

Ireland to shut all non-essential businesses over coronavirus

24 March 2020

Ireland's prime minister Leo Varadkar on Tuesday announced that all non-essential businesses will shut from midnight as part of the country's latest measures to tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

"These are unprecedented actions to respond to an unprecedented emergency," he said, adding the measures would remain in place until at least April 19.

"All non-essential retail outlets are to close to members of the public, and all other [retail outlets](#) are to implement physical distancing," Varadkar added.

Theatres, clubs, gyms, leisure centres, hairdressers, markets, casinos, bingo halls and "similar outlets" are to shut under the sweeping orders.

Restaurants and cafes will be shut to the public but allowed to operate delivery or takeaway services.

All indoor or outdoor organised events are to be cancelled and hotels must limit occupancy to "essential non-social and non-tourist reasons".

Scheduled cruise ship travel to the Republic has also been ordered to cease.

Varadkar said the order will not necessarily close factories or [construction sites](#) but that authorities would be available to help enact "physical distancing" where possible.

He also said there would be an "increased presence" of police in public places to ensure compliance with physical distancing guidelines designed to stem the spread of the virus.

Schools, universities, childcare facilities and pubs across Ireland were already shut by the government earlier this month, and will remain closed until 19 April also.

A set of financial supports for those unable to work owing to [coronavirus](#) or made unemployed by the fallout was also announced Tuesday.

The "unprecedented" measures are estimated to cost 3.7 billion euros (\$4 billion) over a 12-week period.

"We're in this for the long haul, and this could go on for weeks, perhaps even months," Varadkar said.

"No matter what happens, we'll always put your life and your health ahead of any other concern.

"All of our resources are being deployed in this great national effort."

Ireland has so far suffered six deaths from COVID-19 with 1,125 confirmed cases nationwide, according to department of health figures released Monday.

Varadkar has previously predicted there will be some 15,000 cases by the end of March and that the crisis could last until the summer months.

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