

Nightly curfew for pandemic takes effect across Quebec

10 January 2021



A paramedic is shown next to an ambulance outside a hospital in Montreal, Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues in Canada and around the world. (Graham Hughes/The Canadian Press via AP)

A curfew meant to curb a surge in coronavirus infections took effect across Quebec on Saturday evening.

The measure is needed to prevent gatherings that have fueled the rampant spread of the virus, Premier Francois Legault said in announcing the rules earlier in the week. The French-speaking Canadian province has a population of more than 8.4 million.

"The situation is critical and a shock treatment is needed," Legault said in a Facebook post earlier Saturday. "Our hospitals are filling with COVID-19 patients. Hundreds of people are in intensive care, fighting for their lives. Tens of people die every day."

The rules will see most residents face police questions or fines of up to \$6,000 Canadian (US\$4,728) if they're out between 8 p.m. and 5

a.m. for the next four weeks.

There are exceptions for essential workers, people walking dogs, and those who have medical reasons to be out, such as a doctor's appointment.

The curfew has seen sharp resistance from some.

Just before the curfew was set to take effect, a few dozen people walked through the streets of Montreal's Plateau district, chanting "freedom" as five police cruisers with lights flashing trailed behind them. A helicopter hovered overhead, and police cruisers lined the streets.



Paramedics transfer a person from a seniors retirement home to a hospital in Montreal, Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues in Canada and around the world. (Graham Hughes/The Canadian Press via AP)

Under the terms of the curfew, [grocery stores](#) and [convenience stores](#) will have to close by 7:30 p.m. in order to allow workers and customers to get home. Stores connected to gas stations can stay open to serve essential workers.

The curfew comes as Quebec's COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise, with hospitals saying they are filling up and risk becoming overwhelmed.

The trend continued Saturday as the province reported 3,127 new cases of [coronavirus](#) infections and 41 more deaths associated with COVID-19. It was the first time the province's daily case count passed the 3,000 mark.

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