

Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions about the stay-at-home order:

What is considered an essential trip?

The Ontario government admitted they can't determine what is essential for every person in the province, but provided a list of categories people should consider before leaving their home, which include food, health-care services (including medication), exercise, or work when someone's job can't be done at home.

Is there a limit on the number of times someone can leave their home in a day?

No, but all trips should be considered essential.

Is there a time limit for how long people can leave their homes?

No, but the government said people should spend as little time as possible outdoors.

Why can people still gather in groups of five outdoors?

The province said the outdoor gathering limit of five is in recognition of the fact that some people live alone and may require the company or support of others for their mental and physical well-being. People gathering outside are expected to adhere to physical distancing measures and are being strongly urged to wear a mask.

What is considered essential work?

The stay-at-home order does not define what work or jobs are essential, the government said. Rather, it now mandates that anyone who can work from home must now do so.

Why hasn't the province defined who can or should work from home?

The Ontario government said it can't review millions of job descriptions to determine who can work from home. They said they are relying on the "best judgement and common sense of employers" to make those decisions. If an employee believes they should be working from home, they can contact the Ministry of Labour to file a health and safety complaint.

Why is the province issuing a stay-at-home order while also permitting curbside pickup?

The government said that this question assumes every single person in Ontario has easy access to online shopping or that there is a big-box retailer in their community. "This isn't the case for many Ontarians who live in rural and remote areas," Ford's spokesperson said.

"We've learned a lot over the past year responding to this pandemic, including the fact that what may be essential to someone in Timmins and how they buy that item may not be essential to someone in downtown Toronto, who can easily buy items online for delivery. The Government of Ontario determining what retailers may be considered essential risks cutting off many Ontarians who don't live in Toronto or an urban centre from access to necessary goods."

Can people leave home to exercise? Can I go to my local playground or basketball court?

Yes, exercise is considered an essential reason for leaving your home. What that means will be unique to each individual Ontarian, the government said. "Some may wish to go for a walk around the block, while others may wish to go to a local basketball court with their household to shoot some hoops."

Ontarians are recommended to consult their local public health unit or municipality to understand what recreational amenities are open in their community.

How will the government know who is out for legitimate reasons and who isn't?

The province said that residents will have a duty to identify themselves when a police officer has "reasonable and probable grounds" that there has been a breach of the orders made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

Are ski hills closed?

Yes. Ski hills are closed.

Is a housekeeper still allowed in my home?

Yes. Domestic services like housekeeping, cooking, indoor and outdoor cleaning and maintenance services are allowed but only to support children, seniors and vulnerable persons.

What about real estate showings?

Real estate showings, including pre-sale construction, are only available by appointment. Open houses are prohibited.

Are restaurants still open for takeout and delivery?

Restaurants and bars aren't affected by the new rules and can remain open for take out, drive-thru, and delivery only.

Can I get my car serviced or buy a new vehicle?

According to the government, vehicle and equipment repair and essential maintenance and vehicle and equipment rental services are available by appointment only. The same applies to the sale of all motor vehicles.

Can I still attend my in-person driving instruction?

No. In-person driving instruction is not permitted, except for instruction for drivers of commercial motor vehicles.

Can I go outside for a walk or go skating at a public rink?

Going outside for exercise is permitted, including walking your dog, running and ice skating at a public rink. However, the government says it prefers if residents would remain home.

Can I go to my cottage or secondary residence?

No. The government says that because it is asking residents to stay home, trips to a cottage or secondary residence should be avoided, unless it is for an essential purpose like emergency maintenance.

I booked a short-term rental getaway. Can I still go?

No. The province says that pre-arranged bookings for short-term rentals at hotels, motels, lodges, cabins, cottages, resorts are prohibited, with exceptions for housing requirements.

Are cannabis dispensaries still open?

Yes. Cannabis dispensaries are open for curbside pick-up or delivery only, but only from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. As well, an item can only be provided for curbside pickup if the patron ordered the item before arriving at the business premises.

What about alcohol sales?

You can still purchase alcohol at a licensed retailer, but only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

When do the measures end?

The measures announced Tuesday are scheduled to be in place until at least Feb. 11.

Are places of worship allowed to operate?

The government says that religious services, rites or ceremonies, as well as wedding and funeral services, are permitted so long as face coverings are worn and physical distancing can be maintained. Capacity must be capped at 10 people both indoors and outdoors, regardless of the size of the venue.

Drive-in services, rites or ceremonies are also permitted, subject to certain conditions. Virtual services are also permitted.

My significant other and I live in separate houses, but usually stay over with each other, are we still going to be able to do this?

Individuals who live alone, as well as single parents, can have "exclusive, close contact" with another household to help reduce the negative impacts of social isolation, the government says.

Can you go fishing for the day?

While the government has not provided specific guidance on fishing, it says that exercise is considered an essential reason for leaving your home.

"What that means will be unique to each individual Ontarian," a government official said in an email.

The government suggests that Ontarians consult their local public health unit or municipality to understand what recreational amenities are open in their community.

Businesses that produce agricultural products by hunting and fishing remain open.

I work in London, Ont. Monday to Friday through the week and return home on weekends. Can I go home on the weekends or do I have to stay in London?

The government is not recommending intra-provincial travel at this time.

What if I'm moving from one city to another? It's been planned for months now, will this be an issue?

While intra-provincial travel is not recommended, courier, postal, shipping, moving and delivery services remain open, according to the government.

Can I go see a movie at the drive-in?

Concert venues, theatres and cinemas are closed, including drive-in or drive-through events.

We usually go for late-night drives to get out of our house for a bit. I am assuming this is still allowed since it says drive-through and take out still is?

While there's no guidance on leisurely driving, the government says it "cannot determine what is essential for every person in this province, each with their own unique circumstances and regional considerations."

That said, intra-provincial travel is not recommended.

Are dentists considered essential in this lockdown, I do not mean for emergencies, just a cleaning?

Dentists may continue to see patients for emergency and non-emergency appointments. Members of the public are only also permitted to enter a shopping mall that house a dental office or pharmacy.

What about massages?

Registered massage therapists are regulated health professionals in Ontario and remain open, with reduced capacity, during the stay-at-home order.

Can I go snowmobiling? Tobogganing?

Snowmobile, cross country, dogsledding, snow-shoe, skating trails and tobogganing hills are permitted to open, subject to conditions.