

Urgent News Release #56

Richland County Emergency Management

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RICHLAND COUNTY RESPONDS TO THE LIFTING OF THE SAFER AT HOME ORDER

Richland Center, WI: Yesterday the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled the Safer at Home Order as an administrative rule subject to procedures in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 227.24. It was determined these procedures were not followed by the administration resulting in the Court ruling that all elements of the Safer at Home Order, with the exception of school closings, are immediately of no force and effect.

This means the state order prohibiting the closure of non-essential business, the prohibiting of mass gatherings, the restrictions on travel and enforcement of social distancing are no more in effect.

What remains in effect is the Public Health threat caused by the spreading COVID-19 virus. At the time of this announcement, Richland County has experienced 13 positive cases of COVID-19 and 2 unfortunate deaths resulting from the virus. Though tragic, it is appropriate to recognize all the efforts of individuals, families, businesses, organizations, and partnerships that have to this point helped mitigate the spread and saved lives.

Richland County has options of enforcing Public Health orders that could impose comparable restrictions as deemed necessary by our Public Health Officer, as several counties and cities have enacted. At this time the county does not see an immediate need for mandated restrictions by ordinance or health order. However, our Public Health Officer, in working with the county, continues to reserve the right and duty to take such action in the event the virus spread overwhelms our healthcare response or unreasonably jeopardizes public health. Public Health continues to strongly encourage wearing a mask when in public.

Richland County's current position and direction includes:

1. Promote public health — The probability of spread has now increased. Personal responsibility and accountability will be essential in order to keep our cases down.
2. Consumer and customer health — Businesses are strongly encouraged to follow recommended guidelines and enforce health protocols with customers. Customers are encouraged to be mindful of business rules and exercise their freedom to do business elsewhere if they do not feel safe. Businesses are encouraged to consult with their liability insurance carriers when reopening.
3. Vulnerable populations—Citizens are encouraged to be mindful of vulnerable populations and to equip themselves with personal protective equipment, such as masks, to prevent unknowingly spreading the virus to someone at higher risk of health complications.
4. County grounds and buildings —Entry remains restricted. The county will continue to assess and open buildings when reasonable safety can be assured. Please follow the Richland County website for updates at <https://covid.co.richland.wi.us/>.
5. We are awaiting follow-on actions from the state and will help educate the community on state actions and enforce additional laws and orders if they arrive.

Richland County, our Emergency Operations Center partners, and our community partners recognize all the efforts of individuals, families, organizations, and businesses to mitigate spread and save lives. Our community has looked out for one another. We have

confidence that our community will continue to meet this call, and together we will defeat this virus and safely revitalize our local economy and community.

For the most up-to-date COVID-19 information, follow Richland County Health & Human Services on Facebook or consult the following websites:

- ❖ Richland County:
<https://covid.co.richland.wi.us>
- ❖ The Greater Richland Area Chamber of Commerce
www.gorcchamber.com
- ❖ Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
<https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/>
- ❖ Wisconsin Department of Health Services:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

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