

# Cuomo reopens houses of worship; allowing outdoor graduation ceremonies

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√ Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees and, where practicable, vendors, but such screenings shall not be mandated for customers and delivery personnel. At a minimum, screening must determine whether the worker or vendor has had: (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Assessment responses must be reviewed every day and such review must be documented.

√ Limit the workforce and customer presence to no more than 50% of the maximum occupancy, inclusive of customers, who must maintain 6 feet of separation from others, except during the service, and, in all cases, only be permitted entry if wearing an acceptable face covering; provided that the customer is over age 2 and medically able to tolerate one.

√ Ensure 6 feet distance between individuals at all times, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance (e.g. performing a piercing/tattoo, providing a massage, performing a manicure/pedicure). Employees must wear face coverings any time they interact with customers (e.g. performing a service, ringing up a purchase) and any time they come within 6 feet of another person.

√ Ensure that customer seating allows customers to maintain a 6 foot distance from all others except for the employee providing service (e.g. tattoo and piercing workstations, massage tables, or salon workstations must be 6 feet apart from each other), unless a physical barrier is in place in accordance with OSHA guidelines.

√ Ensure that employees at appointment desks/cash registers maintain 6 feet of distance from others, unless there is a physical barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) between them, or the employee is wearing a face covering; however, even

with a barrier, employees must wear a face covering any time they interact with a customer.

√ Close waiting rooms.  
√ Put in place practices for adequate social distancing in small areas, such as restrooms and breakrooms.

√ Personal care services that require customers to remove face coverings (e.g. lip/nose piercings, face massage, facials, lip/nose waxing) are prohibited.

Find additional guidance on the "New York Forward" website.

LCTV posted a graphic stating hotels would likely be able to reopen their dine-in restaurants, spas and gyms in phase three.

### Cuomo's Metrics

Cuomo said the metrics related to the coronavirus in New York state – particularly the number of hospitalizations and deaths – is under control. He introduced a new marker on Tuesday – the percentage of daily positive results by region dashboard – which he said will be used to track a region's ability to remain or advance within the four phases.

"You can look by region and by county. ... Now, the numbers are relatively small, so day-to-day you'll see some up and some down. That shouldn't set off any alarm bells. But if you see it's ticking up – and it's ticking up for a number of days – then it's something that people have to pay attention to," Cuomo said. "So, we're in a new phase. We're feeling good. We've done great. But we have to stay smart, because reopening resets the whole game."

"When you reopen and people start coming out in some ways, you go right back to day one; and we know as a fact that reopening has very often caused problems. We know as a fact that reopening other states, we're seeing significant problems."

"Every region of the state is now reopening, so we need to look at the facts and the numbers through a different lens now," he said. "We're all reopening. Everything is reopening; the question

## MORE DETAILS

### Houses of worship can reopen

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Saturday announced houses of worship – churches, mosques and synagogues – can reopen to 25% capacity in phase two regions. Previously, the governor said these institutions couldn't reopen until phase four of his "New York Forward" reopening plan.

Cuomo said congregants should continue to social distance and wear a mask.

Houses of worship were closed to the public when Cuomo put "New York State on PAUSE" in mid-March. He put in this executive order to stop the possible spread of the coronavirus.

"The reopening of the economy is a valve – we said we were going to open the valve incrementally and then watch the metrics, and our metrics today are all very good so we're going to open the valve more than we originally anticipated," Cuomo said. "We now have the lowest number of hospitalizations and deaths from coronavirus since this pandemic began – which is great news – so we are going to accelerate the opening of temples, mosques and churches and allow these places of worship to open with up to 25% capacity in phase two. But people still have to stay smart and follow all the necessary precautions and guidelines because, if the metrics start to change, the reopening will have to be slowed down."

The governor announced the state has reached the lowest number of hospitalizations and deaths since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of total hospitalizations was down Fri-

day to 2,603 from a record-high of 18,825 during the peak of the pandemic, and 35 people in New York passed away due to COVID-19, down from a record-high of 800 just eight weeks ago.

Cuomo also will issue an executive order allowing commercial buildings to conduct temperature checks for anyone entering the building as office workers begin to return to the workplace.

### Cuomo allowing limited outdoor graduations

Cuomo on Sunday said New Yorkers have done an admirable job of "bending" the coronavirus infection curve. To that end, will be allow small, outdoor high school graduation ceremonies.

"We're going to allow socially distanced graduations outdoors, with up to 150 people total, beginning June 26," Cuomo said. "That's when the schools start to graduate – high schools. And it gives us a couple of weeks between now and then – God forbid – the number changes. But schools need to plan with the progress we've made so far. And if we continue this trajectory, we'll be able to do that. But again, we have a little time to see between now and then."

The governor previously approved drive-in graduation ceremonies.

In mid-March, Cuomo limited the number of people permitted to gather together to 10 or less, in an effort to slow the possible spread of the coronavirus.

now is could there be any spike in the rate of transmission upon reopening? That is the relevant question."

Cuomo explained this new metric "is what people should look at every day: hospital administrators, elected officials, citizens. The percentage of positive tests per day by region, and then you can look at it by county. This is the number to focus on. How many tests did we do yesterday in the region and what percent is positive of those tests?"

"Just because you reopen does not mean you will have a spike, but if you are not smart, you can have a spike. We need to be as smart and diligent as we were up until today, going forward. And my hesitancy is, well now people think it's OK. 'Oh, we're reopen-

ing, well then we're fine.' No. No; we're not fine. We've made great progress, but we have to stay smart, we have to stay disciplined."

### 'Energize the Reopening'

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Cuomo said, "Going forward, we need to do two things simultaneously. No. 1, monitor the reopening; what we've just been talking about. Watch the numbers, be smart, be diligent. Second, let's energize the reopening. Let's set the bar a little higher. Let's not just reopen, but let's have an affirmative strategy that reenergizes the opening."

"How do you do that? Stimulate the economy. Now is the time to do large-scale development projects. Now is the time you want to see government investing, the

private sector investing in building large-scale developments that you know can help drive economic growth. You actually have an opportunity.

"Well, everything is closed down, there's less activity, there's less volume.' Great. Great on one level. If there's less activity, then we can actually build more aggressively, because there's less disruption."

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## IN THE NEWS

### COVID-19 testing is available at Niagara University

Niagara University, in partnership with Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, is offering COVID-19 testing on Tuesdays throughout the month of June.

RNs and other health care professionals from NFMCC will be available from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., June 16-30, in the parking lot of the Butler Building on the Niagara University campus. Both drive-thru and walk-thru testing is available.

Preregistration is required. Call 278-4496 to make an appointment. One should have their health insurance card handy when making an appointment.

For more information, call NFMCC at 278-4496.

### Passenger seat program resumes

Earlier this week, Niagara County Sheriff's Office Acting Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti announced the division of traffic safety will reopen the child passenger safety seat fitting

station – with restrictions due to COVID-19. He said, "At this time, we are able to accommodate caregivers by appointment only by contacting Cathleen Davis our traffic safety educator at 716-438-3464 or by email at Cathleen.Davis@niagaracounty.com."

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