



## Being the Best-Prepared State for COVID-19 (<https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/being-best-prepared-state-covid-19>)

Media Release

Gov. Ricketts Announces New Directed Health Measures to Take Effect on Saturday

**LINCOLN** – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts announced that the State is moving from the “orange” to “yellow” phase of its coronavirus pandemic response plan. As a result, the State of Nebraska is issuing new Directed Health Measures (DHMs) effective 12:01 AM on Saturday, December 12, 2020. The new DHMs change some of the restrictions put in place to help manage the coronavirus pandemic.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, protecting Nebraska’s hospitals has been the ‘north star’ guiding our strategic response to the coronavirus,” said Gov. Ricketts. “Coronavirus hospitalizations have decreased from where they were three weeks ago. As a result, we’re updating the State’s DHMs in keeping with our pandemic plan. The virus is still present in our communities, and we all need to continue using the tools we have to slow its spread. I especially urge Nebraskans to be mindful of at-risk loved ones when making plans to celebrate the holidays. Let’s all take personal responsibility to stay healthy and keep Nebraska headed in the right direction.”

Nebraska’s pandemic response plan links DHM restrictions to the percentage of staffed hospital beds in Nebraska filled by coronavirus patients. The percentage is below 20% (7-day rolling average), which is the threshold for the State moving to the “yellow” phase of its pandemic plan.

Moving from the “orange” to “yellow” phase involves the following DHM changes:

- Fan attendance at **extracurricular activities**—both school and club—is no longer limited to household members of participants.
- Parties at restaurants and bars remain limited to groups of 8 or less. Individuals must still be seated unless ordering food, using the restroom, or playing games. **Six feet of separation** between groups returns to a guidance.
- The maximum **capacity for indoor gatherings** goes from 25% to 50%.
  - Only certain venues where people convene are considered “gatherings” under the State’s DHMs. Go to [dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus](http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus) (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>) and click on “Directed Health Measures” for details.
- **Masks** are recommended, rather than required, for establishments such as childcare centers, salons, barber shops, massage therapists, and body art studios.
- **Elective surgeries** can resume as long as a hospital keeps 10% of its capacity available to treat coronavirus patients.

New DHMs will be posted on the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website in the coming days. To view them, go to [dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus.gov](http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus.gov) (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>), and click on the link for “Directed Health Measures.”

Executive Order 20-36 will remain in place. It gives public bodies the option to meet virtually by videoconference or teleconference through January 31, 2021. Full text of the executive order is available by clicking here (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2F8ssof1qzp2sv8m4%2FE0%252020-36%2520-%2520COVID%252019%2520-%2520Public%2520Meetings%2520Requirement%2520Limited%2520Waiver%2520REVISED.pdf%3Fdl%3D0&data=04%7C01%7Ccio.webmstr%40nebraska.gov%7Cf11e245c>)

A chart comparing the color-coded phases of the State's pandemic response plan is available by clicking here (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/DHM-Measure-Table-ENGLISH.pdf>).