



**ASHLAND COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

630 SANBORN AVENUE • ASHLAND, WISCONSIN 54806

Phone: (715)-682-7004 • Fax: 715-682-7924 • TTY: 715-682-7023

E-mail: [achsd@co.ashland.wi.us](mailto:achsd@co.ashland.wi.us)

**DIRECTIVE OF THE ASHLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**DATE OF DIRECTIVE: Wednesday, September 30, 2020**

*This Directive goes into effect*

*Friday, October 2, 2020 at 8:00 am*

*For a period of sixty (60) days*

*Ending Monday, November 30, 2020 at 11:59 pm*

Please read this Public Health Directive carefully. Failure to comply with the terms of this Directive may lead to additional enforcement action(s) pursuant to Wisconsin Department of Health Services Administrative Code § 145.06.

**WHEREAS**, Public Health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities. Ensuring health security is the fundamental duty and responsibility of government at all levels- federal, state and local; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 18, 2020, Ashland County declared a state of emergency relating to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, all 50 states in the United States, a substantial number of tribal governments as well as the Federal Government have declared an emergency relating to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 9, 2020, the Bad River Tribal Council issued a Shelter at Home Order directing Bad River Reservation residents to stay at home due to additional positive cases in the community affecting public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus, spread easily by airborne, droplet, or contact transmission, from often-asymptomatic hosts, to multiple residents. Although the virus is the most deadly or dangerous to the elderly, and to those with underlying chronic health conditions, there is now strong evidence that otherwise healthy people with even mild COVID-19 cases are suffering from unusually high rates of significant heart, lung, and neurologic damage. Otherwise healthy people also die from the disease; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous social settings associated with bars, taverns, restaurants, and other businesses facilitating the congregation of groups of people have resulted in large outbreaks of COVID-19 infections; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the more people an individual interacts with in a social setting and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading. There is a high risk of COVID-19 spreading within in-person social settings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least six (6) feet apart; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 17, 2020, Ashland and Bayfield County Public Health jointly issued an Emergency Advisory strongly discouraging any large events or gatherings; and

**WHEREAS**, since issuing the Emergency Advisory, we have continued to see incidences of gatherings in Ashland County. In addition to large gatherings there have been numerous planned as well as spontaneous smaller gatherings in, among other places, bars and/or tavern type establishments; and

**WHEREAS**, this Directive is narrowly-tailored to address situations and circumstances where federal, state and local experts have identified a high incidence of transmission of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, Since August 31, 2020, Ashland County has seen an increase in the number of positive cases by the addition of 94 individuals identified; and

**WHEREAS**, over the past week, 55 new positive cases have been identified. Based upon the results of contact tracing efforts, the Public Health Officer has determined that the majority of these newly identified positive cases are directly related to spontaneous gatherings in bars and/or tavern type establishments with no less than 7 establishments identified as sources of exposure; and

**WHEREAS**, many COVID-19 infected individuals have no symptoms or only mild symptoms for which they never seek medical attention. Additionally, a significant number of Ashland County residents have barriers to accessing healthcare services including no or limited transportation, underinsured or uninsured, poverty, and/or no medical primary care provider, which influences the level of testing available for sick individuals. Therefore, the actual number of infected and exposed individuals may be grossly underestimated by local testing; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashland County is home to a significant population of people considered medically vulnerable and at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19; this includes older adults (age 65 years of age and older) and children or adults with conditions such as cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, immunocompromised state, obesity, serious heart conditions, or type II diabetes mellitus; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashland County is considered a rural county and there are several demographic, environmental, economic, and social factors that put rural residents at higher risk of death to

COVID-19 from these public health conditions. Rural areas have higher rates of pre-existing and underlying health conditions, and are more likely to work in low wage jobs without the ability to work remotely, and have limited healthcare infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the state of our emergency services and healthcare infrastructure of Ashland County is limited and easily strained. We have one hospital within Ashland County, which is the primary service provider for a tri-county area; and

**WHEREAS**, this Directive comes after the release of substantial guidance from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the State epidemiologist and other public health officials throughout the United States and around the world; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 252.03, Local Health Officers may do what is reasonable and necessary for the prevention and suppression of disease and may forbid public gatherings when deemed necessary to control outbreaks of communicable disease;

**WHEREAS**, in light of the recent spike in cases and documented exposure at bars, taverns, restaurants, and other businesses throughout the City of Ashland and surrounding areas, the Health Officer has developed this Directive to detail the least-restrictive means to protect the public against further exposure and transmission of COVID-19

**NOW, THEREFORE**, pursuant to Wisconsin Statute Section 252.03(1), (2), and (4), and Wisconsin Department of Health Services Administrative Code § 145.06., the Public Health Officer of Ashland County Directs the following:

**THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER OF ASHLAND COUNTY ISSUES THE  
FOLLOWING DIRECTIVE:**

1. **Safety of individuals.** All individuals should take precautions when leaving their homes to ensure their safety, the safety of the members of their household, and the safety of the public.
  - a. **All individuals.** For individual safety and the safety of the community, all individuals should:
    - i. Maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between individuals who are not members of the same living unit or household, to the greatest extent possible.
    - ii. Cover coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands).
    - iii. Frequently clean high touch surfaces and objects.
    - iv. Not shake hands
    - v. Follow all Ashland County Health Department requirements.

- vi. Comply with all state, local, and Health Department requirements concerning the use of masks and face coverings. Refer to Emergency Order #1, reissued by Governor Tony Evers on September 22, 2020, effective through November 21, 2020.
  - b. **Individuals experiencing homelessness.** Individuals experiencing homelessness are strongly urged to obtain shelter.
  - c. **Unsafe homes.** Individuals whose homes or residences are unsafe or become unsafe, such as victims of domestic violence, are urged to leave their home and stay at a safe alternative location.
2. **Child care, youth, education, libraries, public spaces, and sports (Excluding schools).**
- a. **Child care and youth settings should:**
    - i. Continue to follow licensing and certification ratio requirements.
    - ii. Limit individual groups or classrooms to containing no more than fifteen (15) children if the children are age 12 or under.
    - iii. Limit individual groups or classrooms to containing no more than twenty-five (25) children if age 13 or older.
    - iv. Provide for no interaction or contact between individual groups or classrooms.
    - v. To the greatest extent feasible, minimize amount of staff interaction between groups.
  - b. **Public outdoor playgrounds.** Maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between individuals who are not members of the same living unit or household, to the greatest extent possible.
  - c. **Courts, Fields, and Sports.**
    - i. Maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between individuals who are not members of the same living unit or household, to the greatest extent possible.
    - ii. Games and competitions are allowed when adhering to recommendations and guidance set forth from the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) and sport specific leagues.

d. **Libraries and community centers.** Libraries and community centers shall comply with the requirements in Section 3 of this Directive.

3. **Businesses.** All businesses should:

a. Limit capacity to 50% of approved capacity levels.

b. Develop and implement a written hygiene policy and procedure that includes:

i. Ensuring employees who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to work.

ii. Establishing hand-washing expectations and ensuring supplies are available to employees.

iii. Describing proper cough and sneeze etiquette.

c. Develop and implement a written cleaning policy and procedure that includes:

i. Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces multiple times a day.

ii. Guidelines for frequently wiping down any shared equipment, such as work spaces, credit card machines, lunchroom items, carts, and baskets.

iii. Guidelines for cleaning common areas and equipment between use or shift changes.

iv. Protocols for cleaning and disinfecting in the event of a positive COVID-19 case on site.

d. Develop and implement a written protective measure policy and procedure that includes:

i. Ensuring individuals are at least six (6) feet from others whenever possible.

ii. Ensuring employees are provided with and wear face coverings when unable to maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from others.

e. Document staff receipt, acknowledgement, or training on the policies in Sections 4b.-4.d.

f. **Limit staff and customers in offices, facilities, and stores.** All businesses should, to the greatest extent possible, facilitate remote work and other measures that limit the number of individuals present at an office, facility, or store.

Businesses to the greatest extent feasible should:

- i. Offer online or virtual services, including for, meeting with clients, providing counsel, or other professional services.
    - ii. Hold meetings and collaborate online or by phone.
    - iii. Alternate work teams or stagger shifts.
  - g. **Safe business requirements when remote work is not possible.** All businesses should take the following measures to limit exposure to COVID-19 to staff, customers, and the public when remote work is not possible:
    - i. Where possible, offer curbside pick-up, curbside drop-off, and delivery of goods and services.
    - ii. Where possible, offer online or phone payments, appointments, and reservations.
    - iii. Door-to-door solicitation is allowed with physical distancing.
    - iv. Ensure spacing of chairs in waiting rooms to ensure physical distancing is maintained between individuals.
  - h. Adhere to Ashland County Health Department requirements and strongly consider implementing the Health Department recommendations and guidelines.
  - i. Establish lines outside to regulate entry, with markings indicating where customers should stand to remain six (6) feet apart from one another while waiting to enter. Businesses should also offer alternatives to lines, including allowing customers to wait in their cars for a text message or phone call and scheduling pick-ups or entries to stores.
  - j. Post WEDC industry-specific Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for Covid-19 in a prominent location where all employees may access and view (Available at <https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/>).
- 4. **Industry-specific requirements.** In addition to the directives in Section 3, the following businesses are subject to additional safety measures:
  - a. **Stores that sell food or groceries**, including grocery stores, bakeries, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks and food pantries, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of groceries, prepared food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Such establishments should:
    - i. Encourage pickup and delivery options.

- ii. Prohibit customer self-dispensing of bulk food items and condiments. Beverage stations are exempt from this requirement.
- iii. Except for produce areas, cease any customer self-service operations of all unpackaged food, such as salad bars, and buffets.
- iv. Limit indoor dine-in capacity to 50% of approved seating capacity levels. Space tables and chairs to ensure at least six (6) feet physical distancing between customers who are not members of the same household or living unit. Limit each table to six (6) customers who are members of the same household or living unit.
- v. Outdoor seating is allowed. Space tables and chairs to ensure at least six (6) feet physical distancing between customers who are not members of the same household or living unit. Limit each table to six (6) customers who are members of the same household or living unit. All outdoor seating must also comply with local municipal permitting requirements.
- vi. Sampling of food should be prohibited.

b. **Restaurants and bars. Restaurants and bars should:**

- i. “Restaurant” has the meaning as defined in Wis. Stats. Ch. 97.01 (14g) and whose sale of alcohol beverages accounts for 50% or less of the establishment’s gross receipts. “Bar” is an establishment in which fermented malt beverages are sold for consumption upon said premises and whose sale of alcohol beverages accounts for 51% or more of the establishment’s gross receipts and whose primary business is that of a bar.
- ii. Encourage pick-up and delivery options.
- iii. Cease any customer self-service operations of all unpackaged food, such as salad bars and buffets. Beverage stations are exempt from this requirement.
- iv. Prohibit customer self-dispensing of condiments.
- v. At restaurants, limit indoor dine-in capacity to 50% of approved seating capacity levels. Space tables and chairs to ensure at least six (6) feet physical distancing between customers who are not members of the same

household or living unit. Limit each table to six (6) customers who are members of the same household or living unit.

- vi. Space tables and chairs to ensure at least six (6) feet physical distancing between customers who are not members of the same household or living unit. Limit each table to six (6) customers who are members of the same household or living unit. All outdoor seating must also comply with local municipal permitting requirements.
  - vii. In restaurants and bars, maintain at least six (6) feet between each stool for customers that are not members of the same household or living unit or close bar stool seating areas.
  - viii. Customers should be seated at all times when not in transit.
  - ix. Sampling of food should be prohibited.
  - x. Restaurants and bars are encouraged, but not required to, keep a list of customers and phone numbers indicating the date and time such customers were in the restaurant or bar. This list will aid the Health Department in contact tracing in the event Covid-19 exposure occurs at any business. Such lists should be maintained for two (2) weeks, after which time they should be destroyed.
  - xi. Restaurants and bars are encouraged, but not required to, postpone or suspend all current league (i.e. pool, dart) tournaments and/or match activities.
- c. **Retail stores. Retail stores should:**
- i. Limit the number of individuals in the business (excluding employees) up to 50% of approved capacity levels.
  - ii. Sampling of goods (ex. food or make-up) should be prohibited.
- d. **Salons and spas.** Facilities including hair salons, barber shops, nail salons, day spas, electrolysis providers, waxing salons, eyebrow-care establishments, tattoo and piercing parlors, body art establishments, tanning facilities and similar facilities should:

- i. Limit the number of customers or clients to 50% of approved capacity levels. If capacity level is four (4) or less, one (1) client or customer is permitted.
  - ii. Space customer or client chairs, tables, or stations at least six (6) feet apart from each other.
  - iii. Require employees to wear face coverings at all times when customers are present.
  - iv. Require customers to wear face coverings to the greatest extent possible.
- e. **Gyms and fitness centers.** Gyms, fitness centers, and similar facilities should:
  - i. Provide materials for members to disinfect equipment before and after exercise at each piece of equipment or station.
  - ii. Limit the number of individuals in the business (excluding employees) to 50% of the approved capacity limit.
  - iii. Increase frequency of cleaning of all equipment, common areas, locker rooms, and restrooms.
  - iv. To the extent possible, space equipment at least six (6) feet apart, especially for treadmills and other high-exertion aerobic fitness equipment.
  - v. Use floor markings to indicate spacing of individuals, particularly in areas where individuals congregate or cluster including drinking fountains, the front desk or reception area, and cleaning stations.
  - vi. Group exercise classes should only be offered if physical distancing can be maintained at all times and there is no person-to-person contact.
  - vii. Activities where physical distancing cannot be maintained should not be allowed unless they are between individuals from the same household or living unit.
  - viii. Saunas and steam rooms should be closed.
- f. **Places of amusement and activity.** Places of amusement and activity including, but not limited to, outdoor miniature golf, movie theaters, theaters, concert and music halls, golf courses, race tracks and similar places should:

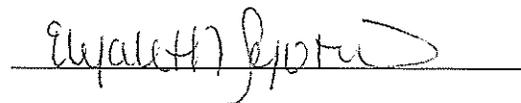
- i. To the extent possible, all reservations and payments should be made in advance online or by phone.
  - ii. Businesses should limit the number of individuals on the premises (excluding employees) to 50% of approved capacity limits.
  - iii. Tee times, appointments, performances, shows, or other scheduled events should be scheduled to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained between all individuals, not within the same household or living unit, at all times.
  - iv. Seating, stations, or recreational areas should be spaced to ensure at least six (6) feet of physical distancing between individuals not within the same household or living unit.
  - v. All equipment provided or rented should be cleaned in between each customer's use.
- g. **Lodging**, including hotels, motels, campgrounds, B&B, and vacation rentals should:
  - i. Prohibit guests from congregating in lobbies or other common areas, including providing adequate space to adhere to physical distancing while queuing for front desk services.
  - ii. Adopt cleaning protocols for guest rooms and common areas based on WEDC and CDC guidelines. Provide training for housekeeping associates for proper handling of linens and cleaning/disinfecting supplies and provide appropriate personal protective equipment.
  - iii. Follow all requirements in Section 3 of this Directive.

5. **Health care operations, public health operations, human services operations, infrastructure operations, manufacturing and government functions.** These operations should only follow Sections 3.b thru 3.e. and 3.i. and 3.j. of this Directive. Long-term care and assisted living facilities must follow all applicable Wisconsin Department of Health Services recommendations, all applicable U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations, and all applicable Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recommendations for prevention of COVID-19 in these facilities.

6. **Religious Entities.** Religious entities are entities that are organized and operated for a religious purpose. Examples include, but are not limited to mosques, synagogues, temples, churches and nondenominational ministries. Religious entities should comply with Section 3 of this Directive.
7. **Leased Premises.** Landlords or rental property managers may enter leased residential premises and show properties if all individuals are wearing face coverings and maintaining physical distancing.
8. Businesses must follow all regulatory and licensing requirements. If this Directive contains provisions that are more restrictive than otherwise permitted in any regulatory or licensing requirement, the provisions of this Directive shall control.
9. **Enforcement.** The purpose of this Directive is to advise as to the least-restrictive means for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in individual and business settings. Individuals and businesses that fail to adhere to this Directive may be subject to enforcement proceedings under Wisconsin Department of Health Services Administrative Code § 145.06.
10. **Severability.** If any provision of this Directive or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Directive, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Directive are severable

**Duration.** This Directive shall become effective Friday, October 2, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. and shall remain in effect for a period of sixty (60) days, ending November 30, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. The Public Health Officer will continue to assess this quickly evolving situation and may modify this Public Health Directive or issue additional Orders related to COVID-19, or cancel this and other orders/directives.

Dated this 30th day of September, 2020



Elizabeth Szot, Health Officer/Public Health Administrator  
Ashland County Health Department