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 Together, We Are Maine

Restarting Maine's Economy

Introduction

Related Documents

[Restarting Maine's Economy Booklet \(PDF\)](#)

[Restarting Maine's Economy Sample Checklist \(PDF\)](#)

[COVID-19: Public Health Considerations for Re-Opening Maine Presentation \(PDF\)](#)

After months of tireless efforts and decisive action by people across Maine, our state appears to be flattening the curve against COVID-19. However, we should not expect life to return to normal. Instead, we have to embrace a new normal – a different way of doing business, shopping, traveling and recreating that keeps us all safe. To that end, the Mills Administration has prepared a plan to gradually and safely restart Maine's economy.

The plan establishes four gradual stages of reopening, the first of which begins on May 1st. Designed with input from public health and industry experts, this staged approach will allow Maine businesses to safely open when the time is right, and stay open by following reasonable, practical guidelines to ensure the safety of employees and customers.

Public health is the foremost factor guiding this process. As the Administration gradually eases restrictions on some businesses and activities, it also implements protective protocols, along with broader additional health and safety measures, to protect Maine people.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for this approach include:

- 1. Protecting Public Health:** The State will continue to use epidemiological data, such as case trends and hospitalization rates, to inform decisions about the appropriate time to lift restrictions.
- 2. Maintaining Health Care Readiness:** Maine must be able to respond to any surge of COVID-19. To that end, the State will continue to work closely with hospitals and health systems to assess system capacity, including available hospital beds, ICU beds and ventilators, and to procure and distribute personal protective equipment to hospitals, nursing facilities, emergency services, and other frontline responders.

3. Building Reliable and Accessible Testing: Testing for all symptomatic people and sentinel disease surveillance are key foundations for opening the economy. While the widespread availability of rapid testing and antibody testing remains a challenge, the State is actively seeking to expand testing to make it more accessible to Maine people.

4. Prioritizing Public-Private Collaboration: Opening Maine's economy depends on close collaboration among businesses, employees, government, and the public to develop, implement, oversee, and accept guidelines and safe practices. A new Economic Recovery task force will be appointed to ensure this occurs.

A Staged Approach

Under the Governor's plan, the stages are based on calendar months, to allow for time to assess the effectiveness of the health and safety precautions put into place and give businesses a predictable timeframe to plan for opening.

The earliest stages are focused on resuming business operations and activities which can be conducted in a safe manner, meaning they have a low risk for potential transmission of the virus.

In addition, new public health guidance will also go into effect. Maine people will be newly required to wear cloth face coverings in public settings where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Employers must also ensure workers wear such cloth face coverings when appropriate, and long-term care facilities will be subject to emergency rules to keep residents and staff safe.

While progression through the stages is planned month-by-month, decisions will be determined by public health metrics. Progress may also change based on virus trends, testing or treatment breakthroughs, or identification of new, safe ways of doing business.

Health Metrics

Throughout the opening process, Maine CDC epidemiological data, such as case trends and hospitalization rates, as well as health care readiness and capacity, will inform Governor Mills' decisions on proceeding through the stages and lifting restrictions.

The Maine CDC will be tracking three primary metrics in its evaluation of whether or not to progress through the stages:

1. a downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses and COVID-like syndromic cases;
2. a downward trajectory of documented cases and newly hospitalized patients; and
3. the capacity of Maine's hospital systems to treat all patients without crisis care and the ability of the state to engage in a robust testing program.

The Administration will also continue to evaluate standards outlined in the Governor's vision statement, such as testing capacity and contact tracing, to inform decisions about proceeding.

If the COVID-19 situation worsens in Maine for any reason, the state will move quickly to either halt progress or return to an earlier stage.

Establishing Safety Precautions

In order to reopen, various sectors of Maine's economy will be required to work with the Department of Economic and Community Development to implement practical, reasonable, evidence-informed safety protocols and modifications that protect the health and safety of employees and customers.

These accommodations may be as simple as closing break rooms, providing flexible working hours, employee training, and installing plexiglass shields, or as complex as adjusting a business' sales process and reducing occupancy to ensure employee and customer safety.

This collaboration between DECD and the private sector will result in what will be known as a COVID-19 Prevention Checklists, which will be distributed ahead of staged openings to allow businesses to prepare.

These checklists will identify best practices for the business specific to its operations as well as general best practices related to physical distancing, hygiene, personal protection, and maintenance of clean workplaces, among others.

The checklists, which will differ sector to sector, will undergo a rigorous review process including from government officials, health experts, and industry representatives. [A sample checklist is included](#) as an appendix to this plan.

Businesses that commit to complying with the requirements on the checklist will be provided a badge to post at their business, on their website, in their advertising, or on social media. Their names will also be posted on the DECD website and they will be allowed to open. Health providers in Maine will follow U.S. CDC and professional association guidelines.

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The Governor's plan builds on current Executive Orders, which allow for the operation of grocery stores, pharmacies, financial institutions, home repair services, and car repair services, [among others \(PDF\)](#), and then plans for the safe reopening of those businesses not currently operating.

The stages do not use essential v. non-essential designations, like those used to limit business operations and activities in the immediate response to COVID-19. All businesses in Maine are essential, and the focus is now on ensuring the safety of their employees and customers.

The stages are advanced as a framework for planning. Innovations or expanded testing and other capacity could accelerate this pace, as could a determination that certain parts of Maine, such as rural areas, may be able ease restrictions safely.

The Mills Administration does not currently anticipate that it will be safe to accept cruise or commercial passenger ships with more than 50 people this summer. The Administration will review this assessment in September 2020. This excludes passenger ferries working between Maine ports.

Additionally, the Administration is currently working with stakeholders to develop plans for a safe return to school in the fall.

The upcoming four stages as contemplated by the Governor's plan include:

Stage 1, May

Stage 1 contemplates a continued prohibition on gatherings of more than 10 people as well as the continued quarantine of all people entering Maine for a period of 14 days. All businesses that have been open may remain open. At-risk people should stay home when possible.

In addition:

- If employees are able to work from home, they should continue to do so. This includes State of Maine employees.
- Professional services, such as legal services, should continue to be done remotely.
- Construction firms should deploy additional Personal Protective Equipment and other safety measures on job sites.

[Checklists for Phase 1 business are now available on the DECD website](#)

Openings permitted per checklist standards

Entertainment

- Drive-in theaters

Health care

- Health care from Maine licensed providers, with a recommendation that they prioritize care for patients with time-sensitive conditions; assure the safety of patients, staff, and communities; manage the use of essential resources such as personal protective equipment and testing supplies; and pace reopening services to the level of community COVID-19 activity, maintaining capacity in our hospitals for potential outbreaks.

Outdoor recreation

- Golf Courses and Disc Golf Courses
- Guided outdoor activities (Hunting, Fishing)
- Guided boating (10 or fewer customers)
- Marinas
- Some 30 State Parks and Historic sites, but coastal sites will remain closed.
- State owned public lands trails

Personal services

- Barber Shops and Hair Salons
- Dog Grooming

Religious

- Limited drive-in, stay-in-your-vehicle church services

Retail/Commercial

- Auto Dealerships
- Car Washes

Stage 2, June

Stage 2 contemplates a continued prohibition on gatherings of more than 50 people and the 14-day quarantine on people entering Maine. All businesses that have been open may remain open. At-risk people should stay home when possible. Employees in legal and professional fields may return to offices, including State employees, as needed.

Openings permitted per checklist standards

Hospitality

- Restaurants
- Lodging (Open to Maine residents.)

Outdoor recreation

- Campgrounds/RV parks (Open to Maine residents.)
- Day camps for Maine children
- Coastal State Parks, with some services

Personal services

- Fitness and Exercise Gyms
- Nail Technicians

Retail

- All retail businesses

Stage 3, July-August

Stage 3 maintains the prohibition on gatherings of more than 50 people and the 14-day quarantine on people entering Maine. All businesses that have been open may remain open. At-risk people should stay home when possible. Employees in legal and professional fields may return to offices, including State employees, as needed.

Openings permitted per checklist standards

Hospitality

- Bars
- Lodging, such as hotels, campgrounds, summer camps, or RV parks for Maine residents and visitors. The Administration is developing guidelines (e.g. potential testing requirements) to assist them in safely reopening, and reservations should not be taken until those guidelines are issued.

Outdoor recreation

- Charter boats, excursions – fewer than 50 people
- State Park Campgrounds
- Summer Camps

Personal services

- Spas
- Tattoo and Piercing Parlors
- Massage Facilities
- Cosmetologists and Estheticians
- Electrolysis Services
- Laser Hair Removal Services, and Similar Personal Care and Treatment Facilities and Services

Stage 4, TBD

All businesses are open and operating with appropriate safety modifications.

Credits

Information



 InforME logo

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