

**Office of the Director**

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[www.kingcounty.gov/health](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health)

## **LOCAL HEALTH OFFICER ORDER**

Whereas on February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee proclaimed a state of emergency within the State of Washington due to COVID-19;

Whereas on March 1, 2020, King County Executive Constantine proclaimed a state of emergency within King County due to COVID-19;

Whereas on March 11, 2020, Governor Inslee ordered that all events of over 250 people be halted in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties due to COVID-19;

Whereas also on March 11, 2020, the Local Health Officer ordered that all events of over 250 people be halted in King County and that all events with 250 or fewer people be cancelled unless the organizer could implement social distancing and sanitation measures due to COVID-19;

Whereas on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency due to COVID-19;

Whereas on March 15, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued interim guidance recommending the cancellation or postponement of in-person events consisting of 50 or more people due to COVID-19;

Whereas state law, RCW 70.05.070(2)-(3), requires and empowers the local health officer to take such action as is necessary to maintain health and to control and prevent the spread of any contagious or infectious diseases within the jurisdiction;

Whereas state regulation, WAC 246-100-036, requires the local health officer, when necessary, to institute disease control and containment control measures, including social distancing measures he or she deems necessary based on his or her professional judgment;

Whereas, there is evidence of increasing transmission of COVID-19 within King County, scientific evidence and national public health guidance support strategies to slow the transmission of COVID-19 and protect vulnerable members of the public from avoidable risk of serious illness or death resulting from exposure to COVID-19;

Whereas, the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of King County places it at risk for serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19.

Although most individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, persons with mild symptoms and asymptomatic persons with COVID-19 may place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk; whereas a large surge in the number of persons with serious infections can compromise the ability of the regional health care system to deliver necessary health care to the public;

Whereas, the implementation of limitations on events and social gatherings, and use of social distancing decreases the risk of COVID-19 transmission to our most vulnerable populations, and is especially important for people who are over 60 years old and those with underlying health conditions due to the higher risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19;

Whereas, this Order will further reduce the likelihood that many individuals will be exposed to COVID-19 at community events and gatherings and at certain retail establishments, and will thereby slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community;

Whereas, this Order will help preserve critical and limited health care capacity in the County by reducing the spread of COVID-19;

Whereas, this Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 11, 2020 Governor's Executive Proclamation on COVID-19 Community Mitigation Strategies;

Whereas this Order is issued in light of the existence of 420 cases of COVID-19 (including 37 deaths) in King County, as of March 15, 2020, and a significant and increasing number of assumed cases of community transmission and at a time when implementation of large scale community mitigation measures are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

Whereas, social distancing measures can reduce COVID-19 transmission by decreasing the frequency and duration of social and other contact among persons of all ages.

Whereas, this Order is issued to prevent circumstances often present in bars, dance clubs, movie theatres, and other social and recreational venues that may exacerbate the spread of COVID-19, such as: (a) a physical environment in which people are in close proximity and have multiple opportunities for close contact with one another that facilitates the spread of COVID-19 and; (b) the difficulty in tracing exposure and implementing traditional public health containment measures;

Whereas, although many residents and businesses followed the voluntary retail guidance issued by Public Health – Seattle & King County on March 11, 2020, confirmed COVID-19 cases have nearly doubled, reflecting both greater testing capacity and also ongoing community transmission of COVID-19;

Whereas, this Order comes after the release of substantial guidance from Public Health—Seattle & King County, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other public health officials throughout the United States and around the world. The Local Health Officer will continue to assess this quickly evolving situation and may modify or extend this Order, or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19;

Whereas, the Local Health Officer hereby finds it is necessary to institute additional social distancing measures within King County;

Therefore, as Local Health Officer, I hereby **ORDER**, that beginning today, **March 16, 2020**:

1. All events with 50 people or more are hereby prohibited until further notice;
2. All events with fewer than 50 people are discouraged and prohibited unless event organizers observe the COVID-19 prevention measures outlined below.
3. All bars, dance clubs, fitness and health clubs, movie theatres, night clubs, and other social and recreational establishments shall be closed until March 31, 2020 or later if determined necessary;
4. Until March 31, 2020 or later if determined necessary, all restaurants and food service establishments shall cease providing dining room services but may remain open for drive-thru, take-out and delivery services and must adhere to the COVID -19 Public Health – Seattle and King County Guidance for retail businesses and service operators.
5. All other retail, including banks, grocery stores, hardware stores, and pharmacies, should and may remain open provided they observe the COVID-19 prevention measures and adhere to the Seattle and King County Guidance for retail businesses and service operators.

Under this local health officer Order, an "event" is defined as a public gathering on non-tribal lands for business, social, or recreational activities including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities. Healthcare settings and veterinary clinics are not considered events and should remain open while observing COVID-19 prevention measures. This order does not apply to and/or exempts food services provided in health care facilities, shelters, schools, and educational settings.

### **COVID -19 Prevention Requirements**

Organizers of events of fewer than 50 people and all establishments that are not closed must ensure that the following COVID-19 prevention measures are taken:

- Older adults and individuals with underlying medical conditions that are at increased risk of serious COVID-19 are encouraged not to attend (including employees);
- Social distancing recommendations must be met (i.e., limit contact of people within 6 feet from each other for 10 minutes or longer);
- Employees must be screened for coronavirus symptoms each day and excluded if symptomatic;
- Proper hand hygiene and sanitation must be readily available to all attendees and employees; and,
- Environmental cleaning guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or more frequently).

### **COVID-19 Retail Guidance**

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/retail.aspx>

Signed and ordered this 16th day of March 2020, in Seattle, Washington, by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Duchin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Dr. Jeff Duchin  
Local Health Officer  
Public Health – Seattle & King County