



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

THE CITY OF WATERTOWN PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREPARE FOR A SAFE REOPENING

Yesterday, the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned the Safer at Home Emergency Order #28. The Court determined that the order is subject to administrative rulemaking, and because it was not established in rule, but rather it was established via order, the Supreme Court found EO #28 “unenforceable.” This ruling takes effect immediately.

Watertown Department of Public Health places great importance on the health and safety of the public. We have already seen essential businesses take extraordinary steps to continue to provide service while keeping their employees and members of the public safe. This needs to continue.

In light of the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling, many businesses that have been closed will choose to open their doors soon, and many others will choose to expand their operations. Businesses need to do so responsibly. All City of Watertown businesses should continue to follow CDC guidelines for social distancing, cleaning, and disinfecting. They should also use the guidelines provided by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation at <https://wedc.org/> and consult with their respective trade or business organizations to identify industry best practices to safely welcome back employees and customers.

Businesses may also want to check with their legal counsel to see how to open safely during a pandemic while also considering legal implications of cases that may be related to their business operations.

Watertown Department of Public Health will continue to have an active and aggressive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Health Department, along with Emergency Management, emergency responders and other municipal departments continue to work together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while keeping the community safe.

In order to protect the health of our community, the Health Department will continue with the following:

- Continue to provide active surveillance in the community and look for trends including location of cases and demographics including occupations of those affected
- Tracking active cases of COVID-19 in a timely manner
- Working closely with the local health system, neighboring counties and the state to ensure continued adequate testing capacity
- Continue to be a resource to the community

Even though the Court ruled in this way, Watertown Department of Public Health strongly



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encourages all City of Watertown residents to voluntarily comply with the key components of the Safer at Home Order. Guidance on large gatherings will be coming out soon. For now, it is still recommended to continue to limit numbers of people gathering to limit spread of the virus.

These include:

- Maintain at least 6 feet between yourself and others;
- Do not congregate in groups larger than 10 people without physical distancing between groups;
- Wash your hands frequently;
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- If you are considered high risk due to age or health condition continue to remain safer at home and take precautions – only going out for essential reasons and working from home as much as possible.

There are many things that businesses and organizations should be doing to prepare for a safe reopening, including:

- Develop flexible sick leave policies that encourage staying home when ill
- Set aggressive infection control policies (hand washing, surface cleaning, barriers to reduce contact between customers and staff)
- Obtain disinfectants, soap, sanitizer, and personal protection equipment (PPE) when 6 ft distancing cannot be maintained
- Support 6 feet physical distancing for individuals
- Create a system to monitor any symptoms your employees may have
- Crosstrain and prepare for absenteeism
- Implement a system to limit and direct traffic in your business
- Communicate your plan to employees and customers

Covid-19 has not gone away and will not in foreseeable future. The Health Department will continue monitoring for increased cases and may need to target certain areas for restrictions based on those case increases.

Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic the City of Watertown will continue to gather information and work with others at the local, regional, and state level to adjust recommendations and works through situations as they arise.

A strong economy is vital to public health and safety. We can't have healthy residents and a healthy community without people working and our businesses providing the goods and services needed. We simply want everyone to continue to be safe.

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