



City of Fond du Lac Police Department

First on the Lake

Making Fond du Lac a safe place to live, learn, work and play!

William B. Lamb
Chief of Police

April 09, 2020

An important message to the members of our community -

It's been approximately two weeks since the State of Wisconsin's 'Safer at Home' public health emergency order was put into effect. Generally speaking, the residents and business owners in our community have been doing a great job of complying with the requirements of this order and helping to ensure that the City of Fond du Lac is doing its part as we work together toward the goal of beating this terrible virus that continues to make many people seriously ill and, tragically, claim people's lives.

However, as we fully assess our community's two-week response we want to take this opportunity to also share that we are, unfortunately, still finding and receiving reports of violations of the 'Safer at Home' that we need to address. More specifically, we're primarily talking about younger people, high-school and younger adults in particular, who are continuing to leave their homes or otherwise engaging in activities that are not permissible under this Emergency Order.

We are allowed to engage in outdoor activity but social distancing requirements must be maintained. In other words, we can go for walks, bike rides, or engage in activities like fishing at Lakeside Park as long as we are maintaining those social distancing requirements. But, the following types of activities are not legal while the Emergency Order is in effect and they are areas where we continue to observe and receive reports of violations:

- Use of playgrounds;
- Use of sports, play or recreational equipment – i.e. basketball courts;
- "Cruising" and "hanging out" with friends – if done in any type of group, small or large, these types activities are not legal (see below);
- Gatherings for parties, cook-outs or barbecues, or other similar group gatherings - these types of group gatherings are not legal.
 - Under the Order, "All public and private gatherings of any number of people that are not part of a single household or living unit are prohibited, except for the limited purposes expressly permitted in this Order. Nothing in this Order prohibits the gathering of members of a single household or living unit."

Again, these are some of the most common types of activities where we continue to receive complaints about violations. (Note: see the following links to the Safer at Home Order and a FAQ document to help you better understand it.)



Governor's Safer at Home Order: <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EMO12-SaferAtHome.pdf>
Safer at Home FAQ :
<https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/Safer%20at%20Home%20FAQ%203.24.20.pdf>

We have spent the past two weeks addressing complaints with an "education first" approach. For the most part, we have found that people were not fully aware of the specific mandates of the Emergency Public Health Order and have been immediately compliant after we talk with them. Regrettably, there have been some that have refused to comply and we have been forced to refer criminal charges to the District Attorney's Office. However, criminal prosecution is certainly not appropriate for all of the violations that we are finding. On Wednesday, April 08, 2020, the City of Fond du Lac adopted a Municipal Ordinance that may be used to issue citations for those violations of the Emergency Public Health Order that are less serious in nature. Citations for first-offense violations will be as follows:

- 17 years old and older - \$313
- 14 to 16 years of age - \$187
- 12 to 13 years of age - \$90

Also, under certain circumstances, parents/guardians may also be cited for the actions of their child(ren).

We will continue to try to use an education first approach with violations of this Emergency Public Health Order when it's appropriate. However, as time passes, we expect that people will become increasingly more aware of the requirements under this order and in compliance with it. As such, as we continue to find behavior or activity that is blatantly or carelessly in violation we have an obligation to begin issuing citations to protect the public health of our community. Therefore, we want to take this opportunity to encourage parents to speak with their children, whether teens or young adults, and explain why they need to comply with this order.

We too are feeling the stress that comes from the restrictions that we're all living with and we are sympathetic to everyone that is feeling bored, restless and missing their friends, family, and loved ones. But, we're all in this together and our lives likely will not return to normal until the public health experts determine that we've safely mitigated the current risk from this virus. Simply put, every single member of this community has a say-so in how soon that is going to happen. If we all do our part and strictly comply with the guidelines that we've been provided, social distancing in particular, we are hopeful that we'll see some return to normalcy in a matter of weeks. Or, for every person that decides that they do not need to comply with the public health order rules, or for every parent who allows their child to ignore it, those individuals will likely make it months and not weeks. And nobody wants that! Again, we're all in this together – and each of us, regardless of age, and our day to day decisions and behaviors will ultimately and collectively determine how long we need to live like this. Of course, besides the normalcy that we all so desperately want returned, we really need to beat this virus to help save the lives of those at higher-risk, and to help our business community get their doors re-opened. Please help by doing your part.

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