



REVISED JOINT ORDER OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE GASTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE GASTON COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT;

RESTRICTING MOVEMENT OF ALL INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITHIN GASTON COUNTY, THE CITIES OF BELMONT, BESSEMER CITY, CHERRYVILLE, GASTONIA, KINGS MOUNTAIN (PORTION WITHIN GASTON COUNTY), LOWELL, MCADENVILLE, MOUNT HOLLY, AND THE TOWNS OF CRAMERTON, DALLAS, HIGH SHOALS, RANLO, AND STANLEY TO STAY AT THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE EXCEPT THAT THEY MAY LEAVE TO PROVIDE OR RECEIVE CERTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES OR ENGAGE IN CERTAIN ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND WORK FOR ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES AND GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES;

EXEMPTING INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS FROM THE RESTRICTION BUT URGING THEM TO FIND SHELTER;

RESTRICTING ALL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES TO CEASE NON-ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC MOBILITY WITHIN THE LOCATIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY; RESTRICTING ALL NON-ESSENTIAL GATHERINGS OF INDIVIDUALS; AND ALL NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL

**WHEREAS**, The North Carolina General Assembly has adopted Article 1A of Chapter 166A of the General Statutes, entitled “North Carolina Emergency Management Act”, which sets forth the authority and responsibility of the Governor, State agencies, and local governments in prevention of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from natural or man-made emergencies; and

**WHEREAS**, G.S. §166A-19.22, which is part of the North Carolina Emergency Management Act, authorizes counties to declare a state of emergency under conditions and following procedures contained in G.S. §166A-19.22; and

**WHEREAS**, G.S. §166A-19.31, which is also part of the North Carolina Emergency Management, authorizes counties to put prohibitions and restrictions in place for its people, businesses, travel, and other activities or conditions reasonably necessary to maintain order and protect lives or property during the state of emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created a state of emergency in the County of Gaston and the municipalities within its borders; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor has declared a state of emergency on behalf of the state of North Carolina on March 10, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, Gaston County declared a State of Emergency on March 15, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, Gaston County ordered all gyms and fitness centers throughout the County to be closed as of noon on March 18, 2020 after thorough consultation with the Gaston County Public Health Department and the Gaston County Office of Emergency Management; and

**WHEREAS**, Gaston County restricted gatherings of people in public places and the operation of business activity, entertainment, events or other places of mass gatherings as reasonably necessary to overcome or prevent further aggravation of the emergency, and any other activities or conditions whereby the control of which maybe be reasonably necessary to maintain order and protect lives or property during the state of emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 particularly, and evidence that age, condition and health of a significant portion of the population of the County and municipalities within its borders places the population at risk of serious health complications, including death from COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, many individuals who contract the virus display no symptoms or have mild symptoms which means they may not be aware they carry the virus. People without symptoms can transmit the disease and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, mass gatherings can result in further transmissions of the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, it is essential to slow viral transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the County's health care system from being overwhelmed; and

**WHEREAS**, this Revised Joint Order and Declaration is necessary to slow the rate of the spread and is the least restrictive based upon the current evidence.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER ORDERED THAT:

This Joint Order is to ensure that the maximum number of people stay in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible, while enabling essential services to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 to the maximum extent possible. When people need to leave their places of residence, whether to obtain or perform essential services, or to otherwise facilitate authorized activities necessary for continuity of social and commercial life, they should at all times reasonably comply with CDC recommendations of Social Distancing Requirements of at least six (6) feet apart. Individuals whose residences are unsafe or become unsafe, such as victims of domestic violence, are permitted and urged to leave their home and stay at a safe alternative location. For purposes of this Order, homes or residences include hotels, motels, shared rental units, shelters, and similar facilities. All provisions of this Order should be interpreted to effectuate this intent.

All individuals currently living within Gaston County and the named Cities and Towns are restricted to stay at home. All persons may leave their residences only for Essential Activities, Essential Governmental Functions, or to operate Essential Business (as defined below). All



Essential Businesses are strongly encouraged to remain open. To the greatest extent feasible, Essential Businesses shall comply with Social Distancing requirements as defined by CDC.

**Non-essential business and County Government operations must cease.** All businesses and operations of and throughout the County, except Essential Businesses and County Operations as defined below, are to cease all activities within the County except as permitted below. Businesses and the Gaston County Government may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors working from home and, in limited cases as deemed necessary by the County Manager, essential County employees necessary to keeping core functions of County government open for the health, safety, and general welfare of citizens of Gaston County, may be permitted to come into their place of work within a County facility that is physically closed to the public.

**Prohibited activities.** All public and private gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited, except for the limited purposes permitted by this Order. Nothing herein prohibits the gathering of members of a household or residence.

All places of public amusement where people may gather, whether indoors or outdoors, including but not limited to, locations with amusement rides, carnivals, amusement parks, water parks, aquariums, zoos, museums, arcades, fairs, children's play centers, playgrounds, recreation centers, funplexes, theme parks, bowling alleys, movie and other theaters, concert and music halls, and country clubs or social clubs shall be closed to the public.

This Order supersedes the restrictions outlined in the Public Health Order to Restrict Mass Gatherings, which prohibited gatherings of 50 people or more.

**Restrictions on nursing homes, long term care facilities and assisted living facilities operated pursuant to Article 6 of NC General Statute Chapter 131E:**

a. Owners, administrators, operators, staff, contractors, and volunteers of nursing homes, long term care, and assisted living facilities are prohibited from allowing residents, customers, clients, or visitors from assembly in spaces that do not permit appropriate social distancing which consists of separation of six (6) feet or more between each individual.

b. Owners, administrators, operators, staff, contractors, and volunteers of nursing homes, long term care and assisted living facilities are prohibited from allowing a person to enter the facility to visit a resident unless each of the following criteria are met: (1) the visitor is an adult, (2) the resident has not already had a visitor that day; and (3) the visit takes place in the resident's room. This prohibition does not apply to end of life situations.

c. No person is allowed to visit a resident of a nursing home, long term care or assisted living facility unless the visitor has been screened prior to entry for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 including the following: fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, or difficulty breathing, contact in any of the preceding 14 days with a person who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 or who is under investigation for COVID-19. All visitors may be required to take precautionary measures including, but not limited to, social distancing or wearing personal protective equipment.

d. No person is allowed to visit a resident of a nursing home, long term care or an assisted living facility unless the visitor shows identification, signs into a visitor's log that includes the date and time in and time out, and provides their name and contact information, including phone number and email if available.

e. Operators and staff of nursing homes, long term care and assisted living facilities are prohibited from destroying a given day's visitor log for a period of 30 days from that particular day.

f. Owners, administrators and operators shall ensure adequate staffing to manage all occupants of the facility to include lifting and moving uninjured occupants.

**Prohibited and permitted travel.** All travel, including, but not limited to, travel by automobile, motorcycle, scooter, train, plane, or public transit, except Essential Travel and Essential Activities as defined herein or otherwise defined in this Order, is prohibited. People riding on public transit must comply with Social Distancing Requirements to the greatest extent feasible. This Order allows travel into or out of the County to maintain Essential Businesses and Operations and Minimum Basic Operations.

1. **Leaving the home for essential activities is permitted.** For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their residence only to perform any of the following Essential Activities:

a. **For health and safety.** To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (including, but not limited to, pets), such as, by way of example only and without limitation, seeking emergency services, obtaining medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for medical services that cannot be provided virtually.

b. **For necessary supplies, services, and food.** To obtain necessary supplies, services, and food for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver said items or services to others, such as, by way of example only and without limitation, groceries and food, household consumer products, supplies



they need to work from home, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.

- c. **For outdoor activity.** To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with Social Distancing Requirements, as defined herein, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, golfing, running, cycling, or using the greenways.
  - d. **For certain types of work.** To perform work providing essential products and services at Essential Businesses or Operations (which, as defined below, includes Healthcare and Public Health Operations, Human Services Operations, Essential Governmental Functions, and Essential Infrastructure) or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Order, including Minimum Basic Operations.
  - e. **To take care of others.** To care for a family member, friend, or pet in another household, and to transport family members, friends, or pets as allowed by this Order.
2. **Elderly people and those who are vulnerable** as a result of illness are strongly encouraged to take additional precautions. People at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including elderly people and those who are sick, are urged to stay in their residence to the extent possible *except as necessary to seek medical care*. Nothing in this Order prevents the Gaston County Public Health Director from issuing and enforcing isolation and quarantine orders or executing other duties as circumstances may require and as is within his authority pursuant to N.C.G.S. §130A.
3. **Healthcare and Public Health Operations.** For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave home to work for or obtain services through Healthcare and Public Health Operations.

Healthcare and Public Health Operations includes, but is not limited to: hospitals; clinics when medical/dental care cannot be provided virtually; pharmacies; public health entities, including those that compile, model, analyze and communicate public health information; pharmaceutical, pharmacy, medical device and equipment, and biotechnology companies (including operations, research and development, manufacture, and supply chain); organizations collecting blood, platelets, plasma, and other necessary materials; reproductive health care providers; home healthcare services providers; mental health and substance use providers; other healthcare facilities and suppliers and providers of any related and/or ancillary healthcare services; and entities that transport and dispose of medical materials and remains.

Specifically included in Healthcare and Public Health Operations are manufacturers,

technicians, logistics, and warehouse operators and distributors of medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), medical gases, pharmaceuticals, blood and blood products, vaccines, testing materials, laboratory supplies, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting or sterilization supplies, and tissue and paper towel products.

Healthcare and Public Health Operations also includes veterinary care and all urgent healthcare services provided to animals.

Healthcare and Public Health Operations shall be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare, broadly defined. Healthcare and Public Health Operations does not include fitness and exercise gyms, spas, salons, barber shops, tattoo parlors, and similar facilities.

4. **Human Services Operations.** For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their home to work for or obtain services that are not available via online or mail-in applications, and telephone interviews at any Human Services Operations, or Medicaid providers that is providing services to the public and including state-operated, institutional, or community-based settings providing human services to the public.

Human Services Operations include, but is not limited to: long-term care facilities; residential settings and shelters for adults, seniors, children, and/or people with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, and/or mental illness; transitional facilities; home-based settings to provide services to individuals with physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disabilities, seniors, adults, and children; field offices that provide and help to determine eligibility for basic needs including food, cash assistance, medical coverage, child care, vocational services, rehabilitation services; developmental centers; adoption agencies; businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals with physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disabilities, or otherwise needy individuals.

Human Services Operations shall be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of human services, broadly defined.

5. **Essential Infrastructure.** For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their home to provide any services or perform any work necessary to offer, provision, operate, maintain and repair Essential Infrastructure.

Essential Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to: food production, distribution, and sale; construction (including, but not limited to, construction or clearing required in response to this public health emergency or to eliminate some other imminent threat to a person's health or safety, hospital construction, construction of long-term care facilities, public works construction, and housing construction); building



management and maintenance; airport operations; operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); distribution centers; security system operation and maintenance; oil and biofuel refining; roads, highways, railroads, and public transportation; ports; cybersecurity operations; flood control; solid waste and recycling collection and removal; and internet, video, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services).

Essential Infrastructure shall be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to essential infrastructure, broadly defined.

6. **Essential Governmental Functions.** For purposes of this Order, all first responders, emergency management personnel, emergency dispatchers, court personnel, law enforcement and corrections personnel, hazardous materials responders, child protection and child welfare personnel, adult protection services, housing and shelter personnel, military, and other governmental employees working for or to support Essential Businesses and Operations are categorically exempt.

Essential Governmental Functions means all services provided by the County or any municipality, township, subdivision, or agency of government needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government agencies or to provide for or support the health, safety and welfare of the public, and including contractors performing Essential Government Functions. Each County, City, or Town Manager shall determine its Essential Governmental Functions and identify employees and/or contractors necessary to the performance of those functions.

This Order does not apply to or in any way bind North Carolina's state government or the United States government. Nothing herein shall prohibit any individual from performing or accessing Essential Governmental Functions.

7. **Businesses covered by this Order.** For the purposes of this Order, covered businesses include any for-profit, non-profit, or educational entities, regardless of the nature of the service, the function it performs, or its corporate or entity structure.

**Essential Businesses and Operations.** For purposes of this Order, Essential Businesses and Operations means Healthcare and Public Health Operations, Human Services Operations, Essential Governmental Functions, and Essential Infrastructure, and the following:

- a. Stores that sell groceries and medicine. Grocery stores, pharmacies, certified farmers' markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of groceries, canned food,

dry goods, frozen foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supplies, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, alcohol and nonalcoholic beverages and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries, medicine, including medication not requiring a medical prescription, and also that sell other non-grocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences and Essential Businesses and Operations;

- b. Food, beverage, and agriculture. Food and beverage manufacturing, production, processing, and cultivation, including farming, livestock, fishing, baking, and other production agriculture, including cultivation, marketing, production, and distribution of animals and goods for consumption; and businesses that provide food, shelter, and other necessities of life for animals, including animal shelters, rescues, shelters, kennels, and adoption facilities;
- c. Organizations that provide charitable and social services. Businesses and religious and secular nonprofit organizations, including food banks, when providing food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, individuals who need assistance as a result of this emergency, and people with disabilities;
- d. Media. Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
- e. Gas stations and businesses needed for transportation. Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities and bicycle shops and related facilities;
- f. Financial institutions. Banks, currency exchanges, consumer lenders, including but not limited, to payday lenders, pawnbrokers, consumer installment lenders and sales finance lenders, credit unions, appraisers, title companies, financial markets, trading and futures exchanges, affiliates of financial institutions, entities that issue bonds, related financial institutions, and institutions selling financial products;
- g. Hardware and supply stores. Hardware stores and businesses that sell electrical, plumbing, and heating material;
- h. Critical trades. Building and Construction Tradesmen and Tradeswomen, and other trades including but not limited to plumbers, electricians, exterminators, cleaning and janitorial staff for commercial and governmental properties, security staff, operating engineers, HVAC, painting, moving and relocation services, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences,



Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses and Operations;

- i. Mail, post, shipping, logistics, delivery, and pick-up services. Post offices and other businesses that provide shipping and delivery services, and businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services to end users or through commercial channels;
- j. Educational institutions. Educational institutions—including public and private pre-K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning, performing critical research related to COVID-19, or performing essential functions, provided that social distancing of six-feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible. This Order is consistent with and does not amend or supersede the Governor’s Executive Order, noting that the Governor has ordered all public schools closed through May 15, 2020; the Gaston School System remains under the local command and control of the Gaston County Board of Education and the statewide command and control of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- k. Laundry services. Laundromats, dry cleaners, industrial laundry services, and laundry service providers;
- l. Restaurants for consumption off-premises. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for consumption off-premises, through such means as in-house delivery, third-party delivery, drive-through, curbside pick-up, and carry-out. Schools and other entities that typically provide food services to students or members of the public may continue to do so under this Order on the condition that the food is provided to students or members of the public on a pick-up and takeaway basis only. Schools and other entities that provide food services under this exemption shall not permit the food to be eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site due to the virus’s propensity to physically cling to surfaces and personal property;
- m. Supplies to work from home. Businesses that sell, manufacture, or supply products needed for people to work from home;
- n. Supplies for Essential Businesses and Operations. Businesses that sell, manufacture, or supply other Essential Businesses and Operations with the support or materials necessary to operate, including computers, audio and video electronics, household appliances; IT and telecommunication equipment; hardware, paint, flat glass; electrical, plumbing and heating material; sanitary equipment; personal hygiene products; food, food additives, ingredients and components; medical and orthopedic equipment; optics and photography equipment; diagnostics, food and beverages, chemicals, soaps and detergent; and firearm and ammunition suppliers and retailers for

purposes of safety and security;

- o. Transportation. Airlines, taxis, public transportation, transportation network providers (such as Uber and Lyft), vehicle rental services, paratransit, and other private, and commercial transportation and logistics providers necessary for Essential Activities and other purposes expressly authorized herein;
- p. Home-based care and services. Home-based care for adults, seniors, children, and/or people with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, and/or mental illness, including caregivers such as nannies who may travel to the child's home to provide care, and other in-home services including meal delivery;
- q. Residential facilities and shelters. Residential facilities and shelters for adults, seniors, children, and/or people with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, and/or mental illness;
- r. Professional services. Professional services, such as legal services, accounting services, insurance services, and real estate services;
- s. Childcare centers for specific employees exempted by this Order. Childcare facilities providing services that enable first responders, healthcare workers, public health, HHS staff and others responding to COVID-19.
- t. Manufacture, distribution, and supply chain companies, suppliers, and distributors. Manufacturing companies, distributors, and supply chain companies producing and supplying products and services that may be reasonably necessary for consumption, purchase, trade, or use by the general population.
- u. Hotels and motels. Hotels and motels, to the extent used for lodging and delivery or carry-out food services.
- v. Funeral services. Funeral, mortuary, cremation, burial, cemetery, and related services.

**Minimum Basic Operations.** For purposes of this Order, Minimum Basic Operations include the following, provided that employees comply with Social Distancing Requirements, to the extent possible, while carrying out such operations:

- w. The minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the business's inventory, preserve the condition of the business's physical plant and equipment, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for



related functions.

- x. The minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences.

**Essential Travel.** For purposes of this Order, Essential Travel includes travel for any of the following purposes. Individuals engaged in any Essential Travel must comply with all Social Distancing Requirements as defined in this Section.

- y. Any travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Businesses and Operations, or Minimum Basic Operations.
- z. Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons.
- aa. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
- bb. Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the jurisdiction.
- cc. Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement.
- dd. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the County. Individuals are strongly encouraged to verify that their transportation out of the County remains available and functional prior to commencing such travel.

**Social Distancing Requirements.** For purposes of this Order, Social Distancing Requirements includes maintaining at least distancing distance of six feet from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands.

- ee. Required measures. Essential Businesses and Operations and businesses engaged in Minimum Basic Operations must take proactive measures to ensure compliance with Social Distancing Requirements, including where possible:
  - i. Designate six-foot distances. Designating with signage, tape, or by other means six-foot spacing for employees and customers in line to maintain appropriate distance;

- ii. Hand sanitizer and sanitizing products. Having hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers;
- iii. Separate operating hours for vulnerable populations. Implementing separate operating hours for elderly and vulnerable customers; and
- iv. Online and remote access. Posting online whether a facility is open and how best to reach the facility and continue services by phone or remotely.

This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 15, 2020 Order of a State of Emergency and Order of the State of Emergency issued by the Governor on March 10, 2020.

This Revised Order will be valid through April 16, 2020 but will be regularly reviewed and evaluated and may be revised, amended, extended accordingly, based upon existing evidence and recommendations by the Gaston County Public Health Director and the Gaston County Office of Emergency Management. .

Any person violating any prohibition or restriction imposed by this Order as authorized by the Joint Order of State of Emergency shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor in accordance with G.S. §14-288.20A.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Order is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Order. The signatories hereby declare that it would have passed this Order and each section, subsection, clause, and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.

This Order is adopted and shall take effect on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of MARCH, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

  
County Attorney

  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners