

Press Releases

City restricting playground use

March 27 | 2020



The rims have been removed from Barb Cook Park's basketball goals.

Gov. Beshear: If you're playing basketball, you're spreading the virus

COVINGTON, Ky. - Saying it's trying to save lives,

Louisville, Newport and Independence in following Gov. Andy Beshear's guidance on restricting certain activities in parks and playgrounds during the coronavirus pandemic.

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Specifically, today the City is taking steps like removing basketball rims and portable soccer goals and blocking off playground equipment.

The moves are designed to keep youth from spreading the highly contagious virus to each other and to people - like the elderly and those with unrelated health conditions like heart disease - for whom the acute respiratory disease COVID-19 is more likely to be fatal.

"If you're going to a park and playing a game of basketball, you're spreading the coronavirus right now," Beshear said matter-of-factly at his 5 p.m. press conference Thursday.

The governor's aggressive efforts to limit close contact have kept the number of COVID-19 cases in Kentucky lower than in many states. But with the number of reported cases in Kentucky spiking by 50 to 248 in one day (the biggest jump yet), Beshear on Thursday urged local governments to help him enforce the restrictions.

"If people aren't observing 'social distancing,' shut them down," he said.

Under the authority of a State of Emergency declared March 19, Covington Mayor Joe Meyer signed an executive order today related to parks and playgrounds that prohibited use of:

- Shelters.
- Slides, swings and "jungle gyms."
- Basketball courts, soccer fields, and baseball fields.

The directive applies to playgrounds owned by schools, churches and non-profit organizations.

City officials lamented the need to take those steps but said warnings about "social distancing" and "safe usage" have been ignored.

"Our families and kids are using our playgrounds in outrageous numbers, and usually that's a great problem to have," the mayor said. "But in a time when we're desperate to slow the spread of this disease, that type of use is reckless, and we simply can't allow it," he said.

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The City posted these warnings last week, but they were roundly ignored.

Neighborhood Services Director Ken Smith echoed that message and said health officials and other leaders have expressed increasing concern.

"I understand completely the desire for kids to get out and play (and adults to socialize), but letting them do it in close contact with each other defeats the whole purpose of social distancing and the whole reason that schools were shut down to begin with," Smith said.

For now, greenspace and hiking and biking paths at places like Devou Park, Riverfront Commons and the Licking River Greenway & Trail will remain open. But if the public ignores social-distancing guidelines by - for example - walking right next to each other in groups, those will have to be blocked off as well, City officials said.

"It's called 'social distancing' for a reason," Meyer said.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Road Closure- Washington st.

Sat, Sep 26, 7:00 AM

Covington Farmers Market

Sat, Sep 26, 9:00 AM

Covington Economic Development Authority Meeting

Thu, Oct 1, 1:30 PM at Covington City Hall

Road Closure- Tobacco Alley

Thu, Oct 1, 3:00 PM

Covington Recreation Committee

Thu, Oct 1, 3:30 PM

Human Rights Commission

Thu, Oct 1, 5:30 PM at Covington City Hall

Road Closure- Washington st.

Sat, Oct 3, 7:00 AM

Road Closure- Home Dr, Montague Ln., Bandshell Blvd.

Sat, Oct 3, 7:30 AM

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Road Closure- BLINK 2026

Sat, Oct 3, 8:00 AM

Covington Farmers Market

Sat, Oct 3, 9:00 AM

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