

San Juan Islands and Washington State Stay at Home Orders

Frequently Asked Questions - What do these orders mean for the San Juan Islands?

On Monday, March 23, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee issued a “Stay at home” proclamation, an order for all of us to limit our daily exposure due to COVID-19. On March 25th, the San Juan County Health Officer issued an order restricting some activities to better fight the COVID-19 virus.

What is allowed:

- **You can still go to the store for groceries**
- **You can still go to restaurants for take out orders**
- **You can go to the pharmacy**
- **You can go to medical appointments**
- **You can go out and get exercise**

Our Governor and Health Officer are reinforcing what health experts the world over are telling us. We need to stay at home, we need to avoid contact with others. We have cases here in the islands and we should behave accordingly to limit the spread.

All gatherings of people for social, spiritual and recreation activities are banned. This applies to public and private gatherings — everything from weddings to funerals.

What will likely stay open?

We all need basic food and supplies to stay safe in our homes. Some examples:

- Grocery Stores
- Pharmacies
- Banks
- Gas Stations
- Hardware stores
- Restaurants, food services offering TAKE OUT only and NO indoor or outdoor seating
- Washington State Ferries (Winter Schedule service through April 28)
- Travel to grocery stores and food banks, pharmacies, gas stations, urgent or emergency medical care, caring for an elderly or sick family member, and travel to work for essential personnel.
- Garden stores and nurseries that support food cultivation and production
- Office supply stores that support working-from home
- Home appliance retailers

What do we know will be closed?

- Many public buildings are closed
- Non-emergency services at dental, optician and medical specialties offices
- Transient accommodations including: Hotels/ Bed and Breakfasts/ Air B&B, etc. are open only to persons engaged in essential activities or performing essential services.
- All campgrounds for overnight accommodation
- Playgrounds
- Non-essential retail stores (i.e. clothes, gifts, crafts)
- Hair, nail and massage appointments.

Who is going to work?

Those providing essential services, including:

- Emergency responders (i.e. Sheriff, EMS, Dispatchers, Fire, Emergency Operations Staff)
- Healthcare workers
- Critical industry workers – including (but not limited to):
Postal employees; food suppliers; grocery store employees; farm workers; OPALCO and other utilities employees; ferry, road and aviation workers (some air services have been temporarily suspended); trucking and cargo workers; workers providing core local government services including San Juan County, Town of Friday Harbor, special districts).

Tell me more about the San Juan County Health Officer order?

The March 25 [order](#) from the San Juan County Health Officer restricts the following activities:

- No accommodations and camping for visitors or guests not engaged in essential activities or performing essential services (healthcare providers, first responders, food suppliers, etc.)
- All playground equipment shall be closed to public use

When does this County order go into effect, how long does it last for?

The order went into effect immediately in the afternoon of March 25 and is scheduled to end on April 30. It will be revisited on April 6 and may be amended or extended as the situation dictates.

What about transient moorage in San Juan County?

In order to ensure compliance with the Governor's proclamation limiting all non-essential travel, marina operators should not be renting transient moorage or dock space to vessel owners traveling for non-essential reasons.

Do hotel guests currently in residence need to be evicted?

No, in order to comply with the Governor's limitation on non-essential travel, current guests will not be forced to leave and travel elsewhere.

So, are all playgrounds off limits?

The key here is playground equipment. The hard surfaces and close proximity of playground equipment are a potential risk for transmission and should be closed. Fields, skate parks, tracks, and other recreational sites are not closed by this order- however users need to follow social distancing guidelines for all activities.

Does the San Juan County order have any other requirements?

Yes, owners and operators of playgrounds, ports and marina facilities, and marine passenger transportation operators, including ferries, are required to post signage by March 26 at 6:00pm specific to their facilities. The signage will indicate closure for playgrounds and playground structures, highlighting limits on non-essential travel, or describing other social distancing limitations as outlined in the specifics of the order.

Does the Governor's proclamation impact the way the County does business?

The Governor's Stay at Home order should not impact the work of local government. However, on March 24, the Governor issued proclamation No. 20-28 regarding the OPMA. This proclamation temporarily alters the Open Public Meetings act and prohibits in-person meetings. The pertinent portion of the order states that public agencies are now prohibited from conducting meetings subject to the OPMA unless:

“(a) the meeting is not conducted in-person and instead provides an option(s) for the public to attend the proceedings through, at minimum, telephonic access, and may also include other electronic, internet or other means of remote access, and (b) provides the ability for all persons attending the meeting to hear each other at the same time.”

San Juan County will be conducting public meetings as per the Governor’s proclamation going forward.

Should I go to a previously scheduled medical appointment?

Call your provider and ask. Many non-emergency treatments in the islands and throughout the state are being rescheduled. Other providers including dentists, opticians and other specialized care providers are rescheduling appointments and are only providing emergency services.

What about postal service, Amazon, FedEx and other delivery services?

YES. they are all continuing to help provide needed services to our islands.

Can I go out for a hike or a bike ride?

Absolutely YES!

Social distancing outside is critical though. No gathering together at playgrounds, docks, patios or at a trailhead. Driving to a trail or walking route is fine. Bike riding while socially distanced is great. Stay separated, stay healthy and keep our islands safe!

How do “Stay at Home” orders get enforced?

Islanders have been demonstrating that you understand the severity of the situation, and we hope that common sense and a desire to help the entire community will prevail. Most of us are doing all we can to keep ourselves, our families and neighbors safe and healthy. For those who are not, now is the time to start.

Please know that these orders are enforceable, however, we are asking that people do the right thing.

Feeling sick?

San Juan County health officials remind islanders that if you feel sick and have mild symptoms, stay home. If you feel you have more serious symptoms or if you are at risk for severe illness, stay home and call your health provider. Follow your doctor or health professional’s direction, only report to a clinic or to the hospital after you have called ahead first. If you feel the situation is urgent and life threatening, call 911.

For more information:

Please visit our informational webpage at www.sjccovid.com. This website is updated as new information becomes available. You can also visit the San Juan County Health and Community Services Facebook page. For help with answering specific questions about the San Juan County Health Officer Order that aren’t answered here, email covidquestions@sanjuanco.com.

Resources:

[More Information on the Governor’s Order](#)

[The March 25 San Juan County Health Officer Order](#)