

Town Government Operations and the Governor's "Safer at Home Order"

(WTA March 24 Email to Town Officials)

Today Governor Evers released a Safer at Home Order that will take effect beginning at 8:00AM on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. You can read the full order online [here](#). WTA will continue to provide updates as they become available.

We know that town officials have a lot of questions about the order and how it relates to local government operations. This Email highlights sections of the order that are specifically relevant in hopes of answering many of those questions. Please note that this order does not directly address the upcoming election, and you should continue to monitor Wisconsin Elections Commission communications regarding the election.

- All "Essential Government Functions" are exempt from the Safer at Home Order. Governor Evers left it up to the discretion of each government body to determine for itself what essential functions it has, and to identify the employees and contractors necessary to perform those functions. This means that each town and village board should determine for itself which functions are essential and allow those employees and contractors to continue working. All non-essential functions should stop. Please see section 12 of the Safer at Home Order for a full definition of "Essential Government Functions."
- The Safer at Home Order does not make changes to the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. Please continue to follow the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Office of Open Government guidance regarding meetings and COVID-19. This guidance is available online [here](#).
- The Safer at Home order requires all public libraries to close for in-person services, but allows online services and programming to continue.
- "Essential Infrastructure" is exempted from this order, allowing the continued provision of services and work necessary to operate, maintain, and repair public works including roads, railroads, public transportation, utilities, and more. Please refer to section 10 of the order for a full description of "Essential Infrastructure."
- Many outdoor activities including walking, biking, hiking, and running are still allowed under this order. All playgrounds, however, are ordered closed.
- Bars and restaurants may continue to operate for take-out and delivery only. Alcohol sales must continue to comply with local ordinances and applicable alcohol licenses. Under state law, Class "B" license holders may sell beer for take-out in original unopened containers, and "Class B" license holders may similarly sell wine. Each municipality may, by ordinance, allow for take-out of other liquor in original unopened containers.