



The State of ALASKA COVID-19 Health Mandate

COVID-19 Health Mandate FAQs Health Mandate 011: Social-Distancing & Health Mandate 012: Intrastate Travel

COVID-19 infections are continuing to spread across the country and Alaska. In an effort to slow the spread of the virus and prevent our health care system from being overwhelmed, Alaska is taking steps now.

Why are the mandates so important?

Mandates are only issued if, after careful consideration, they are deemed necessary to protect the lives of Alaskans. These mandates are designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which can cause severe illness and death, even in an individual of any age without underlying conditions. They are also designed to protect the ability of Alaskans to access medical care for non-COVID reasons.

What if someone isn't complying with the mandates?

Alaskans are expected to comply with all mandates. These measures have been put in place to flatten the COVID-19 curve and protect the health of all Alaskans.

Alaskans who disregard the mandates are putting themselves and their communities at risk.

To report non-compliance, send an email to investigations@alaska.gov. DHSS will treat the sender's identity as confidential information and protect it to the maximum extent state and federal law permit.

Who enforces the mandates?

State and local law enforcement are authorized to enforce individual compliance.

The primary focus is on education and voluntary compliance with the mandates. Law enforcement will respond to complaints and educate the public when they see violations that jeopardize the safety of individuals or the community.

However, individuals who recklessly violate the mandates do risk both civil fines and criminal prosecution. See [link to mandates] for more details on these penalties.

How do I keep from getting the virus?

The science is definitive that maintaining six feet or more from other people will greatly diminish your risk of getting the virus. This, and washing your hands, not touching your face, and wiping down surfaces are the best public health guidance about preventing the spread of this virus. Since there are no current vaccination or antiviral treatments, the primary goal is to prevent getting the virus in the first place. Standing six feet away or more from others is the best way to do this.

Should I wear a mask?

A mask will not necessarily prevent you from catching the virus. However, it will limit YOU from spreading the virus if you are infected, and reduce the projection of a sneeze or cough below six feet.

Can the mandates be changed?

Yes. As the situation changes and more information is available, the governor and public health officials can issue new orders and directives as needed.

Health Mandate 011: Statewide Social-Distancing

What is the purpose of mandate 11?

This mandate's purpose is to restrict the movement of individuals within the State of Alaska in order to prevent, slow and otherwise disrupt the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

What does mandate 11 say?

All persons in Alaska, except for those engaged in essential health care services, public government services, and essential business activities, are mandated to remain at their place of residence and practice social distancing. Read the full mandate online at <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

How long does mandate 11 last?

The social distancing mandate went into effect at 5 p.m. on March 28, 2020 and remains in effect until the Governor of Alaska rescinds or modifies the order. It will be reevaluated by April 11.

Does this mandate apply if I don't have any symptoms?

Yes. This mandate applies to every person (unless specifically exempted), whether or not they have symptoms. It is designed to prevent further community spread of the virus, which has shown to be transmittable from individuals who have no symptoms.

Do immediate family members need to maintain six feet from each other?

No, immediate family members may still be closer than six feet, as long as they are members of the same household. However, it's important to know that COVID-19 can quickly pass between family members so it's wise to wash your hands often, especially if someone has left the house on an essential errand. Anyone who is ill and self-isolating at home should be also isolated from family members as much as possible.

Can non-household members still gather as long as it is a group of less than 10?

Generally, no, unless a specific exemption applies.

Exemptions include outdoor recreation (if 6-foot distance is maintained between non-household members) and those outlined in the Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order.

Do I need a permit to move around?

No. When outside you must maintain a distance of six feet or more from other members of the public.

Can older people leave the house on essential errands?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that older adults, age 64 and older, and those with underlying health conditions not leave home at all, even to run errands. The State of Alaska recommends that these more vulnerable populations order food or necessary items using available services from stores and restaurants, or ask for help from a relative, friend or neighbor. For the safety of everyone, stay home.

Can I leave home to care for my elderly parents or friends? Or a family member or friend who has disabilities?

Yes. Be sure to follow social distancing guidelines to protect them and you. If you are sick with any respiratory illness, stay home and find someone else to help care for them.

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

No. This is difficult but necessary to protect facility staff and other patients. There are limited exceptions, such as if you are going to the hospital with someone younger than 18 or who is developmentally disabled and needs assistance. For most other situations, the order prohibits visitation to these kinds of facilities except at the end-of-life.

Can I get groceries?

Yes, grocery stores remain open but you must maintain six feet of social distancing. Take advantage of grocery delivery or pickup services. All Alaskans are encouraged to limit their number of weekly trips to the grocery store and to shop alone, do not bring the entire family into the store. If you MUST go to the grocery store, you MUST remain six feet away from anyone.

Please keep at least six feet from others when you are out in public, wash your hands often and wipe down frequently-touched surfaces. Do not go grocery shopping if you are ill with a respiratory infection; if you are ill, you should be isolating yourself at home, including from family members.

Do I need to stock up on groceries? Do we expect to see supply chain disruptions?

No. It is a good idea to have enough food in your pantry that you don't need to go shopping frequently, but there is no need to hoard large amounts of supplies. Please leave supplies on the shelves for fellow Alaskans who may need them. Alaska's supply chain is intact and no disruptions are expected.

If I won't be able to buy groceries or pay rent, are there services to help me?

Yes. You may be eligible for public assistance for food, medical care, rent, and more. Please reach out to the Division of Public Assistance for program questions: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/>

For unemployment insurance questions, please go to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development: <https://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/>

Will public transportation be available, like buses?

Public transportation is only available for those who provide or obtain essential services. The number of riders is being limited to allow for enough physical distance between passengers.

Can I still go out to pick up my prescription?

Yes. You may leave your home to visit a pharmacy. If possible, use the drive-thru option to collect your prescription.

Will restaurants be open?

Restaurants may be open for takeout, drive-thru and delivery services only.

Can restaurants still provide take-out services under this mandate?

Yes, but they must do so while maintaining six feet between people at all times. If there are lines, restaurants must ensure people are adequately spaced. Systems must be implemented to prevent close contact when customers pick up food or pay for their order.

Are hotels and resorts essential businesses?

Only for the purpose of providing essential services, such as housing, or for isolation or quarantine.

Do I have to stay home and inside, or can I go outside for exercise and recreation?

Outdoor activity near your home is OK and encouraged for your health and well-being, but always keep at least six feet between people who do not live in your immediate household.

Social distancing requirements are in effect on paths, trails, sidewalks, riverbanks, beaches, parks, and anyplace outside on private or public property where people might gather.

Crowds of 10 people or more are prohibited.

Can I take my child to a playground?

Playgrounds may still be open, but they are not the safest places to be right now. Children tend to play in close proximity to each other in a playground while adults congregate to watch their children.

Choose recreational options that congregate people less.

If you take your child to a playground, bring your own cleaning wipes and hand sanitizer, and be sure to immediately sanitize hands and surfaces to prevent the spread of the virus from surface to surface.

What can I do? What's open?

You must stay six feet away from non-family members. With that said, if you need to go shopping, there are delivery services and pickup options available at most grocery stores. However, if you need to go in person, you must remain six feet from everyone else.

- Health care facilities
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food: Grocery stores, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Banks and credit unions
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Veterinary services
- Hardware stores
- Limited child care for essential workers
- Essential federal, state and local government functions will also remain open, including law enforcement and offices that provide government programs and services.
- Reference the Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order for a full list.
<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010-Attachment-A.pdf>

What's closed?

Many businesses are closed to gathering.

- Dine-in restaurants – except for drive-thru, delivery and carry-out
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios
- Public events and gatherings
- Convention centers
- Hair and nail salons
- Reference the Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order for a full list of what is open.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010-Attachment-A.pdf>

Can I call a plumber?

Yes. Plumbing and other critical home repairs are considered essential businesses. You may call a plumber or other home repair businesses if you need one, but keep physical distance between you and the repair people who come into your home and practice proper hygiene. Non-critical plumbing needs should be delayed.

Are marijuana dispensaries allowed to operate?

Potentially. A dispensary may only operate if it can operate under the requirements in the Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010-Attachment-A.pdf>

See Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order II(b)(i):

For purposes of this Order, Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure industries and entities in Alaska include: "Healthcare Operations: companies and institutions involved in the research and development, manufacture, distribution, warehousing, and supplying of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology therapies, consumer health products, services, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services."

See also II(b)(vi)(20):

All other businesses that can maintain Social Distancing Requirements and prohibit congregations of no more than 10 people in the business at a time (including employees)."

I work in a "critical infrastructure" job, but I don't think that this particular work is critical, or I don't think that my employer is taking steps to keep the workers safe. What do I do?

"Critical Infrastructure" businesses that have employees traveling into Alaska or traveling between communities within Alaska are required to submit a safety plan or protocol.

If you believe individuals or businesses are violating mandates, you should email

investigations@alaska.gov. DHSS will treat the sender's identity as confidential information and protect it to the maximum extent state and federal law permit.

Child care facilities can remain open – are they exempt from social distancing?

Child care facilities can only operate if they follow the new recommendations for increased hygiene and social distancing, which is defined as: "maintaining at least six-foot social distancing from other

individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands.”

Child care facilities should only be used by those who need child care to work at a critical job.

I am homeless or at risk of losing my housing. Where can I go for a place to stay?

Although people experiencing homelessness are exempted from the requirement to remain in their residence, there are ongoing efforts to provide temporary housing.

See a list of Community Resources for Food and Shelter at the end of this document.

I do not feel safe staying at my residence. Who can I call?

If you are experiencing an imminent threat to your physical safety, please call 911.

See a list of Domestic Violence Shelters and Crisis Lines at the end of this document.

Health Mandate 012: Intrastate Travel

Limiting travel between communities to critical infrastructure or critical personal needs

What is the purpose of mandate 12?

The purpose of this mandate is to control the movement of individuals within Alaska in order to prevent, slow and otherwise disrupt the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

How long does mandate 12 last?

The intrastate travel mandate goes into effect at 8 a.m. on March 28, 2020 and remains in effect until the Governor of Alaska rescinds or modifies the order. It will be reevaluated by April 11.

What does mandate 12 say?

All in-state travel between communities, whether resident, worker, or visitor, is prohibited unless travel is to support critical infrastructure or for critical personal needs. Certain Small Alaskan communities may implement further travel restriction pursuant to “Alaska Small Community Emergency Travel Order - Attachment B.”

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-COVID-MANDATE-012-Alaska-Small-Community-Emergency-Travel-Order.pdf>

What does mandate 12 mean?

Unless you are obtaining or providing an essential service that requires you to be out in the public, Alaskans should not be traveling between communities. Alaskans may go outside to exercise and recreate, but must maintain a distance of six feet or more from other members of the public.

Workers are encouraged to work from home, unless they work in health care, public service or other businesses deemed essential, as defined in the Alaska Essential Services and Critical Workforce Infrastructure Order (formerly Attachment A).

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010-Attachment-A.pdf>

This mandate covers the entire state. The goal is to eliminate any unnecessary contacts outside of immediate family members to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, while maintaining essential health care services, public government services, and other essential business activities.

How is “community” defined?

The prohibition on travel between communities is designed so that people must use the closest available services to fulfill critical personal needs.

Common sense applies – normal usage of location names and understanding of geographic separation applies when asking about community boundaries. For instance, Eagle River, Palmer, Wasilla, and Anchorage are all separate communities.

You may only travel to another community for critical personal needs if you cannot meet those needs in your community.

Are employees of essential services and critical infrastructure permitted to travel?

Yes, but essential services and critical infrastructure entities are recommended to limit their travel within Alaska to key personnel, in order to mitigate the risk to their own employees and the communities where they operate.

However, those entities are required to submit a travel plan or protocol consistent with mandates.

Does mandate 12 supersede earlier mandates?

This mandate strengthens and clarifies pre-existing mandates, but does not revoke those mandates.

Is commercial fishing considered an essential service, and can fishing vessels sail port to port?

Yes, commercial fishing is an essential service and part of critical infrastructure. Fishing vessels can sail to port to port in Alaska, but have the responsibility to monitor their crew for signs and symptoms, report any issues to the appropriate authorities, and mitigate the risk of exposure to the small communities in which they operate.

Is oil production, shipping, and refining essential?

Yes.

Are airports still open?

Yes, the public airports in Alaska remain open. Travel is limited to essential travel, and in addition, anyone coming into Alaska from out of state is required to complete a Travel Declaration Form (ready.alaska.gov/form) and self-quarantine for 14 days, per State of Alaska Mandate 10.1. Airport officials are encouraging social distancing throughout airport facilities.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010.pdf>

Can I drive to visit or fly to visit another family member in Alaska?

No. This is not considered “essential business.”

Can I drive to my cabin and hunker down there?

It depends.

If your cabin is your home – your primary “place of residence” – you may return to your cabin and remain there, if there are no additional travel restrictions imposed by that community.

Please remember that the purpose of these mandates are to reduce unnecessary travel and interactions, thereby reducing spread of COVID-19. Where you have options, consider which option

will be the most considerate of your fellow Alaskans. If you can stay in your current location for the time being, consider waiting before going to stay another location.

See: Mandate 12: Intrastate Travel

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-012.pdf>

All in-state travel between communities, whether resident, worker, or visitor, is prohibited unless travel is to support critical infrastructure, or for critical personal needs. Certain Small Alaskan communities may implement further travel restriction pursuant to “Alaska Small Community Emergency Travel Order - Attachment B.”

See: Mandate 11: Social Distancing

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-011.pdf>

All persons in Alaska, except for those engaged in essential health care services, public government services, and essential business activities, are mandated to remain at their place of residence and practice social distancing.

Can I recreate with others outside my family?

You are not prohibited from recreating with others outside your family, but you must stay six feet away from non-household members, and must stay in your community. You also must not be in a group larger than nine.

Can I leave my community to engage in outdoor recreation (such as snowmachining or camping)?

Outdoor activity near your home is encouraged for your health and well-being.

Alaskans are encouraged to recreate as close to home as possible, but if you must travel out of your community for recreation you are expected to take precautions, including: bring your own cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer; maintain social distancing of six feet or more from any non-household member; take the most direct routes and go straight to trailheads, parking lots, cabin or camping site; and avoiding contact with non-household members.

When engaging in outdoor recreation, you must comply with social distancing requirements, including maintaining at least six feet distance from people who do not live in your immediate household.

Social distancing requirements are in effect on paths, trails, sidewalks, riverbanks, beaches, parks, and anyplace outside on private or public property where people might gather.

Crowds of 10 people or more are prohibited, even if you are at an outdoor location.

Can I drive somewhere to recreate?

You are not prohibited from driving, but you must stay six feet away from non-household members, and are requested to stay in your community.

My business falls within the Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure exception. Do I have to submit a travel plan or protocol?

If employees of your business engage in interstate travel, you must submit a travel plan or protocol for maintaining critical infrastructure to akcovidplans@ak-prepared.com.

See: Health Mandate 10.1 – International and Interstate Travel

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03232020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-010.pdf>

If employees of your business travel between communities within the state of Alaska, you must submit a travel plan or protocol for maintaining critical infrastructure to akcovidplans@ak-prepared.com.

See: Health Mandate 012: Intrastate Travel

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-012.pdf>

If your business does not employ anyone who travels between communities or out of state, you do not have to submit a plan.

Please reference these FAQs and remember that Anchorage, Eagle River, and Palmer are separate communities.

I live in the Valley but work in a “critical infrastructure job” in Anchorage. Can I travel between communities for work?

Yes. However, you must follow social distancing even while commuting. Common sense measures, such as filling your tank with gas before leaving your community, will help prevent unnecessary interactions.

See Mandate 12:

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-012.pdf>

Personal travel is prohibited except as necessary to meet critical personal needs or work in critical infrastructure jobs. Critical personal needs include buying, selling, or delivering groceries and home goods; obtaining fuel for vehicles or residential needs; transporting family members for out-of-home care, essential health needs, or for purposes of child custody exchanges; receiving essential health care; providing essential health care to a family member; obtaining other important goods; and engaging in subsistence activities. Travelers are reminded to follow social distancing measures, including, to the extent reasonably feasible, keeping six feet away from others, avoiding crowded places, and limiting public gatherings to less than ten people.

Do these mandates affect child custody for parents who live in different communities?

Travel for purposes of child custody exchange is specifically allowed as a “critical personal need.”

However, you must still follow social distancing measures to include keeping six feet away from non-household members. It is advisable to take precautions to avoid any unnecessary stops or interactions during travel (for instance, by filling your tank before you leave and bringing snacks for long trips).

I live in the Valley but typically shop in Anchorage. Can I continue to travel to Anchorage for shopping?

No, unless it is necessary to meet a critical personal need or work in a critical infrastructure job. If the personal need can be met in the community, you may not travel to another community for similar shopping needs.

See Mandate 12:

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/03272020-SOA-COVID-19-Health-Mandate-012.pdf>

Personal travel is prohibited except as necessary to meet critical personal needs or work in critical infrastructure jobs. Critical personal needs include buying, selling, or delivering groceries and home goods; obtaining fuel for vehicles or residential needs; transporting family members

for out-of-home care, essential health needs, or for purposes of child custody exchanges; receiving essential health care; providing essential health care to a family member; obtaining other important goods; and engaging in subsistence activities. Travelers are reminded to follow social distancing measures, including, to the extent reasonably feasible, keeping six feet away from others, avoiding crowded places, and limiting public gatherings to less than ten people.

Can people under quarantine take their pets to the vet in an emergency?

If you are under a post-travel quarantine under Mandate 10, there is no exception for veterinary visits. However, vets are considered critical infrastructure and can continue to operate.

If you are concerned about your pet's health, please contact the veterinary clinic for advice.

Can I visit my significant other, if we don't live in the same household?

Unfortunately, you cannot. This is a difficult time for everyone who can't be with their loved ones in person. However, it is by keeping physical distance that you are protecting each other. Virtual methods of communication are encouraged.

Remember that strictly complying with these restrictions will be the most important factor in shortening the time that the restrictions are necessary.

Your page does not tell us the specifics of positive cases. Are you going to give detailed information, such as where infected people work or live?

We want to keep Alaskans as informed as possible on COVID-related issues. Part of this process involves hard work by the epidemiology team to investigate and trace all contacts by a person who tests positive so that anyone at risk can be notified.

We cannot disclose protected health information of individual people. Part of respecting all Alaskans is respecting the lives of Alaskans who have tested positive for this virus, and not putting them at unnecessary risk by disclosing personal information.

Please be assured that when there is information that is vital to preventing spread, we will share what is needed.