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# 15 things you might not know about Victoria's 'stay at home' restrictions

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Victoria has moved to its stage three Covid-19 response, putting further limits on public gatherings and introducing fines to those who don't comply. Victorian premier Daniel Andrews has stipulated that there are now only four reasons to leave your house: to seek medical help, to go to work, to get your daily exercise, or to go and buy grocery necessities. The premier has also urged all Victorians to "use common sense and common decency" right now.

As we're getting dribs and drabs of information communicated to us at odd and infrequent times, it's OK to feel a little confused right now. We've combed through public information and recent press conferences in order to explain some of the most pertinent information you should know.

### **1. What is the current rule about public gatherings?**

The country has inched closer to a total public lockdown in everything but name, as further social restrictions were introduced by prime minister Scott Morrison on Sunday, March 29. These include:

- Public gatherings are to be capped at two people, reduced from the ten-person limit introduced last week.
- Outdoor gyms, playgrounds and skate parks will be closed.
- Group boot camp-style training is also banned, although one-on-one personal training is still permitted.

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The restrictions will start from midnight tonight, Monday, March 30.

### **2. Does that two-person rule include indoor gatherings?**

Yes – including your own house. If you are a household of two, you cannot have anyone over. The only exception is if you have more than two people *living in your household*. This means if you live with a group of people, you can all stay inside and go outside together.

### **3. What about if you live alone?**

In theory if you live alone, you can have one visitor. But as they do not live with you, physical distancing rules still apply (you must stay 1.5 metres apart). Better yet, talk to them online. There are heaps of apps that allow you to connect with friends in real time – our pick is Houseparty. [Here's how to use it.](#)

### **4. Can I go out alone and meet another solo friend?**

If it's an essential trip (say, getting your daily exercise) then technically yes. If you want to go and walk your dogs together or go for a run, you can do so, but stay 1.5 metres apart.

### **5. Can I visit my family that doesn't live with me?**

[ABC News](#) is reporting that yes, you can visit family members who live separately to you but common sense (and physical distancing protocols) must be observed. Remember: the less people you interact with (even if they are blood relatives) the better. You visiting your parents, your elderly grandparents or adult children could be deadly.

### **6. If I'm over 70, what are my options?**

All these rules still apply to you, but it has been strongly encouraged that you self isolate at home. You should still go outside for some fresh air and exercise but you should be limiting contact with others as much as possible. If you are over 60 with a chronic illness or an Indigenous person over 50, the recommendation is the same.

### **7. How is the government enforcing the 'stay at home' order?**

As well as the [500 police officers who are doing spot checks on returning travellers in mandatory isolation](#), all police will now be working on curbing gatherings of more than two people. Andrews has said police can now issue on-the-spot fines of more than \$1,600 for those breaking these two-person social gathering rules. If you do not pay, you will have to go to court and fines could reach upwards of \$20,000.

## **8. Can I take the train? Can I catch an Uber?**

Public transport and rideshare services are continuing to operate, but they should only be used for essential travel. It's likely these services will still run because many people rely on public transportation to get them to and from their jobs. If you're able to walk or drive yourself somewhere that's preferable but, again, all non-essential trips outside are no longer permitted.

## **9. Can I get kicked out of my rental property if I can't pay rent?**

No. Commercial or residential landlords can't evict tenants after the government passed a six-month moratorium on evictions from rental properties. This means it is illegal for them to kick you out if you cannot pay rent some time in the next six months. More clarification on this moratorium will be released in due course.

## **10. Why are some retail shops still open?**

This is probably the most confusing part of the whole Covid shutdown. Morrison has said it's important for some shops to remain open for now so that people can gather essential items before further shutdown measures come into place. Many retail shops, including all Myer stores, have decided to close preemptively.

## **11. So can I still go to Bunnings?**

Be smart here, people. If you do not need to go to Bunnings for an essential item, do not go. The stores are currently open to help aid trade customers who still use Bunnings products and services daily. If you do decide to go, get your items and get out of there. Don't idly walk past the indoor plants and pick up every single fiddle leaf fig tree to find the best looking one. This is not essential and it can wait – and hey, **did you know Bunnings delivers?**

## **12. Are parks and beaches closed?**

As well as **a long list of attractions and venues that closed last week**, the federal government has now added playgrounds, outdoor gyms and skate parks to this list. You can still go to the park to get your daily exercise but remember to keep away from others. Beaches across the state are shutting down as well, though many have claimed they are still open for "exercise" purposes. Check with your local council for clarification.

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## **13. Can I go for an outdoor hike or a long drive to the country?**

No. As Daniel Andrews put it, "getting some exercise' means going for a walk around the block or a bike ride to stretch your legs and get some fresh air. It means staying local – not driving for miles or being out all day." So no, you should not be going out and doing massive day hikes or driving down to your beach house for the day. You need to stay put.

#### **14. But it's the school holidays! Can't I get away from the city?**

No, please stay at home. Any form of domestic travel has been strongly discouraged and coastal towns are desperately trying to deter visitors. If you're looking for ways to entertain your kids, [here are some great \(indoor\) ideas!](#)

#### **15. What if I have more questions?**

The government has also introduced a new app as well as a collaboration with popular messaging service WhatsApp to ensure the Australian public can get up-to-the-minute information on the spread of Covid-19. The Coronavirus Australia app is available for download via the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#), or you can activate the WhatsApp service by visiting [oz.gov.au/whatsapp](https://www.oz.gov.au/whatsapp).

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