



NEWS RELEASE

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Wake County Issues New Restrictions to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

In response to the rising number of positive cases of COVID-19, Wake County is putting new restrictions in place to help slow the spread of coronavirus and protect the local healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed.

Wake County Board of Commissioners Chairman Greg Ford today signed a new State of Emergency Declaration. The declaration requires some types of businesses to close, prohibit gatherings of 50 people or more, change visitation practices at nursing homes and restrict the use of playground equipment at local parks.

“This is a challenging time, and it requires us to make difficult decisions to keep Wake County residents safe,” said Chairman Ford. “Our hope is that these new restrictions will maximize opportunities for the public to practice social distancing, which should help reduce the spread of COVID-19.”

Restrictions specific to nursing homes and similar facilities go into effect immediately. All other restrictions go into effect at 8 a.m. on Monday, March 23. The new restrictions will last until April 30.

They include:

- Closing fitness clubs, gyms, hair and nail salons, spas, tanning, massage, and tattoo salons, and other professional grooming services;
- Cancelling mass gatherings of 50 or more people (which includes both staff and patrons). This does not include organizations that provide critical services like hospitals, government operations and financial institutions. It also excludes retailers that provide essentials goods like grocery stores, pharmacies, pet stores and hardware stores;
- Requiring nursing homes, long-term care facilities and assisted living centers to cease group activities that don't allow for social distancing. Residents can only have one adult visitor per day, unless it is an end-of-life situation, and the visitor must be screened for:
 - fever of 100.4-degrees or higher,
 - a cough
 - and difficulty breathing before they can enter the building;
- Prohibiting the use of playground equipment at public and private parks. This does not include backyard playgrounds or other amenities such as greenways and walking trails; and
- Recommendations that retail businesses screen their employees and customers for fever and respiratory illness before they enter the facility and turn away those who are sick.

“We are not at the point yet where we feel a stay-at-home order is necessary,” said Wake County Manager David Ellis. “We hope that these new restrictions will achieve our goals of limiting the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the capacity our healthcare system to serve our residents, so we don't have to take that step.”

The county has set up a dedicated phone line to address business-specific questions: 919-856-7420. In addition, additional FAQs have been included on the county's COVID-19 webpage [here](#).

Wake County is working with the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and Wake County Economic Development to help communicate with the business community about these changes and share important resources to help support them during this challenging time.

The new State of Emergency declaration is attached to this news release.

Protecting Yourself

Although your risk of contracting COVID-19 remains low, the county's public health team encourages you to protect yourself from COVID-19 and any other flu-like illness by following these simple steps:

- Stay away from sick people and practice social distancing measures.
- Wash your hands.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home if you're sick and don't send sick children to school or childcare.

Staying Updated

Wake County has made it easy for you to stay updated on the latest information about COVID-19.

You can visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#), which has a set of frequently asked questions to educate residents in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#), a list of COVID-19-related [closures and service changes](#), as well as an email address and phone number that people can use to ask

personal health-related questions about COVID-19. The county is also sharing important information on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

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