



NEWS RELEASE

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Outdoor Gatherings Restricted to No More Than 25 People in Some Parts of East Lansing

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EAST LANSING, Mich. — No more than 25 people may gather outdoors in parts of East Lansing, including the downtown area, per an [emergency order](#) issued today by Ingham County Health Officer Linda S. Vail. The order, effective immediately and remaining in place indefinitely, was issued to limit the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The [restricted area](#) stretches from the northern edge of the Michigan State University campus to Burcham Drive and is bounded by Harrison Road to the west and Hagadorn Road to the east, including properties adjacent to those streets. County and City officials identified the area based on the frequency of noise ordinance violations historically occurring in the area due to large house parties.

“Large social gatherings can easily become super-spreading events and fuel the coronavirus pandemic,” said Vail. “Over the summer, we have seen this happen across the state and even here in our community. We must do everything we can to prevent another large, local outbreak. I urge everyone: wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash your hands and stay home if you are sick — please help

Social Gatherings Order - continued

stop the spread of COVID-19.”

Nationwide, coronavirus infections drastically rose among college-age students over the summer. People ages 20-29 years old make up nearly a third of those who have been infected with COVID-19 in Ingham County.

“While we are excited to welcome students back to the community, the only way to keep the community safe and our businesses open is to work together to help stop the spread of this virus,” said East Lansing City Manager George Lahanas. “By limiting the size of social gatherings, wearing masks in public spaces and following the other everyday preventative measures that public health officials have recommended, we can stay safe to stay open.”

Outdoor gathering sizes are restricted to 100 people or less in the region under Executive Order 2020-160, but local officials felt more stringent measures were necessary. Emergency Order Ingham 2020-15 is one of many local mandates recently issued to prepare for the return of Michigan State University students to East Lansing. Over the summer, both the City of East Lansing and Michigan State University began requiring the use of face coverings while in certain public areas, including indoor and outdoor spaces on campus and in the downtown, to control the pandemic, among other prevention measures.

“Partnership is key to reducing the spread of COVID-19,” said MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. “Today and together, the Ingham County Health Department, City of East Lansing and MSU are presenting a united front to enhance the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and the greater East Lansing community. The lines that once divided campus from our neighbors are becoming less so in the spirit of protecting one another.”

Schools, childcare organizations, community centers, places of religious worship, farmers markets and parks within the restricted area are exempt from the emergency order, but must continue to comply with the 100-person outdoor limit. For indoor gatherings, the limit is no more than ten people per statewide executive order. All gatherings, indoors and out, must be designed to ensure that people from different households maintain a social distance of at least six feet. Restaurants are classified differently than social gatherings and are not included in the emergency order.

State law provides Vail with the authority to issue orders to protect the public health under Section 2453 of the Public Health Code (MCL 333.2453). Those who disregard the order could be subject to a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than six months and/or a fine of up to \$200.

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