In Light of Data Trends, Mills Administration Accelerates Business Openings in Rural Counties

June 4, 2020

Department of Economic and Community Development posts additional COVID-19 Prevention Checklists and continues its work on a proposed plan for the tourism season

The Mills Administration today announced additional business reopenings under the Governor's rural reopening plan. Under the update, in 13 counties, tasting rooms and bars may open for outside service and gyms and fitness centers, nail salons, and tattoo and piercing parlors may open with added health and safety precautions beginning on Friday, June 12th. These establishments may reopen everywhere in all counties except for York, Cumberland, and Androscoggin Counties.

This update accelerates the reopening of bars and tasting rooms for outside service, as well as the reopening of tattoo and piercing parlors, all which were originally scheduled to reopen statewide as part of Stage 3 (July 1). It also allows gyms and fitness centers as well as nail salons to resume operations in these 13 counties. These updates come in light of low case count trends in these thirteen counties where the relative small number of cases has largely either remained steady or decreased. Consistent with past practice, these businesses must comply with added health and safety precautions in the form of COVID-19 Prevention Checklists as a condition of voluntary reopening.

The developments come as the Mills Administration also works to provide an alternative to the State's 14-day quarantine that seeks to protect the health and safety of Maine people and allow tourists to visit Maine safely and support our small businesses.

"Nearly a month after many businesses in these thirteen counties reopened, we continue to see low case counts in those counties," said Governor Mills. "As a result, we are accelerating the reopening of some additional businesses in these areas, but with added health and safety precautions. I continue to urge Maine people to take steps to protect themselves and others, including wearing a face covering, staying six feet apart whenever possible, and practicing good hygiene such as washing your hands frequently. As we continue to gradually reopen, steps like these will be critical to protecting not only ourselves but others as well."

"The good work that Maine people have done to fight COVID-19 and take health precautions seriously allow us to take another important step forward," said Heather Johnson, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. "I am optimistic that these reopening steps will help businesses while continue to protect the health of Maine people."

"Maine people and businesses have demonstrated that taking critical health and safety precautions can keep our infection and hospitalization rates low," said Jeanne Lambrew, Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner. "As we continue to move forward with a gradual reopening plan grounded in science, these steps are even more important protecting the health and safety of all Maine people."

The Department of Economic and Community Development also posted statewide Stage 2 COVID-19 Prevention Checklists today for businesses. Additionally, in response to feedback from businesses and public health experts, the Department has also updated guidance for some businesses that are already open. The

Checklists, written in close collaboration with industry leaders and public health experts, outline health and safety guidance that businesses and activity organizers must commit to comply with in order to reopen as part of the Administration's Restarting Maine's Economy Plan. DECD has also added individual sectors that may safely operate utilizing existing checklists for clarity purposes. Examples include photography and film businesses may operate utilizing the "general guidance" and mini-golf may operate using the "community sports" checklist.

Additional Checklists:

1. Driver Education Schools
2. Gyms and Fitness Centers
3. Tattoo and Piercing Parlors
4. Barbering and Cosmetology Schools

Updated Checklists:

1. Retail
2. Inland Fish and Wildlife Outdoor Activities
3. Specific Guidance for Charter Boats instead of using Outdoor Activities
4. Marinas

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