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## **Governor Murphy Lifts Major COVID-19 Restrictions, Moves Forward with Most Significant Reopening Steps to Date**

*With Key COVID-19 Benchmarks Achieved, Governor Murphy Lifts Indoor Mask Mandate, Removes Social Distancing Requirements and Gathering Limits Among Others*

*Changes Effective in Two Phases – On Friday, May 28 and Friday, June 4*

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 242, lifting major COVID-19 restrictions and moving forward with the state’s most significant reopening steps to date. Effective on Friday, May 28, the indoor mask mandate in public spaces will be lifted, as well as the six-foot social distancing requirement in both indoor and outdoor spaces, the prohibition on dance floors at bars and restaurants, and the prohibition on ordering and eating/drinking while standing at bars and restaurants. Additionally, effective Friday, June 4, indoor gathering and capacity limits will be lifted.

Over the last two weeks, key COVID-19 benchmarks have been achieved across New Jersey, including a dramatic increase in vaccinations, and significant decreases in new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, spot positivity rates, and rates of transmission, solidifying the foundation for the state’s sweeping reopening steps. Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, individuals who are not fully vaccinated -- defined as two weeks after receiving the second shot of a two-dose vaccination (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccination (Johnson & Johnson) – are strongly encouraged to continue masking and social distancing.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, my administration has been guided by science, data, and facts to put New Jersey on the road to recovery with the public health and safety of all New Jerseyans as our highest priority,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Together, we have made tremendous progress in crushing this virus, and the last two weeks have shown significant decreases in key areas of our data, including new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, spot positivity rates, and rates of transmission. These data points, coupled with a dramatic

increase in our vaccination efforts resulting in over 4.7 million New Jerseyans with their first shot, allow us to lift major restrictions and move forward with our most significant reopening steps to date.”

**The following changes will go into effect on Friday, May 28:**

- **Lifting the mask mandate in indoor public spaces.**
  - Businesses and entities overseeing indoor spaces will continue to have the ability to require masking for employees, customers, and/or guests.
  - Per CDC guidance, masks will continue to be required in health care settings, including long-term care facilities and office-based settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation, as well as transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
  - Additionally, also per CDC guidance, child care centers and facilities, youth summer camps, and public, private, and parochial preschool program premises and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, are not affected by this announcement and continue to be governed by existing requirements.
  - Indoor worksites that are not open to the public remain governed by existing health and safety protocols that employers must follow.
  - Masks will continue to be required in public-facing state offices, such as Motor Vehicle Commission agencies.
- **Lifting the six-foot social distancing requirement.**
  - The requirement will be lifted in businesses, including retail stores, personal care services, gyms, recreational and entertainment businesses, and casinos, and indoor gatherings, including religious services, political activities, weddings, funerals, memorial services, commercial gatherings, catered events, sports competitions, and performances.
  - Businesses and entities overseeing indoor spaces can continue to require social distancing should they choose.
- **Lifting prohibition on dance floors at bars and restaurants.** The prohibition on ordering and eating/drinking while standing at bars and restaurants will also be lifted.

**The following changes will go into effect Friday, June 4:**

- Removing the general indoor gathering limit, which is currently at 50 people.
- Removing the indoor gathering limit for political gatherings, weddings, funerals, memorial services, performances, and other catered and commercial events, which is currently at 250 people.
- Removing 30 percent capacity limitation for indoor large venues with a fixed-seating capacity over 1,000.