



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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State and county officials reinforcing that roadways remain open to out-of-state and in-state travelers

Motorists are still asked to avoid “non-essential” travel during the public health emergency, but state/county law enforcement are not stopping drivers to verify the purpose of a trip

To help dispel rumors, officials with the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) want to clarify that state roadways and borders remain open to in-state and out-of-state travelers.

Under Governor Tony Evers’ [Safer at Home order](#), motorists are asked to avoid “non-essential” travel throughout the public emergency period. State Patrol and county sheriff’s departments continue to enforce traffic laws as usual but are not pulling over vehicles with out-of-state plates or other motorists just to ask about the purpose of their trip.

“For the Wisconsin State Patrol and county sheriff’s departments, public safety remains the top priority,” WisDOT Secretary-designee Craig Thompson said. “State troopers and sheriff’s deputies are working every day enforcing traffic laws to help ensure safe travel. As always, the emphasis is on public education and voluntary compliance.” Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Anthony Burrell clarified in a recent [video](#) that state borders and roadways remain open to travel.

In an April 7, 2020 [memo](#) to sheriff’s departments and other county government officials, [WCA](#) explained that counties do not have the legal authority to ban out-of-state travelers (or second home/seasonal homeowners) from visiting a county during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“To help protect citizens during the ongoing health emergency, counties could issue a travel advisory that would discourage visitors at this time should a county have a significant elderly population or limited health care resources,” said WCA Executive Director Mark O’Connell. “The advisory could also ask visitors to self-quarantine for 14 days.”

WCA is also encouraging counties to provide citizens with easy online access to information from official sources such as the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and local county health departments.

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