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CDPHE approves Arapahoe County variance request with amendments

Decision should allow increased indoor capacity as local businesses reopen

On Monday, June 29, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) approved Arapahoe County's recent [request for a variance](#) from [Public Health Order 20-28](#), with certain conditions.

The County filed the variance request [on June 10](#) and requested that allowances be made for area gyms, restaurants, houses of worship and indoor malls. The CDPHE granted these requests "based on the low disease prevalence" within the County, and the agency stipulated the following restrictions:

- **Gyms, restaurants and houses of worship:** Each may allow for 50% of the posted occupancy code, not to exceed more than 175 people in a confined indoor space with a minimum of 6 feet distancing. Restaurants and houses of worship may work with their local authorities to determine how many people they may have in an outdoor space.
- **Indoor malls:** The current requirements limit confined spaces for indoor events to 100 people. The CDPHE said that the County's request of 30% building capacity "does not include a total person limit, other than what is calculated using a ratio of one person per 55 square feet. Based on the low-level variance approval, the total limit for an indoor mall for any confined indoor space is 175 people." The CDPHE also stressed that "it is critical for the common spaces within the indoor mall to be well-managed, as described in the variance application, to mitigate gatherings above 10 people and keep traffic flow moving."

The CDPHE response said that the variance is subject to adjustment should conditions worsen as described [here](#).

Arapahoe County Board Chair Nancy Sharpe welcomed the CDPHE's decision. "The Board of County Commissioners appreciates the CDPHE's flexibility on this matter," she said. "We want to get our economy up and running again, but we realize that this will only happen successfully if all County residents and businesses do their part to help ensure that everyone is maintaining the health and safety practices that are crucial to slowing the spread of COVID."

Officials at the Tri-County Health Department also expressed their satisfaction with the variance. “The request submitted by the Board meets the guidelines we’ve recommended,” said Jennifer Ludwig, deputy director of the Tri-County Health Department. “We will continue to work closely with County officials to monitor the conditions on the ground as this next phase begins, and we’ll issue updates about the situation as needed.”

To read the CDPHE’s full response, visit [our website](#).

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