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COVID-19 Update: DHS Issues Order Prohibiting Mass Gatherings of 50 People or More

Under the authority of Wisconsin State Statute § 252.02(3) and at the direction of Governor Tony Evers, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm has ordered a statewide moratorium on mass gatherings of 50 or more people to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Effective Tuesday March 17, 2020- all public and private mass gatherings are prohibited in the State of Wisconsin. This order will remain in effect for the duration of the public health emergency declared in Governor Evers' Executive Order #72, or until a superseding order is issued.

"Mass gathering" is any planned or spontaneous, public or private event or convening that will bring together or is likely to bring together 50 or more people in a single room or single confined or enclosed space at the same time.

This order may include but is not limited to mass gatherings at: public or private schools, auditoriums, theatres, movie theatres, museums, stadiums, arenas, conference rooms, meeting halls, exhibition centers, taverns, health and fitness centers, recreation centers, licensed pools, places of worship and religious gatherings.

Critical infrastructure and services such as grocery stores, food pantries, childcare centers, pharmacies, and hospitals will be exempt from this order.

"Iron County Public Health Department is closely following this rapidly evolving situation," said Katie Hampston, Health Officer. "We are working closely with federal, state, and local partners to be prepared for any changes to the situation here and to make sure information is shared with the public."

All gatherings that bring together or are likely to bring together fewer than 50 people in a single room or confined space at the same time must:

1. Operate at 50 percent of seating capacity

2. Preserve social distancing of 6 feet between people, and
3. Follow all other public health recommendations issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Health and the Iron County Public Health Department.

Violation or obstruction of this order is punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both under Wisconsin State Statute § 252.25.

People should follow simple steps to avoid getting sick, including:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Stay home when sick.
- Practice social distancing.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>