



STATE OF NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

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Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Implementing Second Phase of COVID-19 Restriction Easing

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy last night signed Executive Order No. 239, moving forward with the COVID-19 restriction easing announced last week. The easing includes the complete removal of the outdoor gathering limit; an increased indoor gathering limit; the complete removal of all percentage-based capacity limits for indoor businesses, outdoor businesses, and houses of worship,; and an increased indoor large venue capacity. Additionally, the prohibition on indoor interstate youth sports competitions is being lifted.

“Throughout the pandemic, data and public health needs have guided the hard decisions we’ve made on COVID-19 restrictions,” **said Governor Murphy**. “With COVID-19 metrics trending in the right direction amidst substantial progress on our COVID-19 vaccination program, we can move forward with these significant steps towards a return to normalcy.”

The following changes will take effect on Wednesday, May 19th:

- ***Complete removal of outdoor gathering limit***– Attendees at outdoor gatherings will still be required to remain six feet apart from other groups and existing requirements regarding mask wearing will remain in place.
- ***Indoor gathering limit***– The limit for indoor gatherings in private residences will be raised to 50 persons, up from 25 persons. Commercial gatherings and gatherings organized and operated by an

overseeing entity (e.g. conferences, expositions, meetings of fraternal organizations, job trainings, events hosted by senior centers) in public spaces will be subject to the 250-person indoor gathering limit that applies to indoor catered events, as long as all attendees can remain six feet apart.

- ***Complete removal of all percentage capacity limits for indoor and outdoor businesses, and houses of worship*** – The following businesses will no longer be subject to any percentage-based capacity restriction, but will instead be guided by the rule regarding six feet of distance between persons or groups of persons. This would include:
 - Indoor dining – Currently, indoor dining is limited to 50% capacity. This change will remove the 50% limitation but maintain the six feet of required distance between tables, except that tables will still be permitted to be closer than six feet where restaurants use partitions that comply with DOH requirements. Additionally, the prohibition on tables of more than 8 persons will be lifted. As a reminder, outdoor dining has never been bound to a capacity percentage.
 - Houses of worship and religious services, which are currently at 50% capacity.
 - Retail businesses, which are currently at 50% indoor capacity.
 - Gyms, which are currently at 50% indoor capacity.
 - Personal care services, which are currently at 50% indoor capacity.
 - Indoor amusement and recreation businesses and outdoor amusement and water parks, which are currently limited to 50% capacity.
 - Indoor and outdoor pools, which are both currently limited to 50% capacity.
 - Indoor catered events, funerals, memorial services, performances, and political activities – These events are currently limited to 50% of a room’s capacity, up to 250 individuals. Beginning on Wednesday, May 19, the 250-person limit will remain in place, but there will be no percentage-based capacity restrictions. Individuals and groups will need to remain six feet apart.
- ***Indoor large venue capacity*** – The capacity limit for indoor large venues will increase from 20% to 30% and the definition of a large venue would shift from those with 2,500 fixed seats to those with 1,000 fixed seats. The requirement that individuals or groups of individuals that purchase tickets together remain six feet apart will remain in place.
- ***Removal of prohibition on indoor interstate youth sports competitions*** – Athletes, staff, and spectators will still need to abide by all existing health and safety requirements.

For the full text of Executive Order No. 239, click [here](#).

