



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CITY OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES UPDATE TO COVID-19 REGULATIONS AS
HEALTH METRICS CONTINUE TO RISE**

*Revised regulations will keep most indoor capacity limits in place while allowing for
safe outdoor activities and ensuring consistency across industries*

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced updated COVID-19 regulations for Chicago businesses. Due to worrying increases in health metrics in recent weeks, most indoor regulations will remain in place, while outdoor capacity limits will increase at certain establishments to allow for safe activities in outdoor spaces that are less conducive to virus spread. These updated regulations, which include strict social distancing and face covering requirements, will help ensure that the recent rise across our health metrics does not lead to a third surge of the virus in Chicago.

“Over the last few weeks we have seen increases across our metrics, and I am concerned,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “Throughout the pandemic we have promoted caution as we reopen, and unfortunately this pandemic is clearly not over yet. While we have made great progress, I urge all Chicagoans to double down on the safety measures that we know work – wear a mask, keep gatherings small, and maintain social distancing.”

In recent weeks, Chicago’s COVID-19 health metrics have begun to rise following three months of steady decline or stability. CDPH has set four metrics to determine Chicago’s ability to move forward in the reopening plan - three of those four have increased significantly in the last week. Most alarmingly, new daily COVID cases have risen into the “High-Risk” level due to 5+ consecutive days of at least a 10% increase, and Emergency Department visits for COVID-like illness have increased by 38% in the last week:

- **COVID cases diagnosed per day:** currently averaging 365, in the “High-Risk” level and up 23% in the last week
- **COVID test positivity:** currently averaging 3.4%, in the “Lower-Risk” level and up 18% in the last week
- **Emergency Department visits for COVID-like illness:** currently averaging 73 per day, in the “Moderate-Risk” level and up 38% in the last week
- **ICU beds occupied by COVID patients:** currently averaging 73, in the “Lower-Risk” level and up 3% in the last week

While the State announced a loosening of restrictions last week, due to this concerning increase in the health metrics, most of Chicago’s indoor regulations will remain in place for now. CDPH will evaluate the metrics again in one week to determine if and how Chicago could loosen regulations and move to a “Bridge to Phase 5.”

“Our businesses have consistently stepped up throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and the last thing we want is to have to close back down,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareño. “Today’s update will help ensure that we continue to move cautiously and carefully forward while avoiding any large spikes in the virus.”

Under today’s update, most current indoor capacity limits will remain in place across industries. Indoor capacity at bars, restaurants, social events, performance venues, seated spectator events, places of worship and other establishments will remain limited to the lesser of 50% capacity or 50 people per room or floor. In each setting, six feet of physical distance must be maintained between different parties, meaning that facilities may need to operate at a lower capacity to achieve six feet between all parties. In order to ensure consistency across industries, indoor fitness class capacity will now increase to the lesser of 50% or 50 people per room, provided that six feet of social distancing can be maintained between patrons and face coverings are worn at all times

While indoor capacity limits will remain in place due to the recent increase in the health metrics, the virus is less likely to spread in outdoor settings and, as such, outdoor capacity will increase. The following outdoor capacity changes will take effect immediately:

- **Bars and Restaurants:** Maximum outdoor table size can increase to ten people, with tables set up so that patrons are six feet from patrons at other tables
- **Social Events (e.g. weddings, potlucks and other community events):** Total outdoor capacity can increase to the lesser of 50% or 100 people

- **Performance Venues, Theaters and Seated Spectator Events:** Outdoor venues with capacity greater than or equal to 200 can operate at 25% capacity. Smaller venues can operate at no more than 50% capacity or 50 people.
- **Outdoor Recreation:** Maximum groups of 50; multiple groups permitted
- **Places of Worship:** No outdoor capacity limit provided that six feet of social distancing is maintained between parties
- **Health and Fitness Centers:** Outdoor classes can increase to 100 people

Within all of these settings, six feet of social distancing must be maintained between parties, and face coverings can only be removed in limited circumstances. Additionally, in order to ensure proper enforcement and safety across industries, all patrons will continue to count towards capacity limits, even if they are fully vaccinated or have a recent negative test. The full COVID-19 regulations can be found at [Chicago.gov/reopening](https://www.chicago.gov/reopening).

BACP will continue its comprehensive outreach efforts to ensure that businesses understand the regulations through webinars, outreach calls and consultations. Since March, BACP has held 38 webinars, made over 34,500 calls directly to businesses and conducted 904 non-disciplinary consultations through the Active Compliance Program. BACP will also continue conducting investigations in response to complaints and taking enforcement action in egregious and repeated cases, including through the Large Gathering Task Force. Since last March, BACP has conducted 9,065 investigations and cited 469 businesses for violating COVID-19 violations.

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