



## HAMILTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

March 25, 2020

Greg Kesterman

*Interim Health Commissioner*

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Dear Administrators,

I have received several questions this morning regarding outdoor recreational areas. I provide the following to assist you and your community. Please feel free to let us know if you have questions.

The Director's Stay at Home Order issued on March 22 and effective on March 23 at 11:59 provides an overview of how the order shall be implemented. As specified in Section 16, "the intent of this order is to ensure that the maximum number of people self-isolate 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 greatest extent possible. When people need to leave their places of residence, whether to perform Essential Activities, or to otherwise facilitate authorized activities necessary for continuity of social and commercial life, they should at all times and as much as reasonably possibly comply with social distancing requirements. All provisions of this order shall be interpreted as such."

The order does classify outdoor activity as an essential activity in Section 5c: "To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with social distancing requirements, as defined below, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, running, or biking. Individuals may go to public parks and open outdoor recreation areas. However, public access playgrounds may increase spread of COVID-19, and therefore shall be closed."

Based on this guidance, all public outdoor recreation areas that encourage public gatherings or group participation should be considered for closure. This would include picnic shelters, outdoor theatres, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, nature centers, and similar types of locations. While each circumstance in each community will be unique, it is reasonable to consider these areas as areas in which groups of individuals from different households will congregate and not maintain the social distancing specified in Section 15 of the order. For this reason, these areas should be closed unless justification otherwise can be provided.

Sincerely,

Greg Kesterman  
Interim Health Commissioner

