

COVID-19: Maine Enters Phase Four of Reopening; State's Face Covering Mandate Expanded

Article By:

Ann R. Robinson

On Tuesday, October 6, 2020, Governor Janet Mills issued [Executive Order 14 FY 20/21](#), *An Order to Implement Phase Four of the [Restarting Maine's Economy Plan](#)*.

When the state's "Restarting Maine's Economy Plan" was announced in late April, it was projected that Phase Four would lift all restrictions while maintaining any necessary precautions. Instead, the governor's latest Order takes an incremental approach to Phase Four. The order amends indoor seating limitations, and opens some businesses that have heretofore been closed. It also increases limits on indoor seating as cold weather approaches, maintains public health measures, and strengthens the state's face covering mandate.

Beginning Tuesday, October 13, 2020, [Executive Order 14 FY 19/20](#) and [Executive Order 55 FY 19/20](#) are amended to allow businesses and organizations that serve people through seated activities to operate at 50% of their permitted occupancy limit, with a maximum of 100 people. This includes restaurants, houses of worship, social clubs, and school cafeterias. Appropriate health and safety protocols, such as enhanced cleaning practices and physical distancing, remain in full effect. Updated COVID-19 checklists for these businesses and organizations can be found [here](#).

For non-seated indoor activities – such as physical activity in gyms – the gathering limit remains at 50 and the outdoor gathering limit remains at 100. Retailers remain subject to the occupancy limit of five people per 1,000 square feet of shopping space.

Beginning Monday, November 2, 2020, the Order allows for the reopening of indoor service for bars and tasting rooms. These establishments must abide by the new COVID-19 Prevention Checklist for seated food and drink service, which is provided in an update to the [restaurant checklist](#).

Additionally, the Order expands [Executive Order 49 FY 19/20](#) by requiring certain businesses to enforce the state's face covering requirement. While the enforcement mandate during summer months was limited to Maine's coastal counties and more populous cities, it is now required statewide. The Order also extends the requirement for wearing a face covering that is applicable to restaurants, lodging, and retail establishments to include the premises of private schools, local government buildings, and their adjacent grounds.

Businesses that violate this Order are subject to enforcement, including possible fines and loss of licenses.

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