COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions:

**Updated July 31, 2020**

COVID-19 Executive Orders from the Governor's Office can be found here.

FAQ's compiled by the Governor's Office for Phase 2 (EO 141) can be found here.

FAQ's compiled by the Governor's Office for Extended Phase 2 (EO 147) can be found here.

Executive Order 151 (EO 151) for Phase 2 second extension can be found here.

**Disclaimer: This is a rapidly changing situation, and the answers to these questions may change daily, so please make sure to keep checking back regularly as we update answers to your questions.**

**This document is only updated as questions that have not already been addressed are received. If the date at the top of the page is more than one business day old, there have not been any new questions answered since that date.**

Click on the topics below to view frequently asked questions in each category.

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ARE THESE BUSINESSES ALLOWED TO BE OPEN?

Q: What are the specific businesses that the Governor has ordered to remain closed during Phase 2? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Certain entertainment and fitness facilities were specifically ordered to close by the Governor’s Executive Order No. 121 (EO 121) on March 25, 2020, and are still required to remain closed through Phase 2 of the Governor’s re-opening plan. Those businesses include but are not limited to the following:

- Bingo Parlors, including bingo sites operated by charitable organizations
- Bowling Alleys
- Indoor Exercise Facilities (yoga & dance studios, martial arts facilities, indoor trampoline & rock climbing facilities)
- Gyms
- Indoor Fitness Facilities, including but not limited to indoor basketball courts, volleyball courts, racquetball courts, squash courts, and tennis courts
- Health Clubs and Fitness Centers
- Movie Theaters
- Skating Rinks
- Gaming and business establishments which allow gaming activities (video poker, gaming, sweepstakes, video games, arcade games, pinball machines or other computer, electronic, or mechanical devices played for amusement)
- Museums
- Amusement Parks
- Bars
- Night Clubs, Dance Halls, or Music Halls where patrons are not seated.

Q: What is the current status of martial arts studios, dance studios, and other similar facilities? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: To the extent that these facilities provide childcare for working parents (whether from licensed centers, church providers, daycares, after-care providers, home-based care, or any other source) or are holding day camps or summer camps for children, they are allowed to be open. However, paid classes for adults or children are NOT allowed under the Governor’s order (EO 141), and that part of the business must remain closed. Additionally, these businesses are required to comply with CDC and NCDHHS guidelines for childcare facilities, which can be found at NC Interim Guidance for Day Camp Settings. Any businesses which cannot meet these requirements and recommendations should remain closed entirely.

Q: Are country clubs and social clubs allowed to be open? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: Country clubs and social clubs are allowed to be open, so long as they comply with all other applicable restrictions, including the closing of bars located at/in the clubs, unless the bar is operating as part of a restaurant that is allowed to be open under the Governor’s Executive Orders. In that situation, the restaurant must comply with all requirements for restaurants under all applicable orders. Additionally, the mass gathering and social distancing requirements must be followed.

Q: What is a “social club” and does it include bars? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: “Social clubs” are places where people who have a common interest, occupation, or activity typically gather to meet, but it does not include restaurants or bars. Social clubs are similar to country clubs and include
locations like an Elk’s Lodge, a yacht club, a hunting club, private neighborhood clubs, and locations for service organizations like Kiwanis clubs and the Garden Club. Bars continue to be closed pursuant to the Governor’s orders, so any bar inside any social club is still required to be closed, other than for delivery or takeout options. Additionally, restaurants are now allowed to be open with specific limitations, so any restaurant inside a social club must strictly adhere to the requirements of all applicable orders, including maximum occupancy limits, social distancing, mask requirements, and sanitizing/cleaning requirements.

Q: Are museums allowed to be open? (Posted May 22, 2020)
A: Although the City originally interpreted the Governor’s Executive Order No. 138 (EO 138) to allow museums to open in Phase 1, the Governor has since clarified that museums are still required to be closed under the Governor’s Executive Order No. 141 (EO 141) throughout Phase 2. Any museum that opened up during Phase 1 is required to close immediately.

Q: Is it legal for companies to be conducting door to door sales while we are under a stay at home order? (Posted May 22, 2020)
A: All retail sales and service providers/industries which are not specifically closed or restricted by either the state or local orders are allowed to operate at this time, as long as all of the requirements of the Governor’s Executive Order #141 (EO 141) are followed, including social distancing.

Q: Are yard sales allowed? (Posted May 1, 2020)
A: Similar to pawn shops, because people often go to yard sales to obtain essential items (i.e. used appliances, clothing, etc.) yard sales are allowed as long as mass gathering (no more than 25 people there at a time), face covering, and social distancing requirements (at least 6 feet apart) are followed. Frequent sanitation is highly encouraged due to the number of people placing their hands-on different items prior to buying them.

Q: Can an employer at a business that remains closed to the public require employees to report to work to perform tasks like cleaning and inventory in the store? (Posted April 21, 2020)
A: Employees are allowed to continue working at any business performing the operations necessary to maintain the business, such as cleaning and taking inventory. In fact, it is both legal and encouraged for employers to do what they can to keep their employees working in some capacity during this time when so many businesses are having to lay off workers.

Q: Are house cleaning services allowed to operate, including in homes? (Posted April 14, 2020)
A: Cleaning services are allowed under both the state and local orders. Employees are encouraged to maintain social distancing between themselves and with customers while in a home or at a business. If they are not able to maintain social distancing while they are working, then they are encouraged to wear personal protective items like gloves and cloth masks while they are working.

AUTOMOBILE QUESTIONS, INCLUDING SALE, REPAIR, INSPECTION, AND DETAILING

Q: Are auto dealerships allowed to stay open to the public? (Posted May 29, 2020)
A: Auto sales may remain open to the public, so long as they are able to comply with all requirements set forth in the Governor’s Executive Orders for retail businesses. These orders cover maximum occupancy
requirements, social distancing rules, face coverings, required sanitizing practices, and much more, so dealerships are required to comply with all of these rules and regulations or they risk being cited and/or closed down.

**Q: Are vehicle test drives allowed? (Posted May 29, 2020)**

A: Test drives are highly discouraged as the vehicle itself can become a vector for the virus, and social distancing of six (6) feet between people simply makes traditional test drives impracticable. However, if a business can comply with the provisions set forth in the Governor’s Executive Orders No. 141 and 147 for retail businesses, including but not limited to face covering and sanitation requirements, they can proceed with test drives.

**ENTERTAINMENT, FITNESS, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Q: What are the current rules specifically for gyms? (Posted July 31, 2020)**

A: *Indoor fitness facilities and gyms remain closed*, subject to the limited exceptions in Executive Order No. 141, and subsequent guidance from the Attorney General and NC DHHS regarding medical exceptions, which have been incorporated into the Governor’s most recent Executive Order #151. Those documents can be found here [https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Fitness-Center-and-Gym-Settings.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Fitness-Center-and-Gym-Settings.pdf) and here [https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/DHHS-Statement-on-DOJ-Letter-Medical-Exception-FINAL.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/DHHS-Statement-on-DOJ-Letter-Medical-Exception-FINAL.pdf). Current exceptions and guidelines are as follows:

1. Professional athletes and athletes performing on an agreement with an educational institution to receive a scholarship may train within indoor fitness facilities that otherwise would be closed, provided they do not exceed the mass gathering requirement.
2. Gyms and other indoor fitness facilities may be open to serve any person prescribed or directed to use those facilities by a medical or healthcare professional, provided they do not exceed the mass gathering limit.
   a. Medical and healthcare professionals include licensed doctors, nurses, physician’s assistants, chiropractors, dietitians, psychologists, mental health counselors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, recreational therapists, and massage therapists, but does not include personal trainers or unlicensed individuals.
   b. Individuals claiming this exception must present a note or other written communication from the medical professional to the facility operators to confirm that each individual’s use of the facilities is indeed prescribed or directed for that individual.
   c. It is recommended that facilities maintain copies or photos of each note or written communication from medical professionals, as law enforcement officers have the authority to inquire of the facility regarding the note or other written documentation received for each individual present in the facility.

**Q: What is the status of other INDOOR exercise and fitness facilities? (Posted July 31, 2020)**

A: In Phase 2 (EO 141), swimming pools (both indoor and outdoor) were allowed to open, with restrictions, but **all of the other INDOOR exercise and fitness facilities still listed in EO 141 continue to remain closed**, subject to the limited exceptions in Executive Order No. 141, and subsequent guidance from the Attorney General and NC DHHS regarding medical exceptions, which have been incorporated into the Governor’s most recent Executive Order No. 151. This includes but is not limited to INDOOR basketball courts, volleyball courts, racquetball courts, squash courts, and tennis courts, as well as health clubs, fitness centers, yoga studios, dance studios, martial arts facilities, trampoline parks, and rock-climbing facilities. The City is required to obey and enforce the Governor’s orders until they are amended or lifted.
Q: Are bowling alleys allowed to be open? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: No. Bowling alleys have been closed since the beginning of Phase 1. They were allowed to open briefly this month after a superior court in another part of the state ruled in their favor. However, the North Carolina Supreme Court issued a stay on that lower court order this week, so any bowling alleys that had reopened are required to close again until either the Governor modifies his “Safer at Home” order or the courts make additional rulings.

Q: Are escape/panic rooms allowed to be open under Phase 2? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Under the Governor’s order for Phase 2 of re-opening, an escape room or panic room would be classified as an entertainment facility, just like movie theaters, bingo parlors, bowling alleys, skating rinks, video arcades, amusement parks, and museums. All of those facilities continue to remain closed under the Governor’s order for the remainder of Phase 2, which is currently scheduled to last until June 26, 2020, so escape rooms and panic rooms will be required to stay closed as well.

Q: What are the rules for swimming pools? (Posted June 12, 2020)

A: Beginning in Phase 2 (EO 141), swimming pools (both indoor and outdoor) are allowed to open, with restrictions. The Governor has issued interim guidance for public pools and spas for Phase 2 of his re-opening plan. However, this guidance is only for pools that can be used by the general public. If your community pool is private, meaning that you have to be a member or a guest of a member to go there, then any requirements in that guidance are just recommendations and not requirements. If the pool is public, then pools and spas are required to limit user capacity, post signage about capacity and social distancing, perform ongoing cleaning and disinfection, and conduct daily symptom screening for employees. There are also multiple other recommendations listed in the state guidance as well, including spacing of pool deck furniture, providing marks on the floors of pool facilities that are 6 feet apart, not using shared equipment, and many others. If you have concerns about a private pool, you should contact your homeowner’s association. Here is a link to the guidance from the state: https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Public-Pools-and-Spas-Phase-2.pdf.

Q: What are the rules for playing sports OUTDOORS? (Posted June 5, 2020)

A: In Phase 2, OUTDOOR sports in parks and other open areas are allowed, but mass gathering restrictions still apply, with some exceptions. The Governor’s office has clarified that this means participants are limited to 25, spectators are limited to an additional 25 who are socially distanced, and each field is counted separately. Per Section 7(A) of Executive Order No. 141, the Mass Gathering limit of 25 individuals outdoors applies to groups of people who gather together in a park, which would include an outdoor baseball, outdoor soccer, or other outdoor sports field. Accordingly, each youth, amateur, or collegiate sports team may have up to 25 individuals participate in outdoor sports practice or competition, which includes athletes, coaches, trainers and other support staff. Spectators or other attendees at outdoor sports practice or competitions, provided they are separated from the outdoor field by at least 6 feet, are subject to a separate 25-person cap. Each outdoor baseball, outdoor soccer, or other outdoor field, if part of a larger outdoor sports complex, may be counted separately. By way of example, if there are 5 adjoining outdoor soccer fields as part of an outdoor sports complex, each of the 5 fields may have up to 25 individual sports participants (counted as described above), with up to 25 spectators on each field. Sport program administrators and athletes should follow North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services’ Interim Guidance for Administrators and Participants of Youth, Amateur and College Sports Programs.
Q: Are all City parks closed, and if not, can we use playground equipment and fitness stations? (Posted May 29, 2020)

A: Playground equipment and exercise stations are closed, and some public restrooms currently remain closed, but the parks themselves are open, including all trails and other open public spaces.

Q: Are drive-in movies and other drive-in activities allowed? (Posted May 22, 2020)

A: Drive-in activities of any kind are allowed as long as individuals remain in their vehicles. It is also advised that vehicles remain at least six (6) feet apart.

ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

Q: Is WPD actually enforcing the requirements of all of these Executive Orders, and if so, are they issuing citations to those not in compliance? (July 31, 2020)

A: Yes, WPD is responding to any location that they become aware of that may not be in full compliance with all current executive orders. Officers will always attempt to reconcile the situation with education about the requirements first, but citations will be (and have been) issued if there is not voluntary compliance.

Q: For mass gatherings, what is defined as a “confined outdoor space”? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: The Governor’s Executive Order No. 141 (EO 141) defines “mass gatherings” as events or convenings that bring together 1) more than ten (10) persons at the same time in a single indoor space, such as an auditorium, conference room, meeting hall, or any other confined indoor space, or 2) more than twenty-five (25) persons at the same time in a single indoor space, such as an arena or stadium. The Governor is specific that this prohibition also applies to outdoor parades, fairs, and festivals, and the FAQ’s on the Governor’s website also mention “enclosed spaces” as spaces that are confined on the outside by walls or fences, but this list is not all-inclusive. An enclosed outdoor space could also include many other things, including a baseball field, a party tent where the top and sides are enclosed, or even a roped off area of a parking lot or field where access is sufficiently controlled. If you have a question about how something is classified for the purpose of mass gathering requirements, you may contact the City Attorney’s Office for additional guidance.

Q: How do I report a business or individual who I think is violating an order? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: If you have a concern regarding a business within the City limits that you believe is not complying with the current orders, you may contact either the Wilmington Police Department, the Mayor’s Office, or the City Attorney’s Office, and someone will direct your concern to the proper place for review. Email is the preferred form of communication so that you can receive a response in writing. Please see the links above to contact those parties.

Q: Will there be consequences for refusal to comply with current restrictions? What will those consequences be? (Posted April 1, 2020)

A: The purpose of the restrictions is to get the public and local businesses to voluntarily comply in order to curb the spread of the virus. Individuals or businesses who are in violation of the restrictions will be counseled first and educated on why they are in violation and asked to comply. If they continue to refuse/comply, violation can be a Class 2 misdemeanor, which could include jail time of up to 60 days and up to a $1,000 fine.
Q: What are the new rules for alcohol sales at restaurants, breweries, wineries, and distilleries? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order No. 153, effective at 5:00 pm on July 31st, restaurants and other similar businesses which are currently allowed to be open and which sell alcoholic beverages shall cease the sale and service of alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am each day. They also cannot provide off-site table service, catering service, or bartending services for the sale and consumption of alcohol during these hours.

Q: Do the rules on when restaurants have to stop selling and serving alcohol mean that they all have to close down at 11:00 pm? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: No. Restaurants and other businesses covered by the executive order on when alcohol can be sold are allowed to continue to remain open after 11:00 pm, so long as there is no sale or service of alcohol for onsite consumption after 11:00 pm.

Q: Are grocery stores, convenience stores, and other similar businesses still allowed to sell alcohol for OFF-PREMISES consumption after 11:00 pm? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Yes. Grocery stores and anywhere else that was already allowed to be open for the retail sale of alcohol for off-premises consumption is still allowed to sell alcohol for off-premises consumption after 11:00 pm.

Q: What are the consequences for a restaurant or other business that does not stop selling or serving alcohol after 11:00 pm? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: In addition to civil citations or misdemeanor charges that can be issued by WPD for non-compliance, ALE (NC Alcohol Law Enforcement) agents can issue violations and take enforcement action against the business that could result in sanctions up to and including revocation of their alcohol permits.

Q: Are restaurants, hotel ballrooms, and conference centers allowed to host parties and receptions if they are allowed to be open under the current executive orders? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: NO. Under the Governor’s Executive Order No. 151, parties and receptions, like all other private events which are not excepted from the mass gathering requirements, are limited to 10 people inside or 25 people outside. This limit applies regardless whether the event takes place in a restaurant, in a conference center, in a hotel ballroom, in a venue that is used exclusively for receptions or parties, or in some other space allowed to be open under the current executive orders. For instance, a business that is allowed to be open as a restaurant or brewery cannot use the 50% seating capacity to host a wedding reception or other party, even if all of the other requirements that it is required to meet as a restaurant or brewery (tables 6 feet apart, servers wearing masks, etc.) are met. They can only host parties of 10 people inside or 25 people outside.

Q: Can restaurants host corporate events, as long as they remain under their 50% capacity. (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: NO. There is no distinction between corporate events and other parties or events in the Governor’s order, other than actual wedding/funeral ceremonies (NOT receptions). The Governor’s Executive Order No. 151 specifically clarifies that restaurants cannot host parties or events, or take reservations, for more than 10 people inside or 25 outside. We previously thought that his orders would allow renting out a whole
restaurant, as long as the 50% occupancy and other restaurant rules were all followed, but the orders are now clear that the Governor intends for the 10/25 limits to apply to restaurants too.

Q: How is the outdoor limitation of 25 people to be calculated? Can several separate tents be erected and 25 people allowed within each of them and still be in compliance with the outdoor gathering requirements? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: As indicated in the above FAQ regarding the definition of “outdoor confined space,” the 25 person outdoor limit is for EACH ENCLOSED outdoor space. If the tents have walls and a roof, or if the areas are separated by fences or other natural or manmade dividers, and there is a way to sufficiently control the number so that no more than 25 people are in there at a time, then it is possible that separate tents with 25 people in each would be allowed. However, you cannot just put up 5 tents with top coverings and no sides in the back yard and let in 125 people to wander around unfettered between all of them. The spaces have to be visibly separate and controlled to make sure that number isn’t exceeded.

Q: Are event venues able to operate for special events, including weddings, and what are the rules? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Beginning with the Governor’s Executive Order No. 151 on July 17, 2020, event venues are able to open, but with strict requirements. They are allowed to host wedding CEREMONIES, which are not subject to the mass gathering requirements. However, any RECEPTION before or after the wedding, as well as any other party or event held at the venue, is subject to the mass gathering requirement of either 10 people inside or 25 people outside. So, there can be as many people as desired inside or outside for an actual wedding ceremony at an event venue, but any reception is limited by the mass gathering number. The maximum occupancy limits are for every enclosed outdoor or indoor space, so if there are 5 separately enclosed rooms inside a venue, then there could be 10 people in each room. Additionally, there could still be 25 more people outside the venue to meet the outdoor requirement, even if there are already people inside.

Q: Do fast food workers and other restaurant workers have to stay 6 feet apart and wear a mask? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: All restaurants must have workers wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person, whether that person is a customer or co-worker. Restaurant workers are not required to stay six (6) feet apart from co-workers or customers, as long as they are wearing the face covering.

Q: What are the current rules for food trucks and their workers? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: Food trucks are treated like restaurants, so on-premises consumption is allowed, effective in Phase 2 of the Governor’s re-opening plan. Operators are encouraged to tell their customers to stand at least 6 feet apart while they wait for their food to be prepared and food truck workers must wear masks if they are within 6 feet of another person.

Q: For the purpose of re-opening in Phase 2, what is the difference in a restaurant and a bar? (Posted May 29, 2020)

A: State law provides the legal definitions of eating establishments and restaurants in N.C.G.S. Sec. 18B-1000(2) and 18B-1000(6). “Bars” means establishments that are not eating establishments or restaurants as defined in those statutes, but that have a permit to sell alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption under N.C.G.S. Sec. 18B-1001, and that are principally engaged in the business of selling alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption. Bars are still ordered to remain closed.
Q: Do bottle shops and wine shops count as “bars” that are required to remain closed? (Posted May 29, 2020)

A: If a business can show that its primary business prior to COVID-19 was the retail sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption OFF premises (whether it calls itself a “bottle shop,” or a “wine shop” or something similar), then that business is allowed to have some ON premises consumption, which would be based on their max occupancy requirements, just like restaurants, as long as they follow all of the restaurant rules in the Governor’s Executive Order No. 141. This means that wine shops could have on-site tastings, or “bottle shops” that did not make most of their revenue from on-site consumption prior to the pandemic could have on-site consumption (either inside or outside) equal to 50% of their indoor fire capacity. For an official determination as to whether one of these types of businesses is allowed to be open, the business owner should call the NC ABC Commission in Raleigh, and they will review the businesses ABC permit status and provide guidance.

Q: What about breweries, wineries, and distilleries? (Posted May 29, 2020)

A: An establishment is not be considered to be a “bar” which is “principally engaged in the business of selling alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption” if it 1) produces alcoholic beverages for commercial sale; 2) is permitted by the ABC Commission under N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 18B-1101 to 18B-1105; and 3) is authorized to sell at retail for on-premises consumption. As a result, breweries, wineries, and distilleries that are permitted under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 18B-1100 et. seq., and which therefore meet the above test, are allowed to open under Section 8(A) of Executive Order 141.

Q: Are “private clubs” and “members-only clubs” allowed to be open for the purpose of serving food and drink, just like restaurants? (Posted May 29, 2020)

A: Certain private clubs and members-only clubs MIGHT be included in the definition of “restaurant” and be allowed to remain open solely for the purpose of providing food and drink, ONLY IF 1) their normal operations prior to COVID-19 typically included the service of food and drink; and 2) the business is in full compliance with all applicable safety and other requirements for restaurants that are contained in the Governor’s Executive Order No. 141. Entertainment and other activities other than the provision of food and drink is not allowed.

Q: Can small cafés, either stand-alone or inside other retail stores, remain open? (Posted May 22, 2020)

A: Yes, as long as the café complies with all aspects of the currently applicable orders relating to the limitations on restaurants, they are allowed to be open. This specifically includes but is not limited to maximum occupancy requirements, sanitation/cleaning regulations, mask wearing, and social distancing rules. All businesses need to review the orders carefully to make sure they are in full compliance before they open/re-open their stores. Delivery and curb-side food service continues to be allowed and encouraged.

Q: What restrictions are specialty food shops, like ice cream parlors, under now? (Posted May 22, 2020)

A: Specialty food shops must comply with all aspects of the currently applicable orders relating to the limitations on restaurants. This specifically includes but is not limited to maximum occupancy requirements, sanitation/cleaning regulations, mask wearing, and social distancing rules. All businesses need to review the orders carefully to make sure they are in full compliance before they open/re-open their stores. Delivery and curb-side food service continues to be allowed and encouraged.

FACE COVERINGS
Q: Where are face coverings REQUIRED, and by whom? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A. Pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order No. 147, protective face coverings are REQUIRED by the following individuals in the following places/situations:

1. Retail workers when they are within 6 feet of another person.
2. Customers in retail businesses when they are inside the establishment and may be within 6 feet of another person, unless the customer states an exception applies.
3. Restaurant workers when they are within 6 feet of another person.
4. Customers in a restaurant when they are not at their table, unless the customer states that an exception applies.
5. Workers in personal care, grooming, and tattoo businesses when they are or may be within 6 feet of another person.
6. Customers in a personal care, grooming, or tattoo business when they are inside the business and may be within 6 feet of another person, unless the customer states that an exception applies. Additionally, customers may take off a face covering if they are receiving a facial treatment, shave, or other services on a part of the head or face that would interfere with the face covering.
7. Workers and all other adults and children age 11 and older who are present at a child care facility, day camp, or overnight camp and will be within 6 feet of another person.
8. Workers and riders on public transportation, including everyone in NC airports and at bus and train stations or stops, when they are or may be within 6 feet of another person. However, no customer will be denied entry or removed from public transportation for failure to wear a face covering.
9. Workers in meat or poultry processing plants when they are within 6 feet of another person, and their masks must be surgical masks.
10. Workers in long-term care facilities, while in the facility, and the masks must be surgical masks.

Q: Are face coverings REQUIRED everywhere in public? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: All persons are RECOMMENDED to wear face coverings when they are in public and are or may be within 6 feet of another person, but face coverings are not required in public in places or situations other than those specifically mentioned in the Governor’s orders.

Q: If I qualify for an exemption from wearing a face covering based on the list of exemptions in the Governor’s Executive Order No. 147, is a private business required to admit me into their facility? (Posted July 31, 2020)

A: If a customer entering a retail business indicates that they are exempt from wearing a mask due to a qualifying exception, it is up to the business whether to let them in or not. The business has the option of either refusing entry to the customer, letting the customer in under the exception, or offering the customer another option like curbside service, home delivery, or some other reasonable measure to provide goods and services. Businesses are not required to let in people who claim they are exempt from the mask requirement.

Q: Can someone carry a concealed firearm while wearing a mask? (Posted July 14, 2020)

A: There is no law in North Carolina that specifically prohibits a person with a valid concealed handgun permit from lawfully carrying their handgun concealed while wearing a mask. However, there are laws which do prevent the wearing of masks by people 16 years of age or older on public property or in public rights of way, whether they are carrying a concealed firearm or not.
Q: Are there exceptions to the general laws preventing adults from wearing masks in public places? (Posted July 14, 2020)

A. On July 8, 2020, the Governor signed a law containing exemptions to the laws prohibiting mask wearing in public. The exemptions include masks as part of Halloween or theater costumes, masks for physical safety at work, masks as part of traditional celebrations or rituals, masks to protect your face when riding a motorcycle, and the wearing of masks for the purpose of ensuring the physical health or safety or the wearer or others. These exceptions are permanent, but the wearer will still be required to remove the mask during a traffic stop or at any other time when reasonably requested to do so by a law enforcement officer.

Q: Are City workers (including all Fire, Police, and public services workers) required to wear face coverings? (Posted July 6, 2020)

A: No. Local government workers are not required to wear face coverings, but individual local governments are encouraged to adopt their own policies on face coverings. The City of Wilmington has implemented its own guidelines as follows:

- City of Wilmington employees are generally required to wear face coverings that securely cover the nose and mouth, unless they qualify for an exemption outlined in the Governors executive order. This guidance is in effect for all City of Wilmington indoor and outdoor facilities (including city-owned vehicles) when employees are, or may be, within six (6) feet of another person for more than 10 minutes at a time. Police officers and Fire Department personnel are required to wear face coverings at all times, to the fullest extent practicable.

- Citizens who enter into city buildings will be asked to wear a face covering, which will be communicated through signage that will be placed on all entrances and by greeters (if applicable). Citizens are required to wear a face covering at our outdoor facilities when they are, or may be, within six (6) feet of others for more than 10 minutes at a time, except when strenuously exercising or when another exception as noted in the Governor’s Executive Order No. 147 applies. Disposable face masks will be available to citizens inside city buildings, if needed, but customers will not be turned away or refused service if they do not wear a mask.

Q: What are the rules for face coverings by workers and customers inside a retail business? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: Retail businesses must have all workers wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person. In addition, retail businesses must have all customers wear face coverings when they are inside the establishment and may be within (6) feet of another person, unless the customer states that an exception applies. If a customer states that an exception applies, a business may choose to offer curbside service, provide home delivery, or use some other reasonable measure to deliver its good or services. Businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the requirement to wear face coverings may be issued citations unless they can show that they relied on their customers’ or patrons’ statements about whether or not they are excepted from the face covering requirements. If a business or organization does not allow entry to a worker, customer, or patron because that person refuses to wear a face covering, and if that worker, customer, or patron enters the premises or refuses to leave the premises, law enforcement personnel may enforce the trespassing laws and any other laws (other than N.C. Gen. Stat.§ 14-288.20A) that the worker, customer, or patron may violate.

Q: What are the rules for face coverings by workers and customers at restaurants? (Posted June 25, 2020)
A: Restaurants must have all workers wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person. In addition, restaurants must have all customers wear face coverings when not seated at their table, unless the customer states that an exception applies. Businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the requirement to wear face coverings may be issued citations unless they can show that they relied on their customers' or patrons' statements about whether or not they are excepted from the face covering requirements. If a business or organization does not allow entry to a worker, customer, or patron because that person refuses to wear a face covering, and if that worker, customer, or patron enters the premises or refuses to leave the premises, law enforcement personnel may enforce the trespassing laws and any other laws (other than N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-288.20A) that the worker, customer, or patron may violate.

Q: What are the rules for face coverings by workers and customers at personal care, grooming, and tattoo businesses? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: These businesses must have workers wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person. In addition, the business must have all customers wear face coverings when they are inside the establishment and may be within six (6) feet of another person, unless the customer states that an exception applies. Customers may take off their face coverings if they are receiving a facial treatment, shave, or other services on a part of the head which the face covering covers or by which the face covering is secured. Businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the requirement to wear face coverings may be issued citations unless they can show that they relied on their customers' or patrons' statements about whether or not they are excepted from the face covering requirements. If a business or organization does not allow entry to a worker, customer, or patron because that person refuses to wear a face covering, and if that worker, customer, or patron enters the premises or refuses to leave the premises, law enforcement personnel may enforce the trespassing laws and any other laws (other than N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-288.20A) that the worker, customer, or patron may violate.

Q: How do the mask requirements work in childcare facilities, day camps, and overnight camps? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: Child care facilities, day camps, and overnight camps must have workers, all other adults, and children eleven (11) years or older on site wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person. Businesses or organizations that fail to enforce the requirement to wear face coverings may be issued citations unless they can show that they relied on their customers' or patrons' statements about whether or not they are excepted from the face covering requirements.

Q: Do I have to wear a face covering in my car, or when I am riding in public transportation or in a ride-share like Uber or Lyft? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: All workers and riders on public or private transportation regulated by the State of North Carolina, as well as all people in North Carolina airports, and at bus and train stations or stops, must wear face coverings when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person. This provision does not apply to people traveling alone with household members or friends in their personal vehicles, but does apply to ride-shares, cabs, vans, and shuttles, even if the vehicles are privately owned. However, no customer will be removed from or denied entry to public transportation for failure to wear a face covering.

Q: What are the exceptions to the face covering requirements? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: This Executive Order does not require face coverings for workers, customers, or patrons who:
1. Should not wear a face covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance);

2. Is under eleven (11) years of age;

3. Is actively eating or drinking;

4. Is strenuously exercising;

5. Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible;

6. Is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience;

7. Is working at home or is in a personal vehicle;

8. Is temporarily removing his or her face covering to secure government or medical services or for identification purposes;

9. Would be at risk from wearing a face covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations, or by workplace safety guidelines;

10. Has found that his or her face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle; or

11. Is a child whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place the face covering safely on the child's face.

Q: Do I have to provide documentation or any other proof of a condition if I assert an exception to the face covering rules? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: No. Everyone will be on the honor system about whether or not there is a valid reason why they cannot wear a face covering. Everyone is asked to tell the truth, and if they are healthy and able to wear a mask, they are asked to wear a face covering so that they do not put other people at risk of serious illness and death.

Q: What if I am stopped by a law enforcement officer and directed to remove my face covering? (Posted June 25, 2020)

A: A person wearing a face covering for health and safety purposes must remove the face covering upon request by a law enforcement officer during a traffic stop (including a checkpoint or roadblock) and when a law enforcement officer has reasonable suspicion or probable cause during a criminal investigation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Q: What are my options if I am or have been out of work due to COVID-19 restrictions and am unable to pay my utility bills? (Posted July 8, 2020)

A: The Salvation Army has funding available to help with utility payments and rent / mortgage for people in the 5 county area. The bill must be past due. All appointments are done over the phone due to Covid-19. You can find all information at www.buildhope.news under the forms tab. Instructions for application submission and other information, including a phone number, can be found here.

Q: What resources are available if I am experiencing homelessness as a result of COVID-19?
HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH FACILITIES

Q: Are chiropractic offices allowed to be open, and does that include massages? (Posted May 22, 2020)
A: Chiropractic offices may continue to operate and provide care to patients, and massage parlors, either stand-alone or in a chiropractic or other office environment, are allowed beginning in Phase 2 of the Governor's re-opening plan.

Q: Are shelters for the homeless, domestic violence victims, etc. allowed to stay open? (Posted April 2, 2020)
A: The Governor’s order says that residential facilities and shelters for adults, seniors, children, pets, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, victims of domestic violence, the homeless, substance abusers, and the mentally ill are all considered essential and are not required to close. They are encouraged to practice social distancing as much as possible. If one shelter voluntarily decides to close, for whatever reason, other shelters and facilities should still be open.

LODGING AND TOURISM

Q: What are the new rules for hotels and motels, and is the City taking measures to prevent tourists from traveling to our area? (Posted May 29, 2020)
A: All hotels and motels are allowed to be at 100% occupancy without limitation. The businesses are still required to follow the requirements in the Governor’s Executive Orders No. 141 and 147, which include restrictions for restaurants inside hotels, requirements for signage and markings in high-traffic areas like the front desk, daily health checks for workers, face coverings, sanitation requirements, social distancing recommendations, regulations for any pools at the hotel, restrictions on personal care services like massages that are provided at the hotel, closure of fitness centers within the hotel, and mass gathering restrictions for indoor meeting rooms or gathering spaces at the hotel. All lodging establishments need to read EO 141 and any additional applicable regulations to determine what regulations apply to them.

Q: What measures will be enacted for individuals and families who are otherwise homeless or displaced, and therefore living in places like hotels, motels, and short-term residences? (Posted April 1, 2020)
A: None of the social distancing requirements are applicable to the homeless population. There is an exception in the City’s order that allows for extended stay hotels to remain open for business of 28 days or more. There are also exceptions for hotels and motels to rent to individuals who are working to ease the COVID-19 pandemic and those who are otherwise impacted by it. This would include those who have lost their home as a result of losing a job due to COVID-19, etc., but the hotels may require some information or documentation to verify that the need for the rental is related to the pandemic. Please feel free to call New Hanover County’s Coronavirus call center at 910-798-6800 or visit their webpage for resource assistance.
PROTEST AND CURFEW QUESTIONS

Q: Why did you implement a curfew for the current racial injustice protests but not for COVID-19? (Posted June 12, 2020)
A: There has not been an imminent threat to public safety at a particular time that would require a curfew as a response to COVID-19. The coronavirus is just as dangerous at any time of the day, so a curfew during specific hours is not helpful. Instead, the regulations in the Governor’s orders and the previous City declarations have been aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 through limitations on mass gatherings and social distancing recommendations at all times of the day and night.

Q: Why aren’t protesters being charged with violation of the mass gathering and social distancing requirements from the Governor’s COVID-19 Order? (Posted June 12, 2020)
A: Exercise of First Amendment rights is an exception to the mass gathering and social distancing requirements of the Governor’s order, so there is no limit to the number of people who can gather for a peaceful protest event or rally. The City still encourages everyone attending a protest or rally to wear a mask and exercise social distancing to the fullest extent possible in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, WEDDINGS, AND FUNERALS

Q: Can wedding receptions be held at private homes, rental beach houses, and private farms? (Posted July 31, 2020)
A: Private homes, beach houses, and farms may host parties or wedding receptions, but they are still held to the same maximum occupancy requirements of 10 inside / 25 outside, pursuant to the changes in the Governor’s EO 151.

Q: Is dancing allowed outside with a DJ? (Posted July 31, 2020)
A: Yes, dancing is allowed outside with a dance floor and DJ, as long as the 25 person outdoor limit is observed.

Q: Are churches allowed to be open? (Posted July 17, 2020)
A: Yes. Church services are an exception to the mass gathering rules, so they can be held with any number of people, inside or outside, but social distancing and the wearing of face coverings should still be observed to the fullest extent practicable.

Q: Can you clarify the rules for funerals and weddings? (Posted July 17, 2020)
A: Under the Governor’s Executive Order No. 141 (EO 141) funeral SERVICES and wedding CEREMONIES are exceptions to the mass gathering rule, so they may be any size and be held either inside or outside, but social distancing should be observed to the fullest extent practicable. However, any RECEPTION or VISITATION, either before or after the wedding or funeral is subject to the mass gathering requirement of either 10 people inside or 25 people outside.
RETAIL STORES

Q: Do retail stores have to provide their employees with personal protective equipment (PPE) to remain open? (Posted May 22, 2020)

A: All retail stores that are allowed to remain open are now subject to the regulations and recommendations of the Governor’s orders regarding maximum occupancy, social distancing, sanitation, mask wearing, and other steps to ensure the safety and health of both employees and customers. The Governor’s Order does not require that employers provide employees with personal protective equipment, but it does encourage employers to provide employees with cloth masks.

Q: Is the homeless population subject to the same gathering restrictions as everyone else, even when gathering for meals offered by non-profit organizations? (Posted March 31, 2020)

A: Organizations that provide food and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged individuals may continue offering services, including meals to the homeless population, but everyone involved should maintain 6-foot social distancing, and more than 10 persons should not congregate in the same area at the same time.

SCHOOLS

Q: Are private schools and charter schools required to abide by the Governor’s orders relating to school openings? (Posted July 17, 2020)

A: The Governor’s orders relating to school openings apply to all public schools in the state of North Carolina. If a charter school is a public school, then the requirements apply. If a school is truly private and not a public school or public charter school, then the school is free to determine its own schedule, but is also encouraged to use the Governor’s plan as guidance for re-opening.

TRAVEL AND MOBILITY

Q: Can traveling sports teams from the City be prevented from traveling to other states to play in tournaments? (Posted July 14, 2020)

A: No. All travel restrictions in the state have been lifted, so, unless the Governor reinstates the “Stay at Home” order, we do not have any way to restrict travel.

Q: Why is the City not closing public transportation? (Posted April 6, 2020)

A: All forms of transportation are essential in order to support workers who are going to and from essential jobs and members of the public who are traveling to obtain essential products and services like groceries and medicine. Unfortunately, having a personal vehicle is not an option for many people, so public transportation must remain operational in order to meet the needs of those individuals.