

Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen today announced that North Carolina will move into Safer at Home Phase 2 of lifting COVID-19 restrictions on Friday, May 22 at 5 pm. After two weeks in Phase 1, the state's overall key indicators remain stable but the continued increases in daily case counts signal a need to take a more modest step forward in Phase 2 than originally envisioned.

“North Carolina is using the data to guide our decisions about when to lift COVID-19 restrictions, and overall, our key indicators remain stable,” said Governor Cooper. “Safer at Home Phase 2 is another careful step forward, and we have to continue taking this virus seriously to prevent a dangerous spike in infections.”

“From the beginning, North Carolinians have joined together to confront this crisis. We need to rely upon one another to practice the three W's as we begin leaving our homes more. When we wear a face covering, wait six feet apart, and wash our hands often, we are showing we care for our loved ones and neighbors,” said Dr. Mandy Cohen.

Based on the metrics laid out in April by Governor Cooper and Secretary Cohen, North Carolina is evaluating a combination of the data from the following categories that shows the state is stable but still has increasing daily new lab confirmed case counts.

Trajectory in COVID-Like Illness (CLI) Surveillance Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness is decreasing.

Trajectory of Lab-Confirmed Cases Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of lab-confirmed cases is increasing.

Trajectory in Percent of Tests Returning Positive Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory in percent of tests returning positive has been decreasing and is starting to level.

Trajectory in Hospitalizations Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of hospitalizations is level.

In addition to these metrics, the state continues building capacity to be able to adequately respond to an increase in virus spread. These areas include:

Laboratory Testing

- North Carolina has more than doubled the daily testing rate with more than 8,000 tests completed daily on average. More than 300 testing sites across North Carolina are posted on the DHHS [testing information website](#).

Tracing Capability

- The Carolina Community Tracing Collaborative has already hired more than 150 new contact tracers adding to the 250 already working at our local health departments.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Supply chains continue to improve.

What's included in Safer at Home Phase 2?

Phase 2 lifts the Stay at Home order moving into a Safer At Home recommendation, especially for people at high risk for serious illness. Teleworking is also urged when possible.

Mass gathering limits in Phase 2 will be no more than 10 people indoors or 25 people outdoors in most circumstances. These limits apply to the following: event venues; conference centers; stadiums and sports arenas; amphitheaters; and groups at parks or beaches.

Some businesses will remain closed in Phase 2 including: bars; night clubs; gyms and indoor fitness facilities; indoor entertainment venues such as movie theaters, and bowling alleys.

Certain businesses will be open at limited capacity with other requirements and recommendations including: restaurants at 50% dine-in capacity with distancing and cleaning requirements; personal care businesses, including salons and barbers, at 50% capacity with distancing and cleaning requirements; pools at 50% capacity with distancing and cleaning requirements. Employees of personal care businesses will be required to wear face coverings.

Childcare facilities, day camps and overnight camps will be open with enhanced cleaning and screening requirements. Retail businesses allowed to open in Phase 1 at 50% capacity will continue at that level.

Public health recommendations are provided for worship services to practice enhanced social distancing and other cleaning and hygiene practices.

The Safer at Home Phase 2 runs through at least Friday, June 26.