

Douglas County Health Officer issues 'Stay at Home' order

LAWRENCE – Douglas County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Marcellino has issued a “Stay at Home” order as the Douglas County community continues with efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. Grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and healthcare facilities will remain open, as residents are ordered to remain home except for essential needs.

This [order](#) matches recent ones issued in neighboring counties of the Kansas City area, including Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties, and will take effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, March 24, to give residents and employers time on Monday to make preparations. The order is effective until April 23, unless otherwise amended. You can [read this FAQ](#) about the order.

“With full community cooperation, this proactive public health order can minimize the impact of COVID-19 on our Douglas County community,” Marcellino said.

Vulnerable populations including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions must stay-at-home. All community members should stay at home except to perform essential duties for business continuity or government functions, to get food, care for a relative or friend, get necessary health care or perform activities related to maintaining a healthy lifestyle during this time.

It is all right to go outside for walks if you are not in a group and practice proper social distancing.

Read the [full order](#) for details, but some examples of “essential businesses” including:

- Healthcare operations, essential infrastructure and essential government functions.
- Establishments engaged in the retail sale of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and any other household consumer products.
- Businesses that provide food, shelter and social services, and other necessities of life for those economically disadvantaged.
- Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair and servicing, emergency road services and related services and facilities.
- Banks and related financial institutions.
- Hardware stores.
- Those who work in trades that provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of homes and essential operations or businesses.
- Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry service providers
- Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food and beverages, but only for delivery or carry out and not for consumption on the premises.
- Home-based care for seniors, adults or children.
- Professional services, such as legal services, accounting services, real estate services, and insurance services.
- Childcare facilities providing services that enable employees exempted in the order to work as permitted, given children are cared for in groups of 10 or fewer.
- Mortuary, cremation and burial services.
- Hotels and motels.
- Manufacturing companies, distributors, and supply chain companies producing and supplying essential products and services.

The order does not prevent University of Kansas students from moving out of residence halls as they work through a process with KU Housing, and it also does not prevent employees for making a quick trip to get an item from their offices, if needed.

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has worked closely on these decisions with numerous community partners, including Douglas County Government, City of Lawrence, Douglas County Emergency Management and LMH Health.

Douglas County residents can also stay informed as information changes frequently. For more information visit LDCHealth.org/Coronavirus or douglascountyks.org/coronavirus.

For general information, call the KDHE phone bank at 1-866-534-3463, email COVID-19@ks.gov or call Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health's Coronavirus line, 785-856-4343 or the LMH Health Coronavirus Line, 785-505-2819.