

April 22, 2021

What Ontario's Stay-at-Home Order Means for Care Partners

This document is meant to provide clear, plain-language interpretations of current emergency orders for care partners and Alzheimer Society staff. **It is not meant to provide legal advice**, and is not proof of exemption from the stay-at-home order.

What is a stay-at-home order?

Using its emergency powers, the Government of Ontario has ordered that everyone across the province remain inside their homes at all times unless they are performing one of 29 permitted activities.

How long will this last?

The latest stay-at-home order took effect province-wide on April 8, 2021. On April 16 the order was extended by an additional two weeks, and will now be in effect throughout Ontario until at least May 20, 2021.

Is caregiving one of the permitted activities?

Yes. Providing care and support to someone who requires it is a valid reason to leave your home, and anyone who requires care is also allowed to have a care partner inside their home.

Can I still run errands for the person I care for?

Yes. Obtaining anything necessary for someone's health, including medication, is an essential reason to leave home. You can also go grocery shopping for someone who is unable to do so themselves. Dropping off groceries, medication, or other essential supplies for someone you care for is exempted from the order.

Are doctor's appointments cancelled? Can I still go with the person I care for?

All health care providers that were open before the stay-at-home order took effect, including dentists and doctor's offices, are allowed to remain open. Accessing health care is an essential reason to leave home: you are allowed to see your doctor, or another health care provider. You are also allowed to accompany someone you care for anywhere they may require assistance, including medical appointments—however, check with your doctor's office first as they may have restrictions on who can and cannot enter their building.

Is the Alzheimer Society still open?

Yes. The Alzheimer Society is a provider of health care, and an essential service permitted to remain open. Some services are now provided online for the safety of both our clients and staff; check with your local Alzheimer Society office to see what is offered in-person and online. If you are attending an in-person program at the Alzheimer Society, travelling to and from this program is an essential reason to be outside of your home.

What if I don't live with the person I care for? Can I still go to their home?

Yes. There is no ban on travel within Ontario, and you are permitted to travel both to and from the person you are caring for.

Is there a curfew? Do I have to be home by a certain time?

No. There is no curfew in effect, and you may be outside of your home at any hour of the day provided it is for an essential purpose.

I heard police can stop and question anyone at any time. Is this true?

Not anymore. Law enforcement officers now need to have reasonable suspicions that a person is participating in a social event or gathering before questioning them. Further, the officer must believe that questioning someone is in the public interest. Random traffic stops or checkpoints are not currently in place.

Do I need to carry proof of my reason for leaving home, like a letter?

No. Police in Ontario will not require any sort of proof of your stated reason for leaving home, and in the event you are questioned the officer will only request a verbal explanation for your travel. Care partners travelling across provincial borders should stay up-to-date with requirements in their destination province, including the current curfew in effect across Quebec where proof of essential travel is required between certain hours of the day.

Can I still travel to Quebec or Manitoba, and vice versa?

Yes. If you live in Quebec or Manitoba and provide care for someone living in Ontario, you have a valid reason to enter the province. You do not need to present proof of this, however may be asked by a police officer stationed along the provincial boundary to explain your purpose for travel. At this time Manitoba has not implemented restrictions on travel from Ontario, and Quebec also considers providing care to be an essential reason to enter that province.

What do I do if a police officer questions me?

If a police officer has reason to suspect that you are attending a social event or gathering, they may request your name, address, and reason for travel. Explain that you are a care partner, and you are outside of your home to support someone who requires your assistance. It is recommended that you put on a face covering when interacting with a police officer.

Where can I go if I want more detailed information?

The full stay-at-home order, including all 29 exemptions, is available here:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/210265> (EN),
<https://www.ontario.ca/fr/lois/reglement/210265> (FR).

Information on inter-provincial travel restrictions is available here:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/provinces> (EN),
<https://voyage.gc.ca/voyage-covid/voyage-restrictions/provinces> (FR).