



Gunnison County clarifies Public Health Order in wake of neighboring “shelter in place” restrictions

GUNNISON, Colo. (March 25, 2020)—As more and more counties in Colorado passed “shelter in place” restrictions (a.k.a. stay-at-home orders) to fight the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), Gunnison County Director of Public Health Joni Reynolds on Wednesday, March 25 clarified that its own Public Health Order was equally restrictive, if not more so.

Since March 16, the Public Health Order in Gunnison County has directed residents to shelter in place—just using different language. For more than a week, Gunnison County health officials have urged residents to stay at home indefinitely. Residents are expected to leave their homes only for essential items and tasks (e.g., groceries at the market, prescriptions at the pharmacist, etc.) and recreation when social distancing can be maintained.

For residents of the county who have tested positive for COVID-19, the restrictions are, of course, more severe.

Section O of the current Public Health Order: “All persons who have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus are hereby **ordered**, under penalty of law, to isolate and quarantine themselves from all other persons, without exception, for a period of at least ten (10) days from the date on which such person first experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath), or 72 hours after the quarantined person is afebrile (resolution of any fever without the aid of medication), whichever is later.”

Reynolds reserves the right to extend the period of any quarantine, according to the Public Health Order, at her sole discretion.

“We have started seeing questions about when we will escalate to ‘shelter in place’ restrictions in Gunnison County,” Reynolds said. “The simple answer is: We already have.

“Directing tourists to leave the county. Shutting down short-term lodging. Limiting events to fewer than 10 people. And, of course, urging residents to stay at home unless absolutely necessary is essentially ‘shelter in place’ and much more. That has all been law in Gunnison County for more than a week.”

Because of Gunnison County's relative remoteness and approximately 2 million acres of public land, limits to spending time outside (e.g., walking, hiking, running) have not yet been made, as long as standard practices in social distancing are being followed.

As of March 25 at 1:30 p.m., Gunnison County reported 53 positive cases, 57 negative cases with 67 tests pending.

Gunnison County Health and Human Services urges residents who are symptomatic (but otherwise feeling stable) to self-isolate and also [self-report at gunnisoncounty.org/covid19](https://gunnisoncounty.org/covid19).

Residents who are symptomatic and worsening are urged to contact the county's Call Center at 970-641-7660 for guidance.

Residents are asked not to show up to the screening site until contacting the Call Center. In emergencies, residents should call 911.

For more information about COVID-19 in Gunnison County, including a daily morning and evening update, [visit gunnisoncounty.org/covid-19](https://gunnisoncounty.org/covid-19).