

## North Carolina Governor Further Eases COVID

### COVID-19 Response Resource Center: Timely Counsel for your Business

By Alexander Elkan and Ed Turlington on 03.24.2021

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This week, Governor Roy Cooper issued a new Executive Order 204, which further eased various restrictions imposed due to COVID-19. However, the state's general mask mandate remains in effect.

Among other things, the Order:

- increases mass gathering limits – the new limit for indoor gatherings is 50 people, and up to 100 people may gather outdoors;
- lifts the restriction on the late-night sale and service of alcoholic beverages on bars, restaurants, and other establishments;
- establishes three general categories of occupancy restrictions – up to 100% capacity, 75% capacity, and 50% capacity; and
- continues both the general mask mandate and the requirement that all businesses maintain six feet of distance between patrons and implement other safety protocols as they expand their capacity.

The new Order is effective on March 26, 2021 at 5 p.m. and extends through April 30, 2021.

Some changes to note under the Order include:

#### **Capacity Limitations**

Indoors and outdoors up to 100% capacity, subject to masks and six feet social distancing

- Museums and aquariums
- Retail Businesses
- Salons, personal care and grooming businesses, tattoo parlors

North Carolina Governor Further Eases COVID Restrictions on Businesses and Gatherings

Indoors up to 75% and outdoors up to 100% capacity, subject to masks and six feet social distancing

- Restaurants
- Breweries, wineries, and distilleries
- Recreation (e.g., bowling, skating, rock climbing)
- Fitness and physical activity facilities (e.g., gyms, yoga studios, fitness centers)
- Pools
- Amusement parks

Indoors and outdoors up to 50% capacity, subject to masks and six feet social distancing

- Bars
- Meeting, reception and conference spaces
- Lounges (including tobacco) and night clubs
- Auditoriums, arenas and other venues for live performances
- Sports arenas and fields (includes professional, collegiate and amateur)
- Movie theaters (may operate at up to 75% capacity outdoors)
- Gaming facilities (may operate at up to 75% capacity outdoors)

Updated K-12 guidance

• In addition to the Governor's EO 204, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released updated K-12 school guidance in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit. This update aligns with Session Law 2021-4, which was the result of bipartisan legislative and executive efforts. DHHS directs that schools should return to in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible while following all public health protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit.

Continued Three Ws

North Carolina Governor Further Eases COVID Restrictions on Businesses and Gatherings

- In announcing EO 204, state health officials stressed the importance of continuing the mask mandate and practicing safety precautions, including the Three Ws—wear a mask, wait six feet apart, and wash hands often.

**Notable FAQs**

- FAQs for the new Executive Order may be accessed at [this link](#).

If you have questions, please contact Alex Elkan or Ed Turlington.

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Brooks Pierce is dedicated to keeping our clients fully informed during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information, please visit our [COVID-19 Response Resources](#) page.

**Tags:** Masks, school re-opening