

ROAD TO RECOVERY / As most of Virginia begins gradual reopening, here's a look at the guidelines - and exceptions



## CORONAVIRUS

'We all want to end this pandemic': Northam bans gatherings of 100+ people as coronavirus



Governor Northam Address latest Coronavirus cases

By [NBC12 Newsroom](#) | March 15, 2020 at 12:38 PM EDT - Updated March 15 at 11:12 PM

RICHMOND, Va. (WWBT) - Governor Ralph Northam announced a ban on all gatherings of 100 people or more statewide Sunday amid a rise in coronavirus cases in Virginia.

The governor also confirmed a total of 45 COVID-19 cases in the commonwealth, while also confirming one related death in the peninsula district.

[ Here's everything you need to know about the virus in Virginia ]

The district - that covers Williamsburg, Newport News, Poquoson, James City County and York County - currently has 8 confirmed cases. Due to the "cluster" of cases, the governor ordered a shutdown of municipal offices there.

Norm Oliver, Virginia Health Commissioner, said they are doing hundreds of "contact investigations" to make sure they know everyone who came into contact with a sick person. He also said, "expect more and more cases to emerge."

"We are also very concerned about the likelihood of actual community spread of COVID-19, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the peninsula region. And for all those reasons we are going full-court press on trying to identify those cases well ahead of time and isolate them as we do identify them," Norm Oliver said.

The governor also placed a ban on gatherings of 50 people or more in the peninsula, half of what is being recommended statewide.

[ REWATCH: Governor Northam provides coronavirus update on Sunday ]

Local officials stated the outbreak will get worse before it gets better, but Northam said it is not yet time for quarantine.

“We ask people to use common sense,” said Governor Northam. “What we are trying to achieve here is the kind of social distancing that experts tell us is critical to stop the spread of the virus.

At a press conference Sunday, Northam said the ban on large gatherings does not apply to restaurants, bars and offices.



**Henry Graff**  
@HenryGraff

@GovernorVA says ban on groups of more than 100 people does not apply to businesses like restaurants, bars and offices. But he also urges people to not go to crowded bars and other crowded places. “We all want to end this pandemic.” @NBC12



13 12:11 PM - Mar 15, 2020

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The Virginia Department of Health continues to update its site with the latest information on coronavirus. The department says it currently has the capability to test 340 to 470 people. Orders for more are expected to arrive this week.

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