

MONTANA

REOPENING THE BIG SKY

PHASED APPROACH

Message From Governor Bullock

To my fellow Montanans:

In times of crisis, Montanans have always pulled together, and this time has been no different. We have been aggressively managing the virus.

As a result of the actions we have taken, we have among the lowest number of COVID-19 cases in the nation. Montana also has the lowest number of hospitalizations, per capita, in the nation.

We have slowed the spread of this virus and saved lives.

These collective actions have allowed us to get to where we are today – to begin a phased reopening of the state.

I recognize that for over the past five weeks Montanans all across the state have gone to incredible lengths to protect our families, friends and the greater Montana community. We have made these sacrifices for health care workers. We have done so for all the other frontline workers in this crisis. We have done so for those most vulnerable to severe illness from this disease. From the start of this pandemic, I have been incredibly inspired each and every day by how Montanans have come together as a community and by how Montanans have taken the directives seriously to keep our fellow Montanans healthy and safe.

While there is reason for optimism, I am going to ask Montanans to continue looking out for our neighbors who need it the most and to continue being vigilant in every step we take. Because just as important as it was for us to act as a community beginning five weeks ago, that still holds true to this day – and moving forward.

Once we begin to reopen, we want to be able to stay open. Our personal responsibility to protect those around us – particularly those most vulnerable – remains just as important as any time during this pandemic.

We have done this the Montana way by taking care of our neighbors when things get tough, and we will continue to do so. Thank you for doing what is best for the state of Montana, best for Montana workers, and best for the future of Montana's children.

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Phased Approach

- BASED ON **UP-TO-DATE DATA** AND PREPAREDNESS.
- **MITIGATES** RISK OF RESURGENCE.
- **PROTECTS** THE MOST VULNERABLE.
- IMPLEMENTABLE ON **STATEWIDE, TRIBAL, OR COUNTY-BY-COUNTY BASIS.**
- ABILITY TO **ADJUST THE PHASES** BASED ON WHAT IS HAPPENING LOCALLY AND/OR REGIONALLY.

As the State Begins a Phased Reopening the Following Areas Will be Considered

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Evaluation of new cases over time.
- Ability to conduct active monitoring and contact tracing.
- Syndromic surveillance (e.g. respiratory symptoms).

HEALTHCARE

- Ability of hospitals to safely treat all patients, both COVID-19 and those with other conditions.
- Adequate hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacity.

SUPPLIES

- Capacity to test all people with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Adequate personal protective equipment.

Local Jurisdictional Considerations

- Elected officials should coordinate on a regional basis to satisfy these criteria and to progress through the phases outlined in this document.

- Local jurisdictions can enact guidelines that are more restrictive than the State guidelines.

Core Preparedness Responsibilities

TESTING AND CONTACT TRACING

- Ability to test symptomatic people for COVID-19 and trace contacts of COVID+ results.
- Ensure sentinel sites are screening for asymptomatic cases and contacts for COVID+ results are traced (sites operate at locations that serve older individuals, at-risk/vulnerable individuals, lower-income Americans, racial minorities, American Indians, and Correctional Institutions).

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM CAPACITY

- Ability to quickly and independently supply sufficient personal protective equipment and critical medical equipment to handle dramatic surge.
- Ability to surge Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacity.

Core Preparedness Responsibilities Continued

PLANS

- Protect the health and safety of all Montana citizens.
- Protect the health and safety of those living and working in high-risk facilities (e.g. senior care facilities).
- Provide for the safety of those who use transportation where people congregate amongst one another (airlines, buses, trains, etc.).
- Advise citizens and employers regarding protocols for social distancing and face coverings.
- Monitor conditions and immediately take steps to limit and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks by restarting a phase or returning to an earlier phase, depending on severity.

Schools

- Beginning May 7, 2020 all schools have the option to return to in-classroom teaching delivery.
- The State recognizes that if reopened, schools will require the district to make adjustments and create plans, policies, and procedures.
- If schools plan to reopen they should consider:
  - Implementing an alternative educational delivery model that includes a mix of in-person and remote learning.
  - Providing focused individual education, especially for at-risk students.
  - How to reconnect and meet the educational needs of students who fall behind in a remote learning environment.
  - The importance of maintaining the connection between students, teachers, and parents.
  - The important role that schools play in the health of students, families, and communities.
  - Graduation environments that can meet the social distancing requirements.

Guidelines for All Phases: Individuals

CONTINUE TO PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.
- Strongly consider using non-medical face coverings while in public, especially in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing (grocery/retail stores, pharmacies, public transportation, etc.).

PEOPLE WHO FEEL SICK SHOULD STAY HOME

- Do not go to work or school.
- Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.
- Follow local health department guidance on isolation and quarantine.

Guidelines for All Phases: Employers

Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices, regarding:

- Social distancing and protective equipment.
- Temperature checks and/or symptom screening.
- Collaborate with public health on testing, isolating, and contact tracing.
- Sanitation.
- Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas.

Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms. Do not allow people with symptoms of COVID-19 to work.

Collaborate with public heath when implementing policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following an employee COVID+ test.

PHASE ONE

Phase One: Individuals

- **ALL VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** should continue to follow the stay home guidance. Members of households with vulnerable residents should be aware that by returning to work or other environments where distancing is not practical, they could carry the virus back home. Precautions should be taken to isolate from vulnerable residents.
    - *Vulnerable Individuals: people over 65 years of age and/or those with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.*
- All individuals (non-household), **WHEN IN PUBLIC** (e.g., parks, outdoor recreation areas, shopping areas), should maximize physical distance from others.
- Avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **10 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- **MINIMIZE NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL** and adhere to Montana guidelines regarding quarantine.

Phase One: Employers

- Continue to **ENCOURAGE TELEWORK** whenever possible and feasible with business operations.
- When telework is not feasible it is encouraged to **ACCOMMODATE ALTERNATE WORK SCHEDULES** such as shift work and staggered scheduling in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Close **COMMON AREAS** where personnel are likely to congregate and interact; or enforce strict social distancing protocols.
- **MINIMIZE NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESS TRAVEL.**
- **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS** should be made for members of a **VULNERABLE POPULATION** or those with vulnerable household members.

Phase One: Specific Types of Employers / Activities

- **SENIOR LIVING OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES** must continue to prohibit visitors. Those who do interact with residents and patients must ensure strict protocols regarding hygiene and protection are followed.
  - This includes daily screening of staff for symptoms and preventing ill workers from working.
- **CHILD CARE FACILITIES** can remain operational but should follow State and local guidelines regarding operational levels and occupancy.
- **ORGANIZED YOUTH ACTIVITES** can consider becoming operational if physical distancing guidelines can be implemented. Avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **10 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- **RESTAURANTS / BARS / BREWERIES / DISTILLERIES / CASINOS** can become operational on or after May 4, 2020 under strict physical distancing and reduced capacity protocols in accordance with State guidelines.
  - All patrons must be out of bars, restaurants, and casinos by 11:30.

Phase One: Specific Types of Employers / Activities Continued

- **MAIN STREET AND RETAIL BUSINESSES** can become operational on or after April 27, 2020 with reduced capacity and where strict physical distancing protocols can be maintained.
- **GYMS / POOLS / HOT TUBS** remain closed.
- **OUTDOOR RECREATION** can become operational if sites adhere to strict physical distancing between groups and exercise frequent sanitation protocols if public facilities are open.
- **PLACES OF WORSHIP** can become operational on or after April 26, 2020 with reduced capacity and where strict physical distancing protocols can be maintained between non-household members. Avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **10 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Other **PLACE OF ASSEMBLY** shall remain closed (e.g., movie and performance theaters, concert halls, bowling alleys, bingo halls, and music halls).

PHASE TWO

- Gatherings may expand to 50 people.
- Vulnerable populations should continue to follow stay home guidance.
- Gyms / Pools / Hot Tubs can become operational.
- In addition to houses of worship, other places of assembly can become operational under the group size restrictions and physical distancing guidelines in this phase.

Phase Two: Individuals and Employers

- Avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **50 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- **NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL** guidelines remain the same as **PHASE ONE** for individuals traveling into Montana and for Montanans returning home.
- **VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** should continue to adhere to the stay home guidance.
- Continue to **ENCOURAGE TELEWORK** as much as possible and where feasible but refer to guideline in **PHASE ONE** when telework is not possible.
- **SENIOR LIVING OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES** must continue to follow the guidelines of **PHASE ONE.**
- **CHILD CARE FACILITIES** can increase capacity if physical distancing guidelines can be implemented**.**
- **ORGANIZED YOUTH ACTIVITES** remain operational and should avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **50 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.

Phase Two: Individuals and Employers Continued

- **ALL BUSINESSES** can remain operational and must adhere to physical distancing.
- **RESTAURANTS / BARS / BREWERIES / DISTILLERIES / CASINOS** remain in the same operational status as **PHASE ONE,** but with an increase in capacity.
- **GYMS / POOLS / HOT TUBS** can become operational with reduced capacity and only if they can adhere to strict physical distancing and they exercise frequent sanitation protocols.
- **OUTDOOR RECREATION** remain in the same operational status as **PHASE ONE**.
- **PLACES OF ASSEMBLY** can become operational with reduced capacity and must adhere to physical distancing. Avoid **GATHERING** in groups of more than **50 people** in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing.

PHASE THREE

- No limit on group size.
- Vulnerable populations can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, and continue to take precautionary measures.

Phase Three: Individuals and Employers

- **ALL INDIVIDUALS and EMPLOYERS** should continue to operate consistent with updated CDC guidelines.
- For **ALL INDIVIDUALS** there is no limit on group size**,** however everyone should consider minimizing contact time with others and limit time spent in crowded environments.
- **VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, and continue to take precautionary measures.
- Employers can resume **FULL STAFFING** of workplaces.
- Visits to **SENIOR CARE FACILITIES** can resume. Those who interact with residents and patients must be diligent regarding hygiene.
- **ALL BUSINESSES / PLACES OF ASSEMBLY** can remain fully operational with awareness of physical distancing.

Phase Three: Individuals and Employers

- **GYMS / POOLS / HOT TUBS** can remain fully operational but must still exercise frequent sanitation protocols.
- **OUTDOOR RECREATION** Interstate tourism travel resumes. Campground, group-use facilities, playgrounds and visitor centers are fully open.
- There is no limit on **GROUP SIZE** during this phase, however **PHYSICAL DISTANCING** should still be observed**.**
- Continue to follow **GUIDELINES FOR ALL PHASES.**

Resources

- For a comprehensive list of resources and guidelines please visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Service's (DPHHS) websites at:
  - www.cdc.gov
  - https://dphhs.mt.gov