

# City of Odessa Stay-at-Home FAQs

Effective 12:01 am Wednesday, March 25, 2020, the City of Odessa, Missouri, is requiring people to stay-at-home except for essential needs. The intent of this order is to ensure the maximum number of people self-isolate in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible.

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 OK to go outside for walks if you are not in a group and practice proper social distancing. This order is in effect through April 24, 2020.

***It may be extended depending on recommendations from public health officials.***

## **Why are we doing this?**

This is a critical intervention to reduce harm from the spread of the coronavirus in our community. This is a mandatory order enforceable by the provisions of the Odessa Municipal Code.

Health officials are responding to quickly mounting cases and serious illnesses across the region. Now is the time to do everything we can to prevent the situation from getting much worse in a matter of days or weeks. Every hour counts. We need and appreciate the cooperation of everyone who lives and works in Odessa to act immediately.

While this news may feel alarming, it is a necessary step to prevent a worsening situation. The patterns of the virus around the world, and in our own state, tell us that moving right now to maximize social distancing and restrict people gathering is the best way to fight the virus and save lives. If everyone works together, we should be able to adjust to the new rules over the next few weeks. We know that there will be a lot of questions and concerns at the beginning of this new regimen. This is a major change being taken to protect public health. Please be patient and kind to one another. Together, we will get through this, and our community's health will be protected.

## **What can I do? What is open?**

These essential services will remain open:

- City/County government services: police stations, fire stations, hospitals/clinics and healthcare operations, jails, courts, garbage/sanitation, utilities (water, power and gas)
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food: Grocery stores, farmer's markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores/plumbers/electricians and those who provide services necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences
- Banks
- Community benefit organizations on a case-by-case basis
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Cemeteries
- Veterinary Offices
- Agricultural Services

## What are Essential Businesses & Operations?

- **Healthcare and Public Health Operations:** Working at or obtaining services from hospitals; clinics; dental offices; pharmacies; public health entities; healthcare manufacturers and suppliers; blood banks; medical cannabis facilities; reproductive health care providers; eye care centers; home healthcare services providers; mental health and substance use providers; ancillary healthcare services including veterinary care.
- **Human Services Operations:** any provider funded by DHS, DCFS or Medicaid; long-term care facilities; home-based and residential settings for adults, seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities or mental illness; transitional facilities; field offices for food, cash assistance, medical coverage, child care, vocational services or rehabilitation services; developmental centers; adoption agencies; businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services and other necessities of life for needy individuals.
- **Essential Infrastructure:** Working in food production, distribution and sale; building management and maintenance; insurance companies, operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, gas, electric, and propane distributions; distribution centers; roads, highways, railroads, and public transportation; cybersecurity operations; flood control; solid waste and recycling collection and removal; and internet, video, and telecommunications systems
- **Construction:** If working outside can keep social distancing requirement to the greatest extent possible and observing gathering requirement. If inside keep staffing to a minimum and respect social distancing.
- **Stores that sell groceries and medicine**
- **Food, beverage (to go, carry out or curbside only), liquor stores, and agriculture**
- **Organizations that provide charitable and social services**
- **Media**
- **Gas stations and businesses needed for transportation**
- **Financial institutions**
- **Hardware and supply stores**
- **Critical trades**, including plumbers, electricians, exterminators, cleaning and janitorial staff for commercial and governmental properties, security staff, operating engineers, HVAC, painting, moving and relocation services, auto repair shops, and other service providers that maintain the safety, sanitation and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses and Operations
- **Mail, post, shipping, logistics, delivery, and pick-up services**
- **Educational institutions**, for purposes of facilitating distance learning, performing critical research, or essential functions. Schools can still provide "to-go" food for their students
- **Laundry services**
- **Lawn Care Companies**
- **Restaurants for consumption off-premises**
- **Supplies to work from home**
- **Supplies for Essential Businesses and Operations**
- **Transportation**, for purposes of Essential Travel
- **Home-based care and services**
- **Residential facilities and shelters**
- **Professional services**
- **Day care centers for employees exempted by this Order**
- **Manufacture, distribution, and supply chain for critical products and industries**
- **Critical labor union functions**
- **Hotels and motels**, to the extent used for lodging and delivery or carry-out food services

## **How long will we stay home?**

This goes into effect at 12:01 am on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. It is currently set to last for 30 days through 11:59 pm on Friday, April 24, 2020. The Mayor is authorized to modify this order as needed, including shortening or extending the duration.

## **What is closed?**

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and social clubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios
- Salons and spas
- Public park shelters, restrooms, and playgrounds

## **What can I not do?**

- You cannot engage in group activities in person with others.
- You cannot go to bars or social clubs.
- You cannot go to a nail salon or get your hair cut by a stylist or barber.
- You cannot go shopping for non-essential goods.
- You are strongly encouraged not to have dinner parties. You are strongly encouraged not to invite friends over to your home to hang out.

## **Is this mandatory or is it just guidance?**

It is mandatory. You are required to comply, and it is a misdemeanor crime not to follow the Order (although the intent is not for anyone to get into trouble, but to protect public health).

It is critical for everyone to follow the Order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect themselves, their loved ones, friends, neighbors and the whole community.

All persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply if they do not fall within the exemptions that are specified in the Order.

## **Where does this apply?**

This is in effect for the City of Odessa, Missouri.

## **What is social distancing?**

The requirement to keep a six (6) foot separation of person-to-person contact excluding those with whom you permanently reside.

## **Under this order, what is the definition of a gathering?**

An occasion when people come together as a group, whether formal or informal, and whether public or private. Gatherings must be limited to ten (10) people or less.

## **What if I need medical care?**

Medical facilities and hospitals are exempted from the Order. You can still get your health needs addressed. Contact your health care provider to see if they are providing regular services. Some services, especially elective procedures, may be postponed or canceled.

If you are feeling sick, please first call your doctor, a nurse hotline, or an urgent care center.

Do not go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an actual emergency.

## **What should I do if I am sick and need to go to the hospital or a medical provider? How can I protect others?**

If possible, walk or drive yourself to the hospital or healthcare facility. If someone else in your home is sick and can drop you off, that is another good option. You want to try to avoid exposing others to any germs you have, especially if you are seriously ill.

If you have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like a surgical mask or N-95 mask, you can wear that to prevent exposing others. If you don't have that, you could use a temporary method such as wrapping a clean scarf around your mouth and nose to try to reduce droplets when you cough and sneeze. Although this is not an approved method, it is something you can do to avoid exposing others. Just do the best you can.

## **Can I get my prescriptions or other health care needs? Can I leave home to go to the pharmacy?**

Yes. Drug stores and other medical supply stores can operate. When possible, you should utilize a drive-through window or have the drug store deliver your prescription medicine to your home.

## **How will I get food and medicines I need if I must stay in my home?**

The Order specifically allows people to leave their home to buy food, purchase medicine, and purchase other necessary items. It also directs businesses selling those items to remain open and allows employees of those businesses to keep working and to ensure those businesses are operating.

## **Should I stock up on food, necessities like toilet paper and on medicines?**

No. You will continue to be able to purchase these items whenever you need them, as stores selling necessary items like grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores will remain open. Continue to buy normal quantities of these items on the same schedule you normally do. This will ensure that there is enough for everyone.

## **Can I leave home to care for my elderly parents or friends who require assistance to care for themselves?**

Yes. Be sure that you protect them and you by following social distancing guidelines such as washing hands before and after, using hand sanitizer, maintaining at least six (6) feet of distance when possible, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue.

## **Can I visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility or other residential care facility?**

In most cases no.

It is strongly recommended that you do not go to a hospital unless you are seeking emergency medical attention or accompanying a minor who is under 18 years old or someone who is developmentally disabled and needs assistance.

Please use alternative ways to communicate with loved ones at nursing homes and residential care facilities like FaceTime and texting. The residents at those locations are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

If you need to know more, please contact the facility you want to visit by phone before you leave. This is difficult, but it is necessary in order to protect hospital staff and other patients.

### **Can I leave home to visit friends or family members if there is no urgent need?**

It's not our intent at this time for people to be cited by law enforcement as they move around the city. We want to assume people's good intention that they will follow the order and will be out of their homes for permitted reasons. We do encourage people to stay at home unless they need to perform an essential service or have a job with an essential service or business that cannot be done from home. We encourage everyone who can to work from home and encourage businesses to allow for that as much as possible.

### **Can I still get deliveries from online stores? Can I order from online stores?**

Yes. The mail and other delivery services to your home can continue to function, as can food delivery services.

Yes, you can place orders from online stores. Businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences are essential businesses that may continue to operate.

### **Can I use ride share or on-demand service or a taxi?**

Yes, but only for essential travel. Do your best to take social distancing precautions: cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze, use hand sanitizer and wash your hands before and after rides, etc.

### **What if I can't get out of the home? How can I get supplies and food?**

Please contact friends, family, or others you know who can provide support. They are permitted to pick up any of your needs.

### **What about childcare and preschool?**

Facilities that provide child care are allowed to operate to provide services to employees of essential businesses.

### **Can I go buy pet food or take my pet to the vet?**

Yes

### **I receive mental health treatment. Can I still go to their office?**

Yes, but perform good hygiene practices and social distancing.

### **Can I go for a walk in my neighborhood?**

Yes. We actually encourage daily exercise, fresh air, and outdoor activity. Just be sure that any time you are outside of your residence that you observe the social distancing requirement. In addition, the Odessa City Lake and Dyer Park will remain open except for the use of public shelters, restrooms, and playground equipment.

### **Do I have to perform social distancing at home with my family?**

No.

### **What happens if I don't comply with this order?**

We are focused on voluntary compliance. However, upon conviction of a violation of this Order the penalty to be imposed may be a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars and court costs, or 90 days' imprisonment, or both fine and imprisonment. Any business that violates this Order may also have their business license revoked.

### **Can I still go to church?**

Yes, but as with all “essential businesses”, social distancing and gathering requirement should be maintained.

### **I own a business. What am I supposed to do?**

If you don't fall within an exception, besides performing basic minimum functions, you need to close.

### **Is there relief for small business?**

There is effort on the federal level to grant relief to small businesses.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6201/text>

### **I have tickets to an event. Will I get my money back?**

You will have to work with the host of your event to see if the event is rescheduled or if refunds are being offered.

### **How do I prove that I am allowed to be outside?**

If your employer has provided you with validation of essential employment, please keep it with you. It is not our intent for people to be cited by law enforcement. We want to assume people's good intention that they will follow the order and will be out of their homes for permitted reasons. We do encourage people to stay at home unless they need to perform an essential service or have a job with an essential service or business that cannot be done from home. We encourage everyone who can to work from home and encourage businesses to allow for that as much as possible.

### **Do I have to report to Jury Duty?**

The courts are under the jurisdiction of the State of Missouri. Please call the number on your jury service form for instructions as to whether you should appear. If required to appear, practice strong hygiene and social distancing.

### **What if I work in a different county that is not implementing this type of order?**

Travel to and from the City of Odessa is allowed for purposes of performing essential life functions. If you work in a county that is not implementing similar restrictions and are required to go for work, please practice strong hygiene and social distancing while at work and comply with the order while in the City of Odessa.

### **I am an Uber/Lyft driver. Can I still work?**

Yes, when providing rides for essential activities or providing rides to people performing essential government functions, essential infrastructure or essential business.

### **I operate a grocery store and I am worried about people hoarding, looting and too many people in the store at once. What do you recommend?**

We recommend (not require) the following:

- Increase security
- Limit the amount of people in the store at once
- Implement an organized line system where people are spaced ideally six (6) feet apart
- Implement purchase limits on certain items – an example: one (1) person/family can buy one (1) package of toilet paper, one (1) bar of soap, one (1) sanitizer, etc, per shopping trip.
- Extend hours
- Offer pick up or deliveries of grocery items
- Increase the frequency of cleaning

**My child is away at college. Can I go pick them up and return home?**

Yes.

**My wedding is scheduled next week at my church. Can it still go on?**

It can, however, it must meet the social distancing and gathering requirement of 10 or less people. Therefore, we would recommend rescheduling.

**Will cemeteries remain open?**

Yes, they can continue to employ people and maintain operations. We consider cemeteries an essential infrastructure. However, please implement social distancing and gathering requirement.

**I operate a food bank that serves dinner. Can I still operate?**

Yes, but have the food to go (not a buffet or dine in) and implement good hygiene and social distancing practices.

**I don't have a washer/dryer in my home. Can I leave to do laundry?**

Yes, you can go to a laundromat and other laundry service providers.

**I am homeless. How can I comply with the order?**

People who are experiencing homelessness are encouraged to try to stay with family or friends, identify housing options, or access emergency resources such as shelter.

**My business does not fall under one of the categories deemed essential. Can it remain open if health precautions are taken?**

No. Non-essential businesses cannot remain open. However, minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences is allowed. Also, non-essential businesses may continue to conduct point of sale transactions via telephone or internet and provide products by curbside pickup or delivery only.

**I am unclear whether my business qualifies as essential or non-essential. Can I receive a formal recommendation from the city as to whether I qualify?**

We encourage all business owners to review the order in its entirety if they believe there is ambiguity about whether they qualify as essential or not.

*This Order is subject to change based upon the development of this situation. We will continue to communicate any updates or changes. Questions may be emailed to [info@cityofodessamo.com](mailto:info@cityofodessamo.com).*