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NC Governor Roy Cooper

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021 - 00:00

Gov. Cooper Announces North Carolina Will Relax Some COVID-19 Restrictions

State's trends continue to move in the right direction and key indicators used to inform decisions throughout the pandemic remain stable

As North Carolina’s trends continue to show improvement and vaccine distribution increases with 31.7% of North Carolinians over 18 having received at least one dose of vaccine, Governor Roy Cooper announced today that the state will continue to ease some COVID-19 restrictions. Executive Order No. 204 will take effect March 26 at 5 pm is set to expire April 30 at 5 pm.

RALEIGH

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vaccine distribution increases with 31.7% of North Carolinians over 18 having received at least one dose of vaccine, Governor Roy Cooper announced today that the state will continue to ease some COVID-19 restrictions. Executive Order No. 204 will take effect March 26 at 5 pm is set to expire April 30 at 5 pm. The state's general mask mandate remains in effect.

"Our fast and fair vaccine distribution and our sustained progress with the COVID-19 metrics tell us we can move forward with easing restrictions if we do it safely," said Governor Cooper.

"We are in a promising place. With North Carolina's COVID-19 key metrics improving and vaccinations increasing, we can responsibly use our dimmer switch approach to easing restrictions guided by science and data," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D.

Executive Order No. 204 has three general categories of occupancy restrictions: up to 100 percent capacity, 75 percent capacity, and 50 percent capacity. All businesses must continue to maintain the 6 feet of distance requirement between patrons and implement other safety protocols as they expand their capacity.

Executive Order No. 204 will also increase mass gathering limits. The number of people who may gather indoors will increase from 25 to 50 and the number of people who may gather outdoors will increase from 50 to 100. This Order also fully lifts the restriction on the late-night sale and service of alcoholic beverages on bars, restaurants, and other establishments.

Indoors and Outdoors up to 100% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Museums and Aquariums
- Retail Businesses
- Salons, personal care and grooming businesses, tattoo parlors

Indoors up to 75% and Outdoors up to 100% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Restaurants
- Breweries, Wineries, and Distilleries
- Recreation (e.g., bowling, skating, rock climbing)
- Fitness and Physical Activity Facilities (e.g., gyms, yoga studios, fitness centers)
- Pools
- Amusement Parks

Indoors and Outdoors up to 50% Capacity, Subject to Masks and 6 ft. Social Distancing

- Bars
- Movie Theaters*
- Gaming Facilities*
- Meeting, Reception, and Conference Spaces
- Lounges (including tobacco) and Night Clubs
- Auditoriums, Arenas, and other venues for live performances
- Sports Arenas and Fields (includes professional, collegiate, and amateur

*Movie theaters and gaming facilities may operate at up to 75% capacity outdoors.

Activities and settings are lower risk when they involve interacting with fewer people, being outside, keeping masks on the entire time, keeping interactions with people short (under 15 minutes), staying

physically distant, and avoiding singing, yelling, and cheering, according to public health officials.

North Carolina is continuing to see fast and fair vaccine distribution. To date, the state has administered over 4.1 million doses. Over 31.7 percent of people 18 and up have received at least one dose, and 18.8 percent are fully vaccinated. Vaccine equity efforts remain a priority, with 18 percent of first doses administered to Black North Carolinians and 8 percent to members of the LatinX community last week.

DHHS also released updates to the K-12 guidance. Schools should return to in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible while following all public health protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit. This update aligns with Session Law 2021-4, which Governor Cooper and bipartisan legislative leadership worked on together. Plan A has already been widely adopted across the state as districts, educators and support staff have worked hard to get students back in the classroom. The updated Toolkit no longer requires schools to do daily temperature checks and symptom screenings. Safety protocols such as masks and cleaning of high traffic areas are still required. Schools are also highly encouraged to conduct free screening testing as recommended by the CDC. (Read the updated Toolkit (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=488372&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Fcovid19.ncdhhs.gov*2Fmedia*2F164*2Fdownload&cf=13425&v=779b19abfb9984218213c47c931e9e8c259ce6fb736b50f400d2c9451bd352b7__;JSUlJSUl!!HYmSToo!PWl-vZM4Y5bhcOePSiBs6s1uXLDepAEaxklfahcV1s3YkFRbtMvQvH670EJlzGKHEqTX$))

State health officials are continuing to monitor the presence of COVID-19 and its more contagious variants in North Carolina, which is why it is important to continue to have a mask mandate and continue to practice safety precautions, including the Three Ws—wear a mask, wait 6 feet apart, and wash hands often.

Read Executive Order No. 204 (/documents/files/eo204-further-easing-restrictions-0/download).

Read Frequently Asked Questions (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=488372&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2FFAQ-for-Executive-Order-No.-204.pdf&cf=13425&v=70f4b6f68cc6a3e965529fb413eaf5ce09311a3b705ae10d6196d0a831dce1ae__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PWl-vZM4Y5bhcOePSiBs6s1uXLDepAEaxklfahcV1s3YkFRbtMvQvH670EJlzAQg2l-a$).

View the slides (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=488372&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2F210323_keymetr cf=13425&v=c5d342160c9b42c2199367942961e5138602791bfb5799ebc5276cb768aa8e6b__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PWl-vZM4Y5bhcOePSiBs6s1uXLDepAEaxklfahcV1s3YkFRbtMvQvH670EJlzCewqTHF$) from today's briefing.

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