

# IPAWSTIP

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System



## Stay-at-Home vs. Shelter-in-Place as Related to COVID-19

### Special Notice for Alerting Authorities

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In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, some members of the public have expressed confusion related to the use of “Shelter-in-Place” vs. “Stay-at-Home” in public safety messaging. Cities, counties and states across the country have issued instructions to the public to implement various distancing measures to flatten the coronavirus infection curve.

The title, or event code terminology, used by Alerting Authorities in alerts regarding restrictions because of COVID-19 has varied. When sending a COVID-19-related message on the Emergency Alert System or as a Wireless Emergency Alert, use the CEM or “Civil Emergency Message” as the event code followed by instructions to the public that are appropriate for your jurisdiction.

### **Stay-at-Home**

Stay-at-Home often means to remain indoors as much as possible and try to only leave your home when absolutely necessary. If your home has outdoor spaces, such as patios, porches, yards, etc. you may still access them. Outdoor activities such as walking, jogging, and exercise, as well as walking your dog, are allowed in most jurisdictions when social distancing tactics (maintaining at least six feet away from the next person) are practiced. Essential services such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, filling your car with gasoline, going to the Post Office, etc. are also still allowed in most jurisdictions.

### **Shelter-in-Place**

Shelter-in-Place has historically been used to instruct people to stay inside a building until additional guidance is given. This is a more restrictive emergency action used for short-term emergencies when people are in imminent danger, such as during tornadoes or extremely severe weather, during an active shooter response, or hazardous chemical release or radiological incident. The types of traditional Shelter-in-Place protective measures are different from the type of extended isolation being recommended to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

It’s important that local leaders clearly define what these declarations mean and how they plan to implement them. The public relies on you to best determine the appropriate safety measures people should take and to clearly communicate the emergency and the necessary procedures to follow.

We understand language will vary by jurisdictions and in accordance with local ordinances or state laws. You are encouraged to develop guidelines and share with your community to ensure proper adherence to these statements.

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