

Governor Cooper Announces Easing of Restrictions

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

Raleigh

Mar 23, 2021 - [Executive Order 204](#) [FAQs](#)

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. 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.

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Here are some of the highlights:

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