



**NEVADA  
HEALTH  
RESPONSE**

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**Governor Sisolak provides criteria, framework for state-specific reopening plan**

Las Vegas, NV — Today, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak announced the framework the State will use as it begins to roll back restrictions and re-open. Gov. Sisolak was joined by a team of Nevada experts to lay out the State's criteria and provide updates specific to Nevada.

"Before we get to the first phase of our reopening plan, we must make sure we meet criteria set out by the federal government and our team of Nevada experts," **said Gov Sisolak.** "We are actively monitoring the criteria now, and once we have cleared this stage, we can begin the the first phase of getting back to business in Nevada."

To determine whether the State is ready to move into the first phase of re-opening, the Governor and Nevada experts will look at:

- A consistent and sustainable downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations over a 14-day period measured by a decrease in the trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations; and a decline in percentage of people testing positive
- Healthcare and Public Health Systems should be able to maintain hospital capacity without crisis standards of care, have a sufficient public health workforce capacity between the local and state health departments to conduct case contact tracing (detect, test, trace, isolate), have the expanded ability for healthcare providers to administer tests for symptomatic patients, and have sufficient

laboratory testing capacity to process COVID-19 testing samples

- A sustained ability to protect vulnerable populations, meaning that outbreaks are successfully contained and closed in special settings like health facilities and nursing homes
- Confirm protective measures are in place before moving to the first phase

In addition to providing the framework for the state-specific re-opening plan, Governor Sisolak also announced that K-12 schools throughout the State will continue distance learning education throughout the rest of the academic year.

The following is a copy of Governor Sisolak's prepared remarks as it relates to the re-opening plan for Nevada:

*As you just saw, the early models showed the potential for deaths in the tens of thousands if we didn't take immediate and aggressive action. But Nevadans took this seriously. You have been staying home for our State. You're wearing face coverings and protecting your families. YOU are the reason we have avoided thousands of deaths and a breakdown of our health care system.*

*Nevadans heeded the calls, followed the directives, and saved lives. The actions we all take going forward will determine if we continue with this success, or if we take a more obstructive path.*

*A lot of people have been sharing this analogy recently, and I think it's appropriate. Arguing that the curve is flattening and that we can immediately lift restrictions in one fell swoop is like arguing that the parachute has slowed our rate of descent so we can take it off now.*

*We cannot take off the parachute. Experience gleaned from other countries teaches us that we cannot flip a light switch and turn our lives and our economy back on too quickly. We still have a responsibility to protect people and to protect our economy.*

*Even though the models look good for Nevada right now, we are not out of the woods yet. The models change based on our behavior. We are in a better spot than we were six weeks ago, and we've got much more data to help us move forward as we work on our plan to re-open the state's economy.*

*You've heard me say this a lot over the past couple of weeks: that the people of Nevada – the lives of Nevadans – are more valuable than profit. That remains true, but I also understand what the cost has been to our State, your families, your businesses, and our economy.*

*We now want to move into a phase where saving lives and restarting our economy are not mutually exclusive. And our #1 goal as we move toward this is to ensure that Nevada's economic re-opening is sustainable. We know the following to be true:*

*The reopening of our economy is highly dependent upon expanded testing and tracing capacity.*

*Economic activity and recovery will require close collaboration between the state's employers and state and local government to ensure that the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions does not lead to an uncontrolled increase in COVID-19 cases.*

*And because we are an international tourism mecca, we have an added responsibility to get this re-opening plan correct. Our number one priority is always the health and safety of Nevadans, so we need to ensure there are proper protocols and procedures in place to care for our residents, and to welcome back tourists and visitors in a safe manner.*

*I am proud of all of our hotel-casino resort partners who have begun the thoughtful planning process to protect employees and visitors at their specific properties when they re-open. That is their No. 1 priority, and I am glad to see them take proactive steps. And I know the Gaming Control Board, which will ultimately sign off on any casino re-opening plan, is deeply involved in this work as well.*

*This is going to take a big lift from all of us at every level and in every sector. As I've said before, we could flip the switch and turn the lights back on, but our experts predict – and experience elsewhere in the world shows us – if we don't do this in a controlled and informed manner, we'll be hit like a tidal wave in two to three weeks. And I won't do that to our State. I know other leaders don't want that for Nevada, either.*

*So here's the reality. We are seeing fewer cases and deaths than were predicated by many of the models early in the outbreak. That means social distancing and other measures are working.*

*Flattening the curve is only beneficial if we can keep the curve flat. And the factors that helped us flatten the curve, like staying home, practicing aggressive social distancing and frequent hand washing, are still critical to our success.*

*This virus isn't gone. We have flattened this curve because of our human behavior.*

*The virus still remains, and will remain until doctors and medical experts find an approved treatment and develop a vaccine.*

*So, the emergency is not over yet, but has entered a new phase. We must continue to use good behavior and follow medical advice as we navigate this phase.*

*Today I wanted to get together with some of my team to present our planning framework for re-opening Nevada. This team and I have been working on this state-specific framework for weeks and spent the last few days reviewing the White House's Opening Up America Again plan as well. From the start, we have worked to ensure our state measures were in accordance with federal criteria and guidelines.*

*Today's overview is not the full re-opening plan. We knew that our first step had to be setting strong criteria that we must check-off before beginning Phase 1 of re-opening.*

*That is what I would like to walk through with you today.*

*Once I present our framework and criteria for re-opening, I will give a quick overview of some things Nevada can expect once we enter Phase 1. In the coming weeks, my team*

*and I will continue solidifying the details of Phase 1 as we work with business and community leaders and elected officials throughout the state.*

*This is our overall goal. We want to progressively open up different types of facilities and industries in a way that allows Nevadans to gradually return to their normal lives while continuing to prevent the spread of the disease. So once the curve is flattened, our goal is to keep it that way until we have validated, approved treatments and a vaccine.*

*The federal government has created "gating criteria" or criteria that should be met before we can move onto Phase One. Think about this period as Phase Zero. This is what we should do before we can get to Phase One.*

*Again, I am glad to have my experts with me to talk about this framework and how we will measure this criteria to let us know when we have passed the requirements to enter into Phase One.*

*Before we move to Phase 1, we must have a sustained ability to protect our vulnerable populations. That means outbreaks need to be successfully contained in special settings like health facilities, assisted living and skilled nursing homes. We know these populations are more susceptible to the virus. We must have the ability to converge on clusters in vulnerable populations and address them head on to contain the spread.*

*Once these items have been completed, we can move into the first phase to re-open, confident that we have all the necessary protective measures in place.*

*Due to the criteria that was developed by the state team and in accordance with the White House guidance, as of right now, I cannot give you a firm date as to when we will meet all this criteria and begin Phase 1 re-opening plans.*

*If we continue on this path, the date is on the horizon -- our behavior as Nevadans will ultimately help determine this date. And my goal is that my team and I will be able to communicate that to the public with adequate notice so businesses and services throughout the state have time to prepare.*

*This is atypical. The re-opening needs to be flexible, because it's going to rely on data and the virus. There is going to have to be some real-time decision making if we see a spike in cases and I will update Nevadans along the way as we monitor our progress.*

*I am working to update my previous directives to reflect this new reality, that Phase 1 can only begin when this criteria has been met.*

*Once we begin Phase 1, we will be able to loosen restrictions on certain activities and businesses, and the loosening of these restrictions will be done in accordance with federal guidance that's tailored to Nevada's specifics industries, businesses and communities. And now, I want to walk you through a little bit of what Phase 1 will look like.*

*The State will be working with stakeholders, community leaders, and elected officials throughout Nevada on our phased-in approach to re-opening. But today, I wanted to walk through what we do know about Phase 1, based on the federal criteria laid out in the Opening America Again plan. These are the initial standards Nevada should expect once all re-opening criteria is met and we enter Phase 1:*

*The federal government Phase 1 recommendations start with guidance for individuals. The federal criteria recommends that all vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place.*

*Nevada's medical advisory team agrees with this recommendation and so do I. When we reach Phase 1, we want to make sure that our vulnerable residents continue to stay at home and that those who live with vulnerable residents can take the necessary precautions. As we approach Phase 1, we will make sure updated guidance is issued on this very topic.*

*During phase 1, all individuals should avoid socializing in groups of more than 10 where you cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. Again, our medical advisory team agrees with this recommendation so we will maintain our directive when it comes to public gatherings throughout Phase 1.*

*Next, guidelines from the White House recommend that individuals minimize non-essential travel. We agree. So the previously issued travel advisory in Nevada will stay in place through Phase 1.*

*Finally, the White House recommends the public strongly consider using face coverings while in public. We have already issued guidance urging Nevadans to wear face coverings in public, and we are currently reviewing the possibility of strengthening this guidance as we begin to reopen.*

*The second set of recommendations from the federal government refer to how employers should behave during Phase 1.*

*Here is where we will tap on the expertise of Michael Brown, the executive director of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, or as I like to call it now, the Governor's Office of Economic Recovery. Considerations for industries of all types will be done in consultation GOED. Director Brown and his team are going to focus both on the immediate recovery by helping to provide strategic re-opening guidance to businesses on the protocols and practices required to operate under these new conditions.*

*In the long-term, GOED will help support businesses after re-opening by working together to help design and pursue strong economic strategies.*

*And most importantly, Director Brown and GOED will not be doing this alone. The Director will be reaching out and conducting sector-specific discussions and planning sessions with leaders throughout the private sector and other state agencies and licensing boards.*

*Finally, the phase one federal guidance has recommendations for specific types of employers.*

*During phase 1, in-person visits to senior living facilities and hospitals will be prohibited, to protect the health and safety of residents. But I strongly encourage facilities to consider videoconferencing capabilities.*

*Under the federal criteria, bars should remain closed. The Nevada Medical Advisory team agrees and so do I, so bars will continue to operate under existing restrictions during Phase 1.*

*The federal criteria also speaks to other specific employers, including elective surgeries, gyms and other large venues, like restaurants, movies, places of worship and sporting events.*

*All of those places are under review by the Nevada Medical Advisory Team. Once they have made a recommendation on how to handle these places during Phase 1, we will issue guidance and work with these industries to re-open in a safe way.*

*Finally, the last category in the White House's "Specific Employers" list for Phase 1 is schools.*

*In alignment with the federal government criteria and after extensive discussions with Superintendent Ebert, I have made the difficult decision to continue educating our students through distance learning for the rest of the school year.*

*We will continue our efforts to support teachers, staff, students and families throughout the rest of this academic year and I am grateful for Superintendent Ebert's ongoing leadership and coordination with our superintendents to provide innovative resources for students, educators and families, as well as working through the very challenging issues, including graduation for our seniors.*

*I have invited Superintendent Ebert to be here with us to day to talk a little bit more about this step and what it means for Nevada's students.*

*So, this is the start of our plan. Based on the guidance of our Nevada experts and the federal government criteria, we will focus on making sure we are prepared for Phase One. Once our re-opening criteria are satisfied and only then, will we move into Phase One as laid out by the federal government.*

*While we monitor this criteria to be able to move into Phase One, we will be preparing and issuing guidance to further spell out the Phase 1 implementation.*

*The team of experts you see around me will also be reviewing Phase Two and Phase Three criteria as set out by the federal government to see how that criteria fits with our Nevada-specific state plan.*

*As I mentioned before, the Governor's Office of Economic Development, led by Director Brown, along with our local, public and private partners, will begin sector-specific discussions on re-opening plans.*

*Nevada will also continue coordination with some of our fellow Western states. We are in close conversations now to share challenges, solutions and best practices. I look forward to strengthening this partnership in the near future.*

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