

# Governor Mills Updates Moving Maine Forward Plan, Lifts Restrictions

May 13, 2021

*Starting May 24<sup>th</sup>, capacity limits lifted & physical distancing requirements eased*

The Mills Administration today updated its public health protocols under the Moving Maine Forward Plan. Effective May 24<sup>th</sup>, Maine will:

- lift all capacity limits and requirements to physically distance in all public outdoor settings.
- lift all capacity limits in public indoor venues. Physical distancing requirements are also eliminated, except in settings where people are eating or drinking and therefore would be removing their face covering – such as indoor restaurants, bars, dining areas in camps or in congregate living facilities, and break rooms.

Face coverings must still be worn in public indoor settings. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services and Maine Department of Education will separately update school-based protocols.

The Biden Administration has said that as we approach July 4<sup>th</sup> the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will issue updated guidance, based on the best available science and the pace of vaccinations, on permissible activities after being vaccinated. The State of Maine will closely evaluate any changes in Federal recommendations.

“As we continue to make progress in vaccinating Maine people, it is appropriate to update our protocols ahead of schedule. While we are easing restrictions on capacity limits and physical distancing requirements in most instances, we are maintaining masks for indoor activities and distancing for when you can’t wear a mask, like when you’re eating indoors,” **said Governor Janet Mills.** “This change aligns with the latest science and makes sense for Maine at this stage, with more people getting vaccinated. We will continuously review our protocols. The fact is the more people get vaccinated, the faster we will be able to get back to normal.”

“We’ve continuously adapted our public health protocols as the science evolves and as vaccination increasingly protects Maine people from COVID-19,” **said Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.** “Today’s updates reflect that approach and Maine’s success so far in getting shots into arms. We urge anyone who hasn’t yet been vaccinated to make an appointment or drop by a vaccination site.”

“These changes reflect the most recent science on how the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted,” **said Nirav. D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.** “However, getting vaccinated remains the best way to limit potential transmission and protect yourself and your community from COVID-19.”

“With today’s announcement, we are continuing our progress in getting Maine back to normal while protecting public health,” **said Heather Johnson, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development.** “These adjustments to the Moving Maine Forward Plan continue to allow for additional capacity for businesses and non-profits to safely plan for a robust tourism season.”

Previously, under the Moving Maine Forward Plan, indoor gathering capacity was scheduled to increase to 75 percent and outdoor gathering capacity had been scheduled to increase to 100 percent on May 24<sup>th</sup> and physical distancing was still required. The Governor lifted the requirement to wear a face covering outdoors on April 27, 2021.

The update comes as Maine continues to make good progress in vaccinating people. Governor Mills announced yesterday that more than 70 percent of Maine people age 18 and older have received at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC) [tracker](#). Moreover, Maine continues to lead the nation in the percentage of its total population that is fully vaccinated, according to [Bloomberg](#).

Additionally, despite having the oldest median age population in the country, Maine, adjusted for population, ranks fourth lowest among states in both the total number of COVID-19 cases and number of deaths from COVID-19, according to the U.S. CDC.

Governor Mills also renewed the State of Civil Emergency today as Maine continues its focus on vaccinations:

“We are making important progress, but we must keep getting shots into arms to get this pandemic fully behind us,” **said Governor Mills.** “I urge all Maine people to get vaccinated so we can get back to normal as soon as possible.”

The Governor’s decision to extend the emergency is in line with nearly every other state in the nation, which have ongoing emergency declarations, according to the National Governors Association.

A State of Civil Emergency allows Maine to deploy all available tools to respond to and contain COVID-19. This is Governor Mills’ fifteenth extension of the State of Civil Emergency. Under Maine law, Proclamations of Civil Emergencies may be issued in thirty-day increments.