

Virginia Aims to Slow Down Spread of Coronavirus in Conjunction with Neighboring States with Stay at Home Order

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On March 30, 2020, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam issued [Executive Order Number 55](#), “Temporary Stay at Home Order Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).”

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 55 (The Order), all individuals in Virginia should remain in their place of residence. The Order provides that individuals may leave their residences in limited circumstance, including:

- a. Obtaining food, beverages, goods, or services as permitted in [Executive Order 53](#);
- b. Seeking medical attention, essential social services, governmental services, assistance from law enforcement, or emergency services;
- c. Taking care of other individuals, animals, or visiting the home of a family member;
- d. Traveling required by court order or to facilitate child custody, visitation, or child care;
- e. Engaging in outdoor activity, including exercise, provided individuals comply with social distancing requirements;
- f. Traveling to and from one’s residence, place of worship, or work;
- g. Traveling to and from an educational institution;
- h. Volunteering with organizations that provide charitable or social services;
- i. Leaving one’s residence due to a reasonable fear for health or safety, at the direction of law enforcement, or at the direction of another government agency.

While prior Executive Orders did not require institutions of higher education to close, Executive Order No. 55 now requires that higher education institutions cease all in-person classes and instruction, as well as cancel all gatherings of more than 10 individuals. However, for purposes of facilitating remote learning, performing critical research or performing essential functions, institutions of higher education may continue to operate provided social distancing requirements are maintained.

Executive Order No. 55 also provides for the cessation of all reservations for overnight stays of less than 14 nights at all privately-owned campgrounds and the closure of all public beaches except for exercising and fishing.

As with Governor Northam’s prior order, Executive Order Number 55 does not limit: (a) the provision of health care or medical services; (b) access to essential services for low-income residents, such as food banks; (c) operations of the media; (d) law enforcement agencies; or (e) the operation of government.

Violations of the Order will be a Class 1 misdemeanor. Unless amended or rescinded by further executive order, Executive Order 55 will remain in effect until June 10, 2020.

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