



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

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## **MDHHS Updates Epidemic Order and Lifts Mask Requirements for Outdoor Gatherings of Under 100 People**

*Public health protocols relaxed for outdoor activities as more Michiganders get vaccinated with safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine*

**LANSING, MICH.** The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) today updated its [COVID-19 Gatherings and Face Masks epidemic order](#) to encourage safer outdoor activities as spring and summer bring warmer weather and new opportunities to go outdoors. Under the new order, which goes into effect Thursday, May 6, and continues through Monday, May 31, masks are generally not required outdoors unless a gathering has 100 or more people.

In addition, anyone who is fully vaccinated and not experiencing symptoms is not required to wear a mask at residential gatherings, including indoors. New guidance for organized sports no longer requires routine COVID-19 testing for fully vaccinated participants if they are asymptomatic. Masks continue to be required for contact sports but are no longer required outdoors during active practice and competition for non-contact sports. For example, softball and baseball players will be required to wear a mask in the dugout but not when at bat or playing first base.

MDHHS continues to urge Michiganders to follow [CDC guidance](#), even where not specifically required by an epidemic order. For people who aren't yet fully vaccinated, that means masking up whenever around other people not from your household.

"The commitment by Michiganders to receive the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is allowing us to move toward a return to normal," said MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel. "The vaccines work. That means once Michiganders are fully vaccinated, they do not have to abide by as many health guidelines because of the protection the vaccine provides from the spread of the virus. Last week, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer launched the [MI Vacc to Normal plan](#) to set vaccine milestones to enable a return toward normalcy. This week we are taking further steps in that direction."

The Gatherings and Mask Order preserves strong public health measures to control the spread of COVID-19.

"Getting your vaccine is the most important thing you can do to protect yourself, your family and your community," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. "Vaccines give you the freedom and peace of mind to be able to do more things, but we still have work to do to reach our goal of vaccinating at least 70% of residents ages 16 and up. Get one of the three safe

and effective vaccines as soon as you are able, and please remember you need to get your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines to get the full immunity that these vaccines offer.”

To date, 39.3% of Michigan residents 16 and older had been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and 50.6% had received at least a first dose.

Updates to the Gatherings and Masks Order encourage outdoor events with larger capacities permitted for entertainment and recreational facilities and for sports stadiums and arenas that hold events outdoors. This includes:

- **Large outdoor events, including festivals, fairs, and golf tournaments** will be able to exceed the current 1,000-person limit so long as they create and post a safety plan consistent with the MDHHS Large Outdoor Event Guidance, and no more than 20 persons per 1,000 square feet are gathered in any space available to patrons.
- **Outdoor stadiums and arenas:**
  - Stadiums complying with enhanced protocols will continue to be allowed to operate at 20% of their fixed seating capacity. For example, a stadium with a maximum capacity complying with enhanced protocols would be permitted to host 8,000 patrons.
  - Otherwise, for stadiums or arenas with a fixed seating capacity of 5,000 or greater without enhanced protocols 1,000 patrons may be gathered (previously 750).
  - For stadiums or arenas with a fixed seating capacity of 10,000 or greater without enhanced protocols 1,500 patrons may be gathered.
- **Residential outdoor gatherings** are allowed up to 50 people. Or, where density does not exceed 20 persons per 1,000 square feet of usable outdoor space, up to 300 people may be gathered.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus). To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine).

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[Choosing Safer Activities Infographic](#)