreasing the impact of COVID-19.

The main point of our Stay Home – Stay Safe is to ensure that Buncombe County is making every effort it can to practice strong physical distancing and reduce, as much as possible, chances for exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

## **What Can I Do? What Should I Not Do?**

This Order directs all Buncombe County residents to “Stay Home – Stay Safe” and to limit movements outside of their homes that are not deemed essential.

### ***Under the new Stay Home – Stay Safe Order...***

#### **Buncombe County residents can:**

- Go to the grocery and convenience store
- Fill your car with gas
- Go to work for a business or organization defined as essential
- Go to the pharmacy to pick up medications and healthcare necessities
- Visit a health care facility for medical services that cannot be provided virtually (call first!)
- Go to a restaurant, for take-out, delivery, or drive-thru service only
- Care for or support a friend, family member, or pet
- Take a walk, ride your bike, hike, jog, fish (as long as physical distancing and mass gathering orders are followed and you adhere to all park closure guidelines).
- Walk your pets and take them to the veterinarian
- Help others to get necessary supplies
- Receive deliveries from any business that delivers

#### **Buncombe County residents should NOT:**

- Go out at all if they are sick
- Go to work, unless providing essential services as defined by this order
- Visit friends and family if there is no specific, urgent need
- Be closer than 6 feet from others if out in public

- Visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facilities, or other residential care facilities, except for limited exceptions as provided by the specific facility
- Travel, except for essential travel and activities
- People should not organize in-person group activities such as group hikes, exercise classes, parties, or yard sales.
- Engage in door to door solicitation

### **Activities that are considered essential**

In General, activities that fall under these categories. Further details can be found in the April 8<sup>th</sup> Order itself.

- Health and safety purposes
- To get necessary supplies and services
- Outdoor activities (as long as you follow distancing and mass gathering guidance)
- Work for essential businesses, operations, and organizations
- To take care of others
- To receive essential goods and services
- Volunteering

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

#### **What's the difference between Coronavirus and COVID-19?**

The term Coronavirus actually refers to a group of viruses that are known to cause respiratory complications. The coronavirus we are seeing now is a 'novel coronavirus', which means it was a new type that scientist had not previously identified until 2019. COVID-19 refers to the disease that is caused by this new virus. COronaVirusDisease-2019. COVID-19.

#### **Flu vs COVID-19**

COVID-19 can infect people who may not show symptoms of the virus and is spreading faster than the common flu and current data estimates that it may be 20-30 times more deadly. COVID-19 also has a much higher hospitalization rate than the common flu and therefore there is more of concern that those needing special medical attention can possibly overwhelm our healthcare systems.

### **Should I be wearing a mask or face covering?**

There is now evidence that people can be spreading COVID-19 to others without ever feeling sick or unhealthy themselves. Based on this finding, the CDC now recommends that the general public wear cloth face coverings in public settings while also keeping a 6 foot distance from others if possible. Instructions for making such face coverings can be found on the [CDC website](#).

These cloth face covering should NOT be surgical masks or N95 respirators. We want to save these critical medical supplies for healthcare personnel and other medical first responders who are caring for people with COVID-19.

Regardless of the new recommendation to wear a face covering in public, the number one thing we can all do is keep ourselves and the people we live with from having close physical contact with other people that we don't live with. Keeping that 6-feet of physical distance from others is critically important to slowing the spread of the virus. And we all need to continue to reduce any non-essential trips out into the community.

### **What is the difference between “Stay Home – Stay Safe” and “Shelter in Place”?**

Under a Stay at Home order residents can still perform essential services and conduct essential travel. Under a Shelter in Place order only emergency services and emergency travel are permitted. So, a Shelter in Place order is fundamentally more restrictive than a Stay at Home order. Buncombe County is not currently planning to enact a Shelter in Place order, but it is a possible measure that could be used in the future.

### **I live outside of Buncombe County. How does this affect me?**

If you work in Buncombe County, then your business/employer must comply with this order. You are allowed to travel through Buncombe County and conduct essential activities within Buncombe County and to return home. You should follow the guidance of your county of residence.

### **I live in Buncombe County, but I work in another county. How does this affect me?**

Buncombe County does not have the authority to regulate employment activities outside of Buncombe County. While we encourage everyone to stay home and stay safe, residents of Buncombe County who are employed outside the county may travel to work regardless of the nature of their occupation or whether that would be defined as essential or not under the Buncombe County declaration. When in another county, you should follow the guidance of that county.

### **Is there a curfew?**

No, at this time there is no curfew in effect for Buncombe County.

### **Am I allowed to travel?**

You are allowed to travel for purposes of essential business and essential activities.

### **Do I need a pass or other documentation to travel on the roads?**

Buncombe County is not taking any actions to disrupt transit or block roads- we are only asking people to limit themselves to essential travel only. At this time, essential personnel and businesses do not need any credentials or passes to be on the roads. However, the bottom line is that if you don't have an urgent or pressing need to be out, you need to be at home.

### **What is considered essential travel?**

- Any travel related to the provision of or access to essential activities, essential governmental functions, essential businesses and operations, or minimum basic operations.
- Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons
- Travel to engage in outdoor activities (as long as physical distancing and mass gathering orders are followed)
- Travel to religious institutions for drive-in worship services
- Travel to or from education institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and other related services
- Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the jurisdiction
- Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement
- Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the County. Individuals are strongly encouraged to verify that their transportation out of the County remains available and functional prior to commencing such travel

### **Am I allowed to go outside to exercise?**

Yes, and it's encouraged, both for exercise and for maintaining your mental health – but maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet from all others and no mass gatherings of any size are allowed. Activities should be limited to household members. This means a family can go fishing together, or roommates can go for a run together. What we don't want is a group of friends from different households getting in a vehicle together to go hiking. What we don't want is people hanging out together in a parking lot outside a greenway. [People should adhere to any and all park closure guidelines](#)

### **Is moving an essential function?**

Yes, Moving is an essential function. If you haven't yet scheduled your move, and you can delay it, that is recommended, but if not please ensure you are doing your very best to avoid close contact and sanitizing common touch surfaces. If you are moving to

another county or state, or you are moving to Buncombe from another jurisdiction you need to quarantine yourselves for 2 weeks upon arrival at your new location.

## **Specific Expectations**

### **Drive-in Worship Services**

Religious entities may conduct drive-in or parking lot services, however the leaders of these services are responsible for ensuring that their congregants stay inside of their vehicles for the duration of the time spent on the premises and observe the following guidance:

- Have only individuals from a single household in each vehicle (i.e., no carpooling, use of church buses, no children going from car to car, etc.)
- Vehicles should be parked 6 feet or more from each other
- Do not pass anything between vehicles (e.g., communion, offering plates, money, notes, etc.)
- No physical contact- including handshakes, hugs, or kissing

We understand this may sound extreme, and cause drastic departures from traditional ceremony. We ask everyone to keep the bigger picture in mind and remember that we are doing this to protect our community against the possibly devastating impacts of COVID-19.

### **Weddings and Funerals**

Weddings and Funerals may occur, but are limited to 10 people in attendance (including officiants and staff). For now, it is recommended that these events be limited to immediate family only and larger celebrations of marriage or celebrations of life be postponed until Buncombe County guidance on mass gatherings changes.

### **Lawn Care and Landscaping**



Lawn Care and Landscaping services are now defined as essential in Buncombe County. However, they must comply with Public Health guidance on physical distancing and sanitation practices to include:

- Traveling to and from a jobsite
- Working on a jobsite
- During lunch or other breaks on a job site

### **Auto Sales**

Auto Sales services are now defined as essential in Buncombe County. However, they must comply with Public Health guidance on physical distancing and sanitation practices to include:

- Motor vehicle sales will be conducted by appointment.
- Posting online whether a facility is open and how best to reach the facility and, to the extent possible, continue services by phone or remotely.
- Designate six-foot spacing via signage, tape, or by other means, for employees and customers to maintain appropriate distance and maintain at least six-foot physical distancing from other individuals.
- No more than 10 people, including customers and employees, in the showroom at any one time.
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers.
- No test drives permitted unless expressly requested by the purchaser and only conducted in adherence to the following requirements:
  - Vehicles are completely sanitized with COVID-19 approved products before and after every test drive with a card stating time it was driven and when it was sanitized.
  - No sales representative riding in vehicle with a customer.
  - Customer to wear gloves that are provided by dealership while test driving vehicle.
  - Seat mats to be used for the test drive.

- Vehicles test driven will not be driven by another potential customer for 72 hours.
- To the extent legally possible, conduct off-site / home delivery of vehicles.
- Adhere to CDC and Buncombe County Public Health Guidelines for maintaining a safe workplace.

### **Hotels, motels, short-term rentals**

Hotels and motels, bed and breakfasts, short-term rentals, less than 30 days, homestays and campgrounds are instructed to cancel currently scheduled leisure travel reservations and refrain from scheduling future leisure and other non-essential travel reservations. This order shall remain in effect until such time as it is repealed, replaced, or rescinded.

Buncombe County residents or any employee who works for a business or organization defined as essential may stay in any lodging. However, the operator of that lodging MUST document the essential occupation and nature of business of any new resident making reservation from outside the county.

In addition, any visitors arriving to Buncombe County from outside the state who are not travelling on essential business are required to self-quarantine in their residence for 14 days upon arrival. This means if someone is travelling through the state and gets a hotel room for the night, they must quarantine. If someone is planning to be in town for a week, they must quarantine for the duration of their visit. If someone is coming to a second home or vacation home of some sort in Buncombe County, they must also self-quarantine for 14 days before entering the community. This means no trips to the grocery store or other essential retail.

### **Realtors**

This order relaxes previous Buncombe County restrictions and allows for full real estate services on the condition that they are complying with CDC guidance and Buncombe

County Public Health orders regarding physical distancing, and hygiene and sanitation practices.

### **Legal Services**

Legal activity in support of essential business and essential functions is inherently essential. For any other legal activity, it is up individual attorney to determine whether a service for a client or potential client is reasonably mandated.

### **Businesses with multiple departments**

Some businesses have a combination of lines of operations or departments that are essential and non-essential. These businesses can operate but should close or extremely limit the non-essential parts of their business. For example, a craft store can sell office supplies, and mask making supplies, but should not have their picture framing desk in operation.

Additionally, some businesses focus on a specific type of product but have a very limited offering of an item that an essential business sells. This does not make them an essential business. For example, a retail store that primarily sells home decorations cannot be considered essential just because they offer a few books, or you can purchase snacks onsite.

### **Enforcement Activities**

#### **Can I get arrested for violating this order?**

All Buncombe County Law Enforcement entities will enforce the order through education, dialogue, and seeking voluntary cooperation from all residents and businesses. If voluntary cooperation is not achieved Buncombe County Law Enforcement is equipped to enforce these restrictions through citations or misdemeanor charges. Any person violating any prohibition or restriction imposed by this order may be charged with a Class 2 misdemeanor.

### **How do I report a violation of this order?**

Report violations to your Local Law Enforcement Agency via a Non-emergency line. We don't want people using 911 to report these types of violations.

### **I live in (Woodfin/Black Mountain/Weaverville/Biltmore Forest/Montreat/Asheville) – does this order apply to me?**

Yes – this order applies to all residents within Buncombe County.

### **Does this order apply to the homeless?**

No – homeless are exempt from this restriction but are urged to find shelter. Buncombe County and its many partners and local non-profits are hard at work to ensure safe opportunities and secure resources for those experiencing homelessness.

### **My question or concern was not answered in this document, where can I go?**

To help address your questions, Buncombe County and the City of Asheville are operating the Ready Team call center.

The Ready Team call center is an extension of the Emergency Operations Center. It is focused on business and general questions about COVID-19 and can direct you to the best resources available to find answers. To ensure that there are options for Spanish, Russian, and multiple other languages, the Ready Team is working with the United Way's 211 Call Center.

The Ready Team call center operates Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. It can be reached at (828) 419-0095 or by email at [ready@buncombecounty.org](mailto:ready@buncombecounty.org).

### **Guidance on essential services under the supplemental declaration is as follows:**

Essential businesses or entities, including any for profit or non-profit, regardless of the nature of the service, the function they perform, or its corporate or entity structure, are not subject to these restrictions.

*(Essential Businesses must continue to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining a clean and safe work environment issued by the Department of Health i.e. physical distancing and sanitation practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19).*

This guidance is mandated by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and applies to each business location individually and is intended to assist businesses in determining whether they are an essential business and steps to request such designation. With respect to business or entities that operate or provide both essential and non-essential services, supplies or support, only those lines and/or business operations that are necessary to support the essential services, supplies, or support are exempt from the restrictions.

For purposes of this supplemental declaration, "Essential Business," means:

**1. Essential Health Care Operations, Including:**

- research and laboratory services
- hospitals
- walk-in-care health facilities
- emergency veterinary and livestock services
- elder care
- medical wholesale and distribution
- home health care workers or aides for the elderly
- doctor and emergency dental
- nursing homes, or residential health care facilities or congregate care facilities
- medical supplies and equipment manufacturers and providers
- blood drive and blood collection sites

**2. Essential Infrastructure, Including:**

- utilities including power generation, fuel supply and transmission
- public water and wastewater
- telecommunications and data centers

- airports/airlines
- transportation infrastructure such as roads, bus, rail, or for-hire vehicles, garages
- hotels, and places of accommodation, when used Any employees who work for a business or organization deemed essential can stay in any lodging.

### **3. Essential Manufacturing, Including:**

- food processing, manufacturing agents, including all foods and beverages
- chemicals
- medical equipment/instruments
- pharmaceuticals
- sanitary products
- telecommunications
- microelectronics/semi-conductor
- agriculture/farms
- household paper products

### **4. Essential Retail, Including:**

- grocery stores including all food and beverage stores
- pharmacies
- convenience stores
- farmer's markets
- gas stations
- restaurants/bars (but only for take-out/delivery)
- hardware and building material stores
- pawn shops

### **5. Essential Services, Including:**

- trash and recycling collection, processing and disposal
- mail and shipping services
- laundromats

- building cleaning and maintenance
- child care services
- auto repair
- warehouse/distribution and fulfillment
- funeral homes, crematoriums and cemeteries
- storage for essential businesses
- animal shelters

## **6. News Media**

## **7. Financial Institutions, Including:**

- banks
- insurance
- payroll
- accounting
- notary public
- services related to financial markets

## **8. Providers of Basic Necessities to Economically Disadvantaged Populations, Including:**

- homeless shelters and congregate care facilities
- food banks
- human services providers whose function includes the direct care of patients in state-licensed or funded voluntary programs; the care, protection, custody and oversight of individuals both in the community and in state-licensed residential facilities; those operating community shelters and other critical human services agencies providing direct care or support

## **9. Construction, Including:**

- skilled trades such as electricians, plumbers

- other related construction firms and professionals for essential infrastructure, to include public works, roads and bridges, or for emergency repair and safety purposes

#### **10. Defense**

- defense and national security-related operations supporting the U.S. Government or a contractor to the US government, to include the Defense Industry Base's (DIB) Essential Critical Infrastructure

#### **11. Essential Services Necessary to Maintain the Safety, Sanitation and Essential Operations of Residences or Other Essential Businesses, Including:**

- law enforcement
- fire prevention and response
- building code enforcement
- security
- emergency management and response
- building cleaners or janitors
- general maintenance whether employed by the entity directly or a vendor
- automotive repair
- disinfection

#### **12. Vendors that Provide Essential Services or Products, Including Logistics and Technology Support, Child Care and Services:**

- logistics
- technology support for online services
- child care programs and services
- government owned or leased buildings
- essential government services



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