



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 23, 2020

After a weekend that included positive COVID-19 tests in both Rock Island and Scott counties, governors from both Iowa and Illinois outlined restrictions meant to stem the transmission of the virus.

**Iowa restrictions**

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds extended the social distancing proclamation to now include the closing of additional establishments that began at 10 a.m. Sunday night (March 22) and continue until midnight March 31. These non-essential businesses now are ordered to close:

- Salons
- Medical spas
- Barber shops
- Tattoo establishments
- Tanning facilities
- Massage therapy establishments
- Swimming pools

“These additional closures are intended to help our communities to further social distance and minimize the spread of COVID-19 by limiting our interactions with one another,” said Amy Thoreson, deputy director of the Scott County Health Department.

Living in a bistate area, Quad Citians are receiving guidance from two states that might not sound the same. Iowa has provided new self-isolation guidance provided, but Illinois residents have not been given the same directive. Iowans are encouraged to self-isolate for 14 days in the following situations:

- If you have traveled outside of Iowa for business or vacation in the last 14 days.
- If you have taken a cruise anywhere in the world in the last 14 days.
- If you have traveled internationally to a country with a Level 3 travel warning in the last 14 days. This information can be found on [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
- If you live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.

We know these recommendations can raise questions. We would like to provide some additional information for self-isolation for those that have traveled outside of Iowa for business or vacation in the last 14 days:

- This does NOT include regular daily business that takes place within the Iowa and Illinois Quad Cities.
- However, this IS related to those returning from business and spring break trips outside of Iowa.

Here it is important to distinguish between social distancing and self-isolation. Self-isolation means isolating yourself in your home and away from others for 14 days beginning with the last possible day of exposure (when you left your travel destination). You should heed the following recommendations:

- Stay home and do not go to school, public areas or attend gatherings.
- Do not use public transportation, ride sharing or taxis.
- Postpone all travel.
- Wash your hands often and practice good hygiene.
- Call to postpone all non-essential medical appointments until you have completed your 14 days of self-isolation. If you have an essential medical appointment during this time, please work with your healthcare provider and local public health professionals as needed to help coordinate the visit.

The Iowa Department of Public Health has provided guidance on how earlier guidance on social distancing and self-isolation relate to individuals identified as “Essential Services Personnel,” which includes the following categories:

- Healthcare providers
- Law enforcement
- Fire and EMS personnel
- Long-term care personnel
- Residential support facility personnel
- Public health and emergency management personnel

These individuals are recognized as essential to the COVID-19 response. If individuals in these groups are exposed to COVID-19, they will still be allowed to go to work as long as they do not have symptoms and check their temperature at the beginning and end of their shift.

### **Illinois restrictions**

In Illinois, the following groups are a partial list of who is exempt. We refer you to the complete list at [Illinois.gov](https://www.illinois.gov). They include:

- Essential Businesses and Essential Government Functions
  - First responders
  - Emergency management personnel
  - Law Enforcement personnel
  - Health care workers
  - Grocery stores
  - Pharmacies
  - Any employee of an essential business

Illinoisans are allowed to go to:

- Work (if you work at an essential business listed above)
- Grocery stores to obtain food or supplies
- Health care offices
- Pharmacies to pick up medications
- Outdoors (walking, hiking, running or biking in any outdoor recreation area), except playgrounds, when social distancing precautions can be taken
- Places to take care of others (providing care or transportation for a family member, friend, or pet)
- Gas stations
- Auto repair facilities

In Illinois, all non-essential business and operations have been ordered to cease. Business can continue with employees working from home, with Minimum Basic Operations completed onsite. These operations include the minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of inventory, preserve plant and equipment condition, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits and facilitate employees working remotely.

- Examples of non-essential business in Illinois, include:
  - Fitness centers
  - Salons and spas
  - Barber shops
  - Tattoo parlors
  - Day care centers
- The order also closes licensed child care centers and all childcare homes serving more than six children. The Pritzker administration is working to expand the availability of child care for essential workers, while protecting the health of the children and child care teachers and home providers. A new Emergency Child Care Center license is being created with more flexibility but much smaller group sizes to ensure social distancing for children in care.

### **Travel in Illinois**

In Illinois, only essential travel is permitted at this time and must be done in accordance with social distancing requirements. That includes travel related to:

- Performing essential activities, essential governmental functions, essential businesses and operations or minimum basic operations
- Caring for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities or other vulnerable people
- Receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services from an educational institution
- Returning to a place of residence from outside the jurisdiction

- Following the direction of law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement
- Returning to a place of residence outside the state for non-residents.

### **Testing and personal protective equipment**

We know there is confusion about COVID-19 testing. There may be many of us who are exposed to COVID-19 and contract the virus and either have no symptoms or mild symptoms.

“If this is the case, you likely we not need a COVID-19 test because we know COVID-19 is already in our community and is spreading,” said Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department.

She said we all are best served if people who are feeling ill stay home and recover there. This way we can making sure that mildly ill people aren’t exposing others to the virus. However, if patient becomes life-threateningly ill, please call ahead to the hospital emergency room or tell 911 dispatchers that a patient could be positive for COVID-19.

“We also know that every time a patient is tested for COVID-19, the individuals helping take the test are using some of our limited supply of personal protective equipment, such as masks and gowns,” Ludwig said. “These resources are important for health care providers and hospitals to have for sick patients and those will extreme symptoms. They are not meant for those who do not have symptoms or could best recover at home.”

If you have questions about how best to help ease your symptoms, which can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, make sure to call your health care provider for advice. We suggest you do not you homemade COVID-19 remedies that have been going around on the internet.

### **Social distancing**

We wouldn’t be doing our jobs if we didn’t stress the importance of social distancing and staying home at this crucial time:

- If you do not have a need to go out, stay home.
- Limit your trips to the grocery store and similar locations and go only for essentials.

“Until we as a community, states and nation socially distance from each other as a unified group, the end of our social distancing period will be further into the future,” Ludwig said. “We can protect our communities and our most vulnerable residents by responding as a community now.”

### **Changes in Illinois WIC**

In an effort to the reduce the number of clients who come into the Rock Island County Health Department, leaders there have waived all clinic visit requirement for all participants and WIC visit types because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan remains in effect until further notice, including:

- Required initial and 6-month certifications will take place by telephone interview:

- Clients are asked to understand that calls could take up to 45 minutes.
- Clients are asked to provide the most recent height, weight and hemoglobin information from prenatal, postpartum, or well-baby/child visits, if possible.
- A WIC staff member will provide age-appropriate nutrition education over the phone.
- At the Rock Island clinic, clients will be issued food benefits through a drive-through lane.
- At the Moline and East Moline clinics housed at Community Health Care clinics, clients will be screened before entering the waiting room.

“We know these are trying times for families,” said Janet Hill, chief operating officer of the Rock Island County Health Department. “WIC has been here for our families for almost 50 years, and we know how much they depend on us to get the food and nutrition education they need to keep their children healthy and growing.

#### **Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illness**

- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay away of social gatherings of more than 10 people
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects

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