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NC Governor Roy Cooper

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Governor Cooper Announces Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions as North Carolina Trends Stabilize

Key indicators used to guide decisions throughout pandemic show state's trends are moving in the right direction

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RALEIGH

As North Carolina's numbers continue to show improvement and vaccine distribution increases, Governor Roy Cooper announced today that the state will carefully ease some of its COVID-19 restrictions. Executive Order No. 195 will take effect February 26th

at 5 pm and will expire March 26th at 5 pm.

“Today’s action is a show of confidence and trust, but we must remain cautious. People are losing their loved ones each day,” said Governor Cooper. “We must keep up our guard. Many of us are weary, but we cannot let the weariness win. Now is the time to put our strength and resilience to work so that we can continue to turn the corner and get through this.”

“Keep wearing a mask, waiting 6 feet apart, and washing your hands. We’ve seen in the past how fragile progress can be, so we need to keep protecting each other while we get everyone a spot to get their shot,” said North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D.

Today’s Executive Order lifts the Modified Stay at Home Order requiring people to stay at home and businesses to close to the public between 10 pm and 5 am. The number of people who may gather indoors will increase from 10 to 25, while 50 remains the limit for outdoors. The curfew on the sale of alcohol for onsite consumption will be moved from 9 pm to 11 pm. Some businesses, including bars and amusement parks, will now be open for patrons indoors as they adhere to new occupancy restrictions. Many businesses, venues and arenas will have increased occupancy both indoors and outdoors.

Executive Order No. 195 has two general categories of occupancy restrictions: 30% capacity and 50% capacity. Because indoor spaces have a higher risk of spread for COVID-19, indoor facilities in the 30%-occupancy category may not exceed two hundred fifty (250) people per indoor room or indoor space.

30% Capacity Limit (may not exceed 250-persons in indoor spaces)

- Bars
- Meeting, Reception, and Conference Spaces
- Lounges (including tobacco) and Night Clubs
- Indoor areas of Amusement Parks
- Movie Theatres
- Entertainment facilities (e.g., bingo parlors, gaming establishments)
- Sports Arenas and Fields*
- Venues*

Indoor event venues with more than 5,000 seats may be excepted from the 250 person limit if they follow additional safety measures up to 15% capacity.

50% Capacity Limit

- Restaurants
- Breweries, Wineries, Distilleries
- Fitness and Physical Activity Facilities (e.g., gyms, bowling alleys, rock climbing facilities)
- Pools
- Museums and Aquariums
- Retailers
- Outdoor areas of Amusement Parks
- Salons, Personal Care, Tattoo Parlors

Safety protocols such as masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing will continue to be important as people adjust to the new order, health officials said.

Today marks the first day of eligibility for teachers to receive vaccination as the state begins to expand access to group 3 essential workers. Due to manufacturers' shipping delays caused by inclement weather, DHHS continues to work with providers to administer both last week's shipment and this week's shipment this week and continue to exhaust first dose supply before next week's shipment arrives.

Dr. Cohen also provided an update on North Carolina's data and trends.

Trajectory in COVID-Like Illness (CLI) Surveillance Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness is decreasing.

Trajectory of Confirmed Cases Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of cases is decreasing.

Trajectory in Percent of Tests Returning Positive Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory in percent of tests returning positive is decreasing.

Trajectory in Hospitalizations Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of hospitalizations is decreasing.

In addition to these metrics, the state continues building capacity to adequately respond to an increase in virus spread in testing, tracing and prevention.

Testing

- Testing is widely available across the state.

Tracing Capability

- There have been more than 716,610 downloads of the exposure notification app, SlowCOVIDNC.

Personal Protective Equipment

- North Carolina's personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies are stable.

Read Executive Order No. 195 (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=487341&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2FEO195-Easing-Restrictions.pdf&cf=13425&v=259580bd7483d01e2e6741b9f78d2746fe6a5d28a786d5f15bc8e413cd4bc3e8__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!MZ9CpGhCTvdGKSK1zo7eSMxNBRbPOeS6NL49YdKOXvupWJH5GktM9

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today's briefing.

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