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Gov. Evers Directs Department of Health Services to Limit Indoor Public Gatherings

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today directed Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to issue Emergency Order #3 limiting public gatherings to no more than 25 percent of a room or building’s total occupancy. See full the order and list of exemptions [here](#).

This directive is effective at 8 a.m. on Oct. 8, 2020, and will remain in effect until Nov. 6, 2020, and applies to any gatherings at locations that are open to the public such as stores, restaurants, and other businesses that allow public entry, as well as spaces with ticketed events. A frequently asked questions document is available for review [here](#).

“We’re in a crisis right now and need to immediately change our behavior to save lives,” said Gov. Evers. “We are continuing to experience a surge in cases and many of our hospitals are overwhelmed, and I believe limiting indoor public gatherings will help slow the spread of this virus. Folks, we need your help and we need all Wisconsinites to work together during this difficult time. The sooner we get control of this virus, the sooner our economy, communities, and state can bounce back.”

[Earlier today](#), the governor also announced an additional \$100 million in support for Wisconsin's small businesses, including lodging, event venues, and others in the tourism industry, who are struggling in the wake of the pandemic without additional federal supports.

“The unfortunate reality is this: the disease activity level of COVID-19 in Wisconsin is so high that going to a gathering puts you at very high risk of exposure,” said DHS Secretary-designee Palm. “We know gatherings are a key way this virus spreads, so we must act to limit indoor gatherings to stop the spread, reduce illness, and save lives.”

Today, DHS reported an increase of 2,020 confirmed cases of COVID-19; 18 new deaths, and the seven-day average of new daily COVID-19 cases is 2,346 up from 836 one month ago. According to DHS’ [Disease Activity](#) dashboard and as of Sept. 30, 2020, 45 of Wisconsin counties meet the threshold of a very high disease activity level, which means that there are more than 350 cases per 100,000 people in that county. All other counties reported high case activity levels. This means Wisconsinites should assume they will likely be exposed to the virus if they leave home and should practice all safety precautions.

Wisconsinites should take the following steps to stay safe and help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home whenever possible;
- Wear a mask;
- Wash your hands frequently;
- If you have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19, get tested;
- Get the flu shot to help reduce the strain on healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Challenge misinformation and talk to friends and families about the importance of these safety precautions.

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin's COVID-19 response, visit the DHS [COVID-19 webpage](#). We also encourage you to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram](#) for more information on COVID-19.