

Friday, November 13, 2020

As COVID-19 surges in states across the country, Governor Ralph Northam today announced new actions to mitigate the spread of the virus in Virginia. While the case counts per capita and positivity rate in Virginia remain comparatively low, when compared to our neighboring states and much of the country, Virginia is averaging 1,500 newly-reported COVID-19 cases per day, up from a statewide peak of approximately 1,200 in May.

The following measures will take effect at **midnight on Sunday, November 15:**

- **Reduction in public and private gatherings:** All public and private in-person gatherings must be limited to 25 individuals, down from the current cap of 250 people. This includes outdoor and indoor settings. A “gathering” includes, but is not limited to, parties, celebrations, or other social events, whether they occur indoors or outdoors.
- **Expansion of mask mandate:** All Virginians aged five and over are required to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces. This expands the current mask mandate, which has been in place in Virginia since May 29 and requires all individuals aged 10 and over to wear face coverings in indoor public settings.
- **Strengthened enforcement within essential retail businesses:** All essential retail businesses, including grocery stores and pharmacies, must adhere to statewide guidelines for physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and enhanced cleaning. While certain essential retail businesses have been required to adhere to these regulations as a best practice, violations will now be enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health as a Class One misdemeanor.
- **On-site alcohol curfew:** The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol is prohibited after 10:00 p.m. in any restaurant, dining establishment, food court, brewery, microbrewery, distillery, winery, or tasting room. All restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms must close by midnight. Virginia law does not distinguish between restaurants and bars, however, under current restrictions, individuals that choose to consume alcohol prior to 10:00 p.m. must be served as in a restaurant and remain seated at tables six feet apart.

The Governor’s video announcing the new actions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is available [here](#). The Governor’s full release can be found here: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/november/headline-861342-en.html>

The full text of amended Executive Order Sixty-Three and Order of Public Health Emergency Five and sixth amended Executive Order Sixty-Seven and Order of Public Health Emergency Seven will be made available [here](#). (As of 3:40pm, they had not yet been posted to the state’s website).