

City of Albany and Dougherty County Declaration of Disaster & Public Health Emergency FAQs

When does the order go into effect?

The order goes into effect at 6 p.m. Sunday, March 22, 2020

How long does the order last?

The order is in effect through 11:59 p.m. on April 7 2020, unless it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended by the Mayor of Albany and the Chairman of the Dougherty County Commission.

What does shelter-in-place mean?

The order does not confine residents to their home as the lockdowns in Italy and China have done, but it directs residents to stay home unless participating in essential activities. Essential activities include grocery shopping, working, healthcare, caring for others – a full list can be found on the order. A full list of Essential Activities is defined in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events Public Notices section.

Non-essential activities throughout the community are prohibited. Non-essential travel in and out of the community is prohibited. Citizens are advised to travel only for essential business operations, to travel to and from work and to secure essential goods and services and other exceptions found in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events Public Notices section.

What are essential activities?

Individuals may leave their residence only to perform “Essential Activities” as defined in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Should my business close during this time?

The order does not require all private businesses to temporarily close. The list of essential businesses is outlined in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Is my business considered “essential”?

Essential businesses are defined in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Will grocery stores remain open?

Yes, grocery stores may remain open and are not to exceed 50 percent occupancy at any given time. Persons are to observe social distancing and are not to be within six feet of one another for extended periods of time.

Will retailers and shopping centers have to close?

The order defines “essential businesses” and also essential business operations. Businesses are expected to follow the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section. Persons are not to be within six feet of one another at all times.

Can my “non-essential” retail businesses continue to offer curbside/pick-up/delivery of goods, even if the business is considered non-essential?

Businesses outside of the “essential” category may provide goods via curbside/pick-up/drive through. All social distancing guidelines should be followed. Please review the order at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Can production facilities and distribution centers stay open?

Yes, production facilities and distribution centers may remain open, so long as social distancing guidelines of six feet are followed. Workers may travel to and from work.

Are information technology and related businesses considered essential?

Yes, information technology businesses are considered “essential infrastructure” and may continue to provide essential business services. Social distancing guidelines are to be followed. Please review the order at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Are plumbers, electricians, mechanics and similar trades considered essential?

Yes, these are considered “essential businesses” as defined by the order. Please review the order at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section

If my restaurant/bar/gym limits access to 10 members or less at a time, does it have to close?

Restaurants are prohibited from providing service in their dining rooms. Restaurants may continue to provide drive through, pick up/curbside and delivery services. Bars, Nightclubs and other similar establishments are closed. Gyms and other similar businesses fall under the temporary closure order. All businesses which possess a license to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption, but only via drive-thru or in parking lots or at curbside.

I’m an Albany State University student. Can I get my belongings from my dorm?

Albany State University has provided students with guidelines related to moving out during this situation. Those can be found here <https://www.asurams.edu/student-affairs/health-services/covid19-housing-move-out.php>.

Are daycares required to close under this order?

No. Childcare facilities are not included in this order but should maintain social distancing.

Does my church have to cancel in-person service?

Yes. However, virtual worship services are highly encouraged during this time of crisis in our community.

Can we still hold funeral services?

Yes, as long as indoor attendance is limited to less than 10 persons and social distancing is observed. Outdoor/graveside services are encouraged.

My hotel has a restaurant and/or continental breakfast buffet. Should that be closed?

Yes. Food should be delivered to rooms or picked up to-go during the effective period of the order.

Can my food truck remain operational?

Food trucks and mobile food operations may remain open so long as all social distancing guidelines are followed and the method of service is pick-up, take out, delivery only. Patrons are encouraged to remain in their vehicles until such a time as they must order or their food is prepared.

Are beauty and barber shops and nail salons allowed to stay open?

No. These establishments are expected to follow the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Can dance studios continue classes that are limited to 10 students or less at one time?

No. A dance studio falls under the category of Indoor Recreational Facility and is subject to the requirements of the order.

Can employees of businesses not affected by the order still be allowed to come in to work, but remain closed to the public?

The order does not require all private businesses to temporarily close, the list of essential businesses is outlined in the order, which can be found at dougherty.ga.us under the News & Events/Public Notices section.

Can we still maintain our dentist, eye doctor, and medical doctor appointments?

Yes. Hospitals and medical facilities are not included in the Community Gathering definition so long as persons are generally not within 6 feet of one another for extended periods. Please see the social distancing recommendations as well as “essential businesses” included with the order at dougherty.ga.us under the News and Events/Public Notices section.

Will the City work with people who cannot pay their utility bill due to being out of work as a result of COVID-19?

If you are unable to pay your bill, please contact Albany Utilities (229) 883-8330. As always, utilities staff is prepared to work with you on a payment plan for your bill.

Is public transit still running a full schedule?

Yes. Transit services are not prohibited under the order and are continuing as normal, with enhanced measures for cleaning. Travel should be essential. Six foot distancing still required.

Is the animal shelter remaining open?

Animal shelter operations are continuing as normal.

Are parks and playgrounds still open?

Outdoor recreational facilities such as parks and playgrounds remain open, so long as there are not gatherings of 10 or more people and social distancing is required.

Organized and unorganized group sports are prohibited. Parks and Recreation has implemented an extensive cleaning schedule for all playground equipment, tables, benches and other outdoor facilities.

Will there be enforcement and how?

A violation of the order is a misdemeanor. If you have a complaint about businesses operating outside of the order or large community gatherings during the effective period, please notify the Emergency Operations Center at (229) 302-1900, seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The City and County may use other enforcement tools as allowed by law. To report a potential violation of the order, 229-431-2100 or 229-431-2132.