

Sheriff addresses concerns about stay-at-home order

Editor's note: the following release was submitted by Brown Co Sheriff John Merchant

I have had many people contact me with concerns over the "Stay at Home" order that came from our Governor last week and I hope I can bring some clarity to your questions. I realize that in all of our lives, most have never had to experience anything quite like this and it can be somewhat intimidating and overwhelming. By everyone abiding to the recommendations set forth and using some common sense, we will all get through this but we have to stay focused on staying healthy and making good choices. Social distancing is very important as well as thorough hand washing if you want the odds in your favor of avoiding this virus.

Please realize that any medical questions or concerns that you may have, need to be brought to the attention of your doctor, the local health department or KDHE. They are the ones who have the most up to date information and can answer any health related questions you may have. The information that I put out to the public on this issue is reviewed by our local health department.

I have had many calls and questions about the Executive Order # 20-15 that Governor Kelly put in place last week such as what the definition of what "essential personnel" is and what business is necessary, do I need to go to work, etc. There have been many questions about what activities people at home may do, can they go to the Dr., take walks, go fishing, buy groceries, etc. Even though I have spent many hours reviewing the latest updates and establishing the ever changing protocol for my staff and the facility, I make every effort to provide accurate information for the questions you may have. I hope the following will help answer some of your questions and concerns:

#1 If you are needing food, medicine, or other needed items for your household, you may leave your home to do this. But is it necessary to bring the whole family and go into a grocery store? Try to limit the number of people who have to attend to these errands.

#2 If you are a business, individual or organization that is identified as "Essential" in the Executive Order, you are allowed to travel to and from work to perform your job requirements.

Some jobs listed as "essential" are: Farmers, truckers, post office, construction workers, babysitters, medical, law enforcement, emergency responders, pharmacies, grocers, filling stations, carry-out restaurants, banks, public works, etc. The executive order as well as the limitations are here:

<https://governor.kansas.gov/wp-content/.../2020/03/EO20-16.pdf>

#3 Seeking medical care. This goes without saying, if you need medical attention, please do so. Follow protocol set by your doctor or hospital.

#4 You are able to care for children, family members, pets or a vulnerable persons in other locations.

#5 Outdoor activities are allowed as long as individuals stay at least six feet from one another and have a 10 person limitation on the gathering size. Fishing is allowed, mushroom hunting is allowed, mowing your yard is allowed, bar-b-que is allowed. etc.

#6 Private family gatherings are allowed. Please use common sense, if you are feeling ill, running a fever, exhibit a cough etc. STAY HOME, do not take the chance of exposing others.

There have been so many rumors that have been circulating concerning this health issue facing our county and I appreciate those who have reached out to me so I can give you accurate information. This is the likes of something we have never seen before and I hope we never see again. This is something we need to take very seriously but we cannot let fear and panic dictate our lives. By listening to the advice of our doctors, health department personnel and the KDHE we will get through this, but we have to work together. Pay attention and abide by recommendation put forth for the betterment of us all. Many think this is a hoax or blown out of proportion or we are overreacting, this is definitely something we need to pay attention to and try to avoid as much as possible. So please, make good choices and listen to the information being provided and updated by our local physicians, health department and KDHE.

County law enforcement will continue as usual. We will have deputies out day and night patrolling all over the county as we always have. I am thankful to have many law enforcement connections throughout the country and we are able to share thoughts and ideas. We are all looking for criminal activity to increase, so it is imperative that we stay alert and keep active patrols in the county. Our deputies have been provided safety information/training and supplies so they can do their job accordingly. So if you see suspicious activity, please report.

Remember folks, make sure to call your elderly, disabled or handicapped friends or those who live alone and check on them. This can be a very unsettling time for them. A few phone calls to visit and talk can go a long way in reassuring them. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the Sheriffs office at 785-742-7125

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