

Block Island Issues Emergency Ordinance to Shelter-In-Place

Frequently Asked Questions:

March 25, 2020

1. When does the order take effect?

The original emergency ordinance was effective as of 12:01 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The amendments were effective as of 5:00 p.m. on March 24, 2020, and the entire emergency ordinance, as amended, is in effect until midnight on April 15, 2020.

2. Are Block Island Residents required to “Stay at Home”?

Yes, as of Monday, March 23, 2020 the Block Island Town Council voted to issue a “Shelter-in-Place” Order effective Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 5:00 PM and is in effect at least until April 15 at midnight unless further modified. The “Shelter-in-Place” Order means remaining at your residence except for Essential Activities; however, people may leave their homes for outside activities such as walks and exercise, but social distancing must be maintained and the CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines must be followed. This is outlined in the Order and we have also developed a series of FAQs to help with the most common questions that people have about when and why they may leave their homes.

3. Is a “Stay at Home” Order the same as a “Shelter in Place” Order?

Yes, under "Shelter in Place," you can still order and take out delivery from restaurants or go grocery shopping. Please, remember to practice social distancing when you do your grocery shopping. Meal-delivery, and take-out options will still be available by those restaurants, cafes, and food trucks that choose to participate. Please note that if you are under "Self-Quarantine," you must remain at your residence except for medical care or emergencies, have food and other necessities delivered, and monitor yourself for symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath.

4. Where does the "Stay at Home" order apply?

This order includes the entirety of the island. Unless you work for an Essential Activity or are doing an Essential Activity, you should stay home. Read the entire order at www.new-shoreham.com

5. Will grocery stores and liquor stores be open?

Yes, essential services will still be operational including, but not limited to:

- Grocery stores
- Gas stations
- Police/Fire/Rescue Building
- Transfer Station
- Medical Center
- Lumber Yard
- Hardware Store

- Liquor store
- Bank (by appointment)
- Post Office

6. What if I still have to go to work?

Unless your work is an Essential Activity (i.e. healthcare provider, grocery store clerk, first responder), you are required to stay home.

The term "Essential Activities" includes activities relating to the following: public safety; public works; medical care; public utilities such as water, sewer and electric; sale and purchase of gasoline, sale and purchase of propane and heating oil; delivery of medicines; transfer station; sale and purchase of liquor as provided in this emergency ordinance; sale and purchase of hardware and lumber; post office; package delivery; sale and purchase of groceries; sale and purchase of take-out food; banking; education as it directly relates to development of curriculum and its distribution; and emergency vehicle repairs.

7. Is the Block Island Ferry and New England Airlines still operating?

Yes, the ferry service and plane service are operating, but on limited schedules. Please check their websites for updated information. The Town encourages all residents to avoid any travel unless absolutely necessary both to and from the island to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

8. Can I order food? What about going to the Block Island Grocery or Depot?

Yes, you can still order take or delivery from restaurants or go grocery shopping. Please, remember to practice social distancing when you do your grocery shopping. Meal-delivery, and take-out options will still be available by those restaurants, cafes, and food trucks that choose to participate.

9. Can I walk my dog?

You are allowed to walk your dog or to take it to the vet if needed. Be sure to practice social distancing while out on walks, maintaining at least 6 feet from **others**.

10. Should I stock up on food, necessities like toilet paper, and on medicines?

No. You will be able to purchase groceries and have medicine delivered. Continue to buy normal quantities of these items on the same schedule you normally do. This will ensure that there is enough for everyone. Whenever you are out, remember to practice social distancing.

11. What happens if I don't comply with this order?

You could be fined up to \$500 per day and 30 days in jail per offence.

12. What about trash?

The Transfer Station is still open regular hours. Haulers are considered essential and will continue to pick up public garbage and dumpsters. Individuals make take their own trash to the Transfer Station as usual. The Town reminds everyone to use precautions and to practice safe social distancing.

13. I am a fisherman; can I still go fishing?

Yes, but **practice social distancing.**

14. I am a farmer, can I still work?

Yes, but **practice social distancing.**

15. Can I still go to church?

Not at the House of Worship. The State of Rhode Island prohibits meeting in groups over 10. For this reason, all Houses of Worship on Block Island have stopped gathering in person, however, some of these groups are holding on-line services. Check with the House of Worship for schedules.

16. Can I drive to the beach?

Try to avoid going out. It is imperative that we limit our contact with others and for that, we need to stay home. You may drive to the beach or park or walking trail for exercise and fresh air - if you do, practice social distancing.

17. I'm a House Caretaker/ House Checker, can I still work?

Caretaking is not necessarily an essential business – unless there is an emergency threat to life, safety or property that outweighs the risk of your attending to that threat. cursory walk-throughs are not considered essential in unoccupied houses.

18. My neighbors just returned from a trip and they are not self-quarantining. What should I do?

If you are concerned please call the Block Island Police Department at 401-466-3220.

19. I went off island for 3 hours to the doctor and I just got home. Do I have to Self-quarantine?

Yes. EVERYONE arriving on Block Island must immediately Self-Quarantine for two weeks, and thereafter must Shelter in Place and follow CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines.

20. Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please contact Interim Town Manager Jim Kern at jkern@new-shoreham.com or on his cell at: 401-363-2430

