

March 22, 2020

- First, some overall guidance from the Joint Information Center (JIC) to be consistent and strong in our messages to the residents of our counties and cities. I understand each area has different needs.
- Second, address the most frequent questions we are getting from you, which were regarding whether a "stay at home" order is imminent, and the National Guard.

OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS GUIDANCE

The following is directly from the JIC - about how to communicate the latest information about the coronavirus response. The JIC asks that you and your teams **emphasize the messages that are in bold.**

FROM THE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER:

Two key messages:

- **While this situation poses some unknowns, be assured that all essential food and supplies will continue across our roadways, that people will be able to travel to get essential needs like food and medical help, and that there are no current needs or plans to close our borders with other states.**
- **While no restrictions to travel have been announced at this time, we ask that all Washington travelers recognize the need to limit travel to essential trips. As Governor Inslee has stated, it is imperative that we reduce the amount of travel in our state to slow the spread of the COVID-19 and we are continuously reviewing data in hopes of avoiding travel restrictions in the future.**

The language we use can significantly impact people's ability and willingness to comply with any health and safety restrictions imposed by local, state and federal leaders. This is particularly true as we encourage people to stay home and limit the number of public places open to Washingtonians.

Phrases like "shelter-in-place" can pose two specific problems:

The phrase means something that doesn't accurately describe what we're directing people to do, which is to stay home as much as possible. Shelter-in-place is an action associated with natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes or imminent threats such as active shooters or a radiological hazard. It means we are ordering people to stay in their home or another secure location until they are told they can exit.

The phrase exacerbates feelings of fear and anxiety which can escalate behaviors we are trying to reduce. Leaders are already working hard to discourage behaviors such as overstocking and help people cope with the emotional and mental health impacts of restricted social activity. Because people are already feeling fearful and confused, the phrase "shelter-in-place" can activate impulses such as overstocking (hoarding), and feed harmful behaviors such as substance abuse.

As you develop communications materials, we encourage you to keep the following three principles in mind:

- **BE PRECISE.** Don't make people try to interpret your words. If you want people to stay home as much as possible, say "stay at home as much as possible." If you want people to stay at home and not leave for any reason until told otherwise, then you might choose to say "shelter-in-place" with a clear explanation of what exactly that means.
- **BE INCLUSIVE.** Remember to make materials available to those who speak languages other than English, use language that is culturally sensitive, and to share information with those who are deaf or blind and with community-based organizations.
- **BE HONEST AND ASSERTIVE BUT REASSURING.** Be honest about how hard this will be, emphasize the urgency of everyone doing their part, and reassure them we're all in this together.

These principles are embedded in the message that we "Spread the Facts" and "Stay Home. Stay Healthy." Encourage people to keep themselves and their loved ones safe and healthy by staying home.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM WASPC

To better understand how Washington compares with other states, this graphic from the Seattle Times is helpful:

Stay home: Order or request?

States across the country have ordered their residents to stay at home, with exemptions for things like groceries and walks. In Washington, officials are urging people to stay home, but haven't ordered it.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?	Washington	California	New York
WHAT'S HAPPENING?	"I am pleading with you to stay home"	"Ordering all individuals...to stay home"	"All non-essential businesses statewide will be closed"
RESTAURANTS	Closed, except delivery and takeout	Closed, except delivery and takeout	Closed, except delivery and takeout
GATHERINGS	Less than 50 people allowed, provided social distancing steps are taken	All non-essential gatherings banned	All non-essential gatherings banned
GROCERY STORES, PHARMACIES	Open	Open	Open
NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES	Open, urged to allow work from home	Must work from home	Must work from home
INDIVIDUALS	Urged to stay home, especially those over 60	Ordered to stay home, but allowed to walk outside if six feet apart	Ordered to stay home but allowed to walk outside if six feet apart

Sources: states of Washington, New York and California

EMILY M. ENG / THE SEATTLE

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS I RECEIVED WHEN I ASKED FOR INPUT

1) Is a stay-at-home order imminent?

Rather than try to guess about when and if a stay-at-home order will occur, *we should all plan that it may happen*. The best messages to your department and your local communities today should be the same messages listed previously:

- **While this situation poses some unknowns, be assured that all essential food and supplies will continue across our roadways, that people will be able to travel to get essential needs like food and medical help, and that there are no current needs or plans to close our borders with other states.**
- **While no restrictions to travel have been announced at this time, we ask that all Washington travelers recognize the need to limit our travel to essential trips. As Governor Inslee has stated, it is imperative that we reduce the amount of travel in our state to slow the spread of COVID-19 and they are continuously reviewing data in hopes of avoiding travel restrictions in the future.**

The following messages are being used by law enforcement leaders in California when a "stay-at-home" order was given, and they could be the types of messages you could also utilize if a stay-at-home order is mandated. These points are provided as examples:

- The Governor is not asking law enforcement to enforce the statewide stay-at-home order. To preserve public health and safety the hope is that people will self-regulate their behavior and home isolate, protect themselves and go about only the essential activities using social distancing and common sense.
- Your local law enforcement has no intention of carrying out such restrictions with an enforcement effort. Our communities have already shown they understand the severity of the situation we are all experiencing and are doing all they can already to keep themselves, their families and neighbors safe and healthy.
- Our deputies are not by any means going around different neighborhoods and areas checking to see if people are out when they shouldn't be. We understand some people need to carry out essential duties. If you need to go to the pharmacy and pick up your medication, that's OK. If you're out in the grocery store to pick up food, that's fine. We're not actively seeking people out. Again, we just want people to listen to the order and stay home if they don't need to be out.
- I want to be perfectly clear that neither the Sheriff's Office, nor any of the police departments have any desire to make any arrests or take anybody to jail for violations. We view our role more as one of education. Educating people how to keep themselves safe, how to keep their families safe and most importantly, to keep the rest of the community safe, especially our vulnerable populations, is the purpose of this order.

2) What is the status of utilizing the Washington National Guard?

The utilization of the National Guard is under discussion and WASPC is working to represent the needs of local law enforcement in decision-making. We want to assure our communities that we will work with the National Guard to ensure public safety and that troops are not coming into our communities to arrest, detain or punish residents.

Thank you all again for all you do-

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