

MEDIA RELEASE

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LINK TO MEDIA RELEASE

While COVID-19 Restrictions are Easing, Mask Mandate and Other Safety Protocols Remain in Effect

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. Mar. 24, 2021 — Governor Roy Cooper announced lifting some restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, with [Executive Order 204](#), which will take effect Friday, March 26 at 5pm and is set to expire on April 30th.

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.

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.

What will be staying the same?

The statewide mask mandate remains in effect, and masks are still required in both outdoor and indoor settings.

Social distancing is still required even as restrictions for capacity are lifted.

What will be changing?

Low Risk Settings

- Can open up to full capacity
- This includes childcare, camps, outdoor playgrounds, museums, retail and personal care businesses.

Medium Risk Settings

- Can open up to 75% capacity indoors
- This includes restaurants, breweries, wineries, gyms, pools and amusement parks.

Higher Risk Settings

- Can open up to 50% capacity
- This includes arenas, conference and reception spaces, movie theaters, gaming and bars.

The decision is based on North Carolina's COVID-19 key metrics, including a reduction in cases, percent of positive tests, hospitalizations, and number of people visiting the emergency room for COVID-19 symptoms. As vaccine production and distribution is increasing, many North Carolinians are being vaccinated which is contributing to the positive trend in data as well.

Related Links

- Current COVID-19 Restrictions in NC: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/41/download>
- Executive Order 204: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO204-Further-Easing-Restrictions.pdf>
- Frequently Asked Questions About Executive Order 204: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/FAQ-for-Executive-Order-No.-204.pdf>

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