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Stay-at-home orders take effect Thursday to curb spread of second wave

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Stay-at-home orders will take effect at 12.01 a.m. on Thursday, January 14, to limit mobility in the fight against COVID-19.

The Provincial Government announced the stay-at-home orders on Tuesday afternoon, along with an Ontario-wide state of emergency, which will be in place for a minimum of 28 days.?

As the number of new cases of the virus continue to rise, there is a ?looming threat? that Ontario's hospital system could collapse, said the Province.

The stay-at-home order will require everyone to remain at home with exceptions for essential purposes, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services, for exercise and for essential work. As such, employers must ensure that any employee who can work from home does so.

Additional measures announced Tuesday include restricting organized outdoor public and social gatherings to no more than five people with limited exceptions, requiring individuals to wear masks or face coverings in the indoor areas of businesses and organizations that are open, and requiring all non-essential retail stores, including hardware stores, alcohol retailers, and businesses offering curbside pickup and delivery to open no earlier than 7 a.m. and close no later than 8 p.m. These restrictions do not apply to stores that primarily sell food, pharmacies, gas stations, convenience stores, and restaurants for takeout or delivery.

?The Ontario spirit has lifted us through worse, the people of Ontario have battled through worse, and I know this time will be no different,? said Premier Doug Ford. ?Now more than ever, we need you?to do your part, stay home, save lives [and]protect our health care system.