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Gov. Wolf: Reopening Targeted for May 8 in North-Central, Northwest

Phased Approach Relies on Safety and Science

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today presented his detailed plan for reopening the commonwealth with a targeted May 8 start. The administration will categorize reopening into three phases: red, yellow, green. Phases will be assigned based on conditions in a county, counties or region.

The administration will first study conditions in the north-central and northwest regions with a target of moving from red to yellow on May 8. Additional monitoring will take place and direction will be provided in the next week.

To decide when to move to a new phase, the administration will use Department of Health metrics and a data tool developed by Carnegie Mellon University. The full plan is available [here](#).

The red phase, which currently applies to the whole state, has the sole purpose of minimizing the spread of COVID-19 through strict social distancing, non-life sustaining business and school closures, and building safety protocols.

Red	
Work and Congregate Setting Restrictions	Social Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life Sustaining Businesses Only• Congregate Care and Prison Restrictions in Place• Schools (for in-person instruction) and Most Child Care Facilities Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay-at-Home Orders in Place• Large Gatherings Prohibited• Restaurants and Bars Limited to Carry-Out and Delivery Only• Only Travel for Life-Sustaining Purposes Encouraged
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reiterate and reinforce safety guidance for businesses, workers, individuals, facilities, update if necessary• Monitor public health indicators, adjust orders and restrictions as necessary	

As regions or counties move into the yellow phase, some restrictions on work and social interaction will ease while others, such as closures of schools, gyms, and other indoor recreation centers, as well as limitations around large gatherings, remain in place. The purpose of this phase is to begin to power back up the economy while keeping a close eye on the public health data to ensure the spread of disease remains contained to the greatest extent possible.

Yellow	
Work and Congregate Setting Restrictions	Social Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telework Must Continue Where Feasible • Businesses with In-Person Operations Must Follow Business and Building Safety Orders • Child Care Open with Worker and Building Safety Orders • Congregate Care and Prison Restrictions in Place • Schools Remain Closed for In-Person Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay-at-Home Restrictions Lifted in Favor of Aggressive Mitigation • Large Gatherings of More than 25 Prohibited • In-Person Retail Allowable, Curbside and Delivery Preferable • Indoor Recreation, Health and Wellness Facilities (such as gyms, spas), and all Entertainment (such as casinos, theaters) Remain Closed • Restaurants and Bars Limited to Carry-Out and Delivery Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All businesses must follow CDC and DOH guidance for social distancing and cleaning • Monitor public health indicators, adjust orders and restrictions as necessary 	

The green phase eases most restrictions by lifting the stay-at-home and business closure orders to allow the economy to strategically reopen while continuing to prioritize public health. While this phase will facilitate a return to a “new normal,” it will be equally important to continue to monitor public health indicators and adjust orders and restrictions as necessary to ensure the spread of disease remains at a minimum.

Green	
Work and Congregate Setting Restrictions	Social Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Businesses Must Follow CDC and PA Department of Health Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive Mitigation Orders Lifted • All Individuals Must Follow CDC and PA Department of Health Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor public health indicators, adjust orders and restrictions as necessary 	

Just as the administration took a measured, county-by-county approach to the stay-at-home order before expanding statewide, it will do the same to ease restrictions and reopen the state.

The governor first announced the standards for reopening last week and they remain the focal point for the comprehensive plans announced today:

- The approach will be data driven and reliant upon quantifiable criteria to drive a targeted, evidence-based, regional approach to reopenings in Pennsylvania.
- There will be guidance and recommendations for employers, individuals, and health care facilities and providers for assured accountability as we reopen.
- Reopening necessitates that adequate personal protective equipment and diagnostic testing are available.
- Reopening requires a monitoring and surveillance program that allows the commonwealth to deploy swift actions for containment or mitigation.
- Protections for vulnerable populations must remain steadfast throughout the reopening process, such as limitations on visitors to congregate care facilities and prisons.
- Limitations on large gatherings unrelated to occupations should remain in place for the duration of the reopening process.

The commonwealth is partnering with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to create a data-driven decision support tool that will enable a balance between maximizing the strengthening of the economy while minimizing public health risks. This tool will help officials better understand the current health and economic status, as well as the inherent risks and benefits to easing restrictions by sector and region.

There is no single tool or model that can determine easing of restrictions or reopening, but the commonwealth, through partnerships with Carnegie Mellon University and other institutions of higher education, and the criteria set by the Department of Health, will make informed decisions based on data and science.

To determine when a region is ready to reopen and return to work, the state will evaluate the incidence rate of COVID-19 cases per capita, relying upon existing regional health districts used by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. A regional assessment will measure the COVID-19 cases to determine if the target goals of an average of less than 50 cases per 100,000 individuals over the course of 14 days is met. The administration will work closely with county and local governments to enable the communities to reopen and transition back to work.

Throughout this process, the administration will have guidance in place to support best public health practices to avoid these negative impacts. This guidance will reinforce and build on existing [business](#) and [building safety](#) orders and will adapt to the changing nature of the pandemic, even as we learn from the first communities to reopen.