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Following Orders: A Timeline of State and City Action on COVID

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Ed Reed/Mayoral Photography Office.

The mayor at Tuesday's briefing. He met with the press Thursday via a remote conference tool as a precaution against spread of the virus.

As the number of coronavirus cases grows at a rapid pace, state Governor Andrew Cuomo Friday afternoon signed an executive order, "New York State on PAUSE," to implement a 10-point policy shutting down all non-essential services effective March 22 at 8p.m. this weekend.

"We know the most effective way to reduce the spread of this virus is through social distancing and density reduction measures," Cuomo said. "I have said from the start that any policy decision we make will be based on the facts, and as we get more facts we will calibrate our response accordingly. This executive order builds on the actions we have taken to reduce the spread of the virus and protect the wellbeing of our friends, colleagues and neighbors."

It's just the most recent policy imposed at the city or state level to deal with COVID-19 since the first case appeared in New York State on March 1.

As a resource, City Limits has compiled those executive actions below. This compilation will be updated.

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Across the five boroughs

- On March 8, the city banned nonessential foreign travel for city employees.
- On March 12, Mayor de Blasio declared a local state of emergency, giving him the common law authority to protect the public in the event of an emergency. At the time, there were 95 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Additionally, the city restricted gatherings exceeding 500 persons and required venues to maintain a occupancy level at or below 50 percent of legal capacity; local special election canvassing and Census outreach was suspended; the Department of Education was ordered to cancel extracurricular activities and large gatherings and the city's Department of Social Services activated the city's emergency food contracts.
- On March 15, through Executive Order 99, the city announced that city schools would close until April 20 and begin online classes on March 23. The de Blasio administration also advised New Yorkers to practice social distancing, which means not coming to contact with people unless absolutely necessary.
- On March 16, with Executive Order 100, the city suspended City Council hearings, all City Planning land-use review and landmarks designation processes, cancelled the Queens Borough President Special Elections scheduled for March 24 until further notice, and had the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation cancel or postpone elective procedures system-wide and to cease performing such procedures.

Additionally, the city ordered establishments like restaurants, bars, cafes to close except for providing take-out items, and ordered all entertainment venues including movie theaters, clubs, cinemas, theatres and concert venues, as well as all commercial gyms and older adult congregate centers, closed.

The mayor also addressed price gouging: The city restricted retailers to only a 10 percent price increase and every instance of a violation, there will be a \$350 fine.

The de Blasio administration also restricted contact in jails and directed the Commissioner of the Department of Correction to take “all appropriate steps to facilitate alternative methods for detainees to maintain contact with friends and family” and otherwise communicate with the outside world.

- On March 17, in Executive Order 101, the city banned all group riding or shared rides effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 8 p.m. The ban does not apply to paratransit vehicles.
- On March 20, in Executive Order 102, the city gave new guidance to New Yorkers for more stringent restrictions to stop the spread of the COVID-19 by closing all non-essential businesses effective March 22 at 8:00 p.m. The only businesses with essential functions will be permitted to operate, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, internet providers, food delivery, banks, financial institutions and mass transit. Businesses that provide essential services must implement rules that help facilitate social distancing. The NYPD will be out in neighborhoods across the city to ensure compliance with the policies. The city will also enforce the following rules for non-vulnerable individuals with fines and mandatory closures:
 - No non-essential gatherings; any concentration of people outside their home must be limited to workers providing essential services
 - Practice social distancing in public (6 feet or more)
 - Individuals should limit outdoor recreational activities to non-contact.
 - Limit use of public transportation to only when absolutely necessary.
 - Sick individuals should not leave home except to receive medical care.

The city also said it would enforce “Matilda’s Law,” which sets the following restrictions for vulnerable New Yorkers who are over the age of 70 and/or immune-compromised:

- Remain indoors
- Limit outdoor activity to solitary exercise
- Pre-screen all visitors and aides by taking temperature
- Wear a mask when in company of others
- Do not visit households with multiple people
- Everyone in presence of vulnerable people should wear a mask
- Stay six feet from other people
- Do not take public transportation unless absolutely necessary

Across New York State

- On March 7, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a state disaster emergency to address the Coronavirus threat after a cluster broke out in New Rochelle.

- On March 2, Cuomo announced the Wadsworth Center laboratory and the state's Department of Health would be working with hospitals to expand surge testing capacity to 1,000 tests per day statewide for the novel coronavirus. Additionally, Cuomo said he had directed the State Department of Financial Services to require New York health insurers to waive cost sharing associated with testing for novel Coronavirus including emergency room, urgent care and office visits.

Additionally, the state directed a new cleaning protocol for schools and the public transportation system to help stop any potential spread of the virus.

- On March 3, Cuomo signed into law a \$40 million emergency management authorization for the state's coronavirus response which will allow for additional staffing, procuring equipment and any other necessary resources. Cuomo said he would amend the Paid Sick Leave budget proposal to specifically protect from employees from termination, especially those required to stay home from work because they are being isolated or quarantined as a result of the novel coronavirus
- On March 4, the state directed the State University of New York's and the City University of New York's study abroad programs in China, Italy, Japan, Iran and South Korea to be suspended effective immediately.
- On March 7, Executive Order 202, Cuomo declared a state disaster emergency to begin emergency response to contain the spread of the virus. New York State had 89 confirmed cases.
- On March 10, Cuomo announced new protocols in place for the growing cluster in New Rochelle in Westchester County under the advisement of the state's Department of Health, which included closing schools, houses of worship and other large gathering facilities within a one-mile radius in New Rochelle for a two-week period,
- On March 11, the state and city cancelled the 259th St. Patrick Day parade until further notice. The state said it would guarantee two full weeks of paid leave for all state workers regardless of civil service classification, bargaining unit, and regardless of part time or accrual status. Cuomo also announced a new cooperative effort from business leaders to voluntarily implement different work shifts and telecommuting in an effort to reduce density. Additionally, the state announced SUNY and CUNY would implement plans to maximize distance learning and reduce in-person classes.
- On March 12, the governor limited mass gatherings, directing events with 500 or more individuals in attendance to be cancelled or postponed. Any events, gatherings, or places of business with less than 500 individuals in attendance will be required to cut capacity by 50 percent. These regulations went into effect Friday, March 13th at 5 p.m., with the exception of Broadway Theaters where the limits went into effect March 12 at 5 p.m. The state also asked nursing homes to set up online communication capacity so families can tele-visit their loved ones, required health screenings for all nursing home workers each day when they enter a facility and mandated that those workers wear surgical masks to guard against any potential asymptomatic spread.

- On March 13, after the United States Food and Drug Administration gave New York state the approval for mass automated testing, Cuomo expanded on his state disaster emergency order with [executive order 202.1](#) to make health regulations more flexible in order to address capacity, essential health workers and related resources. As part of the executive order, the state waived for those impacted by COVID-19 the seven-day waiting period for workers to claim unemployment insurance. Additionally, Cuomo directed the state's Department of Public Service to suspend public utilities from cutting off service—including power and heat—to customers impacted by Coronavirus. The state's major utilities must suspend service shutoffs to households and offer deferred payment plans during the outbreak. The order also eliminated the aid penalty for schools directed to close by state or local officials or those closed under a state or local declaration of emergency that do not meet 180-day requirements if they are unable to make up school days.
- On March 14, with [executive order 202.2](#), the state announced the State Department of Financial Services will require insurance companies to waive co-pays for telehealth visits to ultimately reduce the strain on the healthcare system and prevent further spread of the virus. He also suspended the candidate petitioning process for the June primaries for Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly and Judicial races. The governor also announced the first Coronavirus death in New York State — an 82-year-old woman in Brooklyn who had a pre-existing respiratory disease, emphysema. A second death is reported later that evening of a 65-year old man from Rockland County.
- On March 16, Cuomo signed [executive orders 202.3 and 202.4](#) allowing the state to increase hospital capacity to prepare the state's healthcare system for an influx of patients. The state would also partner with the National Guard and building unions and private developers to find existing facilities — such as dormitories and former nursing homes — that can most easily be converted to medical facilities, with the goal of creating an additional 9,000 beds. As part of the executive order, Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont announced a uniform regional approach. The state also announced New York City, Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk schools will close this week in an effort to limit the spread of novel coronavirus and delayed village elections statewide until the April 28 primary election.
- March 17: The state made the following announcements related to the coronavirus: a three-way agreement with the legislature on a bill guaranteeing job protection and pay for New Yorkers who have been quarantined as a result of COVID-19 and temporarily halt the collection of medical and student debt owed to the State of New York and referred to the Office of the Attorney General for collection, for at least a 30-day period (March 16, 2020 through April 15, 2020). Additionally, the state called on qualified former doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals to supplement the personnel at hospitals. The State Department of Health and the State Education Department sent letters to retired health care professionals and all schools of nursing, public health and medicine encouraging qualified health care personnel to sign up for on-call work during the COVID-19 crisis. Healthcare professionals who wish to sign up can contact the State Department of Health at health.ny.gov/assistance.

- March 19: Cuomo signed executive orders 202.5;202.6 and 202.7 mandating a decrease in-office workforce by 75 percent.

The following essential service industries were exempt: shipping, media, warehousing, grocery and food production, pharmacies, healthcare providers, utilities, banks and related financial institutions, and other industries critical to the supply chain. Also, the state will allow the state Department of Health to identify space within existing hospitals to increase bed capacity. The state also announced new measures to free up staff and speed up the admission and discharge process at hospitals for 90 days. Cuomo also announced the Department of Financial Services (DFS) had issued a new directive to state mortgage servicers to provide 90-day mortgage relief to mortgage borrowers which includes the following: waiving mortgage payments based on financial hardship; no negative reporting to credit bureaus, a grace period for loan modification, no late payment fees or online payment fees and postponing or suspending foreclosures. Additionally, Cuomo directed the DFS to instruct banks to waive ATM fees, late fees, overdraft fees and fees for credits cards.

- On March 20, Cuomo also signed an executive order “New York State on PAUSE,” to implement a 10-point policy, rules for vulnerable aging groups to follow and a 90-day moratorium on all commercial and residential evictions for all New Yorkers. Here is the 10-point policy:

1. Effective at 8 p.m. on Sunday, March 22, all non-essential businesses statewide will be closed in conjunction with New Jersey and Connecticut;
2. Non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason (e.g. parties, celebrations or other social events) are canceled or postponed at this time;
3. Any concentration of individuals outside their home must be limited to workers providing essential services and social distancing should be practiced;
4. When in public individuals must practice social distancing of at least six feet from other;
5. Businesses and entities that provide other essential services must implement rules that help facilitate social distancing of at least six feet;
6. Individuals should limit outdoor recreational activities to non-contact and avoid activities where they come in close contact with other people;
7. Individuals should limit use of public transportation to when absolutely necessary and should limit potential exposure by spacing out at least six feet from other riders;
8. Sick individuals should not leave their home unless to receive medical care and only after a telehealth visit to determine if leaving the home is in the best interest of their health;
9. Young people should also practice social distancing and avoid contact with vulnerable populations;and
10. Use precautionary sanitizer practices such as using isopropyl alcohol wipes.

The state also advised the aging population to follow these regulations known as Matilda's law (Gov. Cuomo's mother's name):

- Remain indoors;
- Can go outside for solitary exercise;
- Pre-screen all visitors and aides by taking their temperature and seeing if person is exhibiting other flu-like symptoms;
- Do not visit households with multiple people;
- Wear a mask when in the company of others;

- To the greatest extent possible, everyone in the presence of vulnerable people should wear a mask;
 - Always stay at least six feet away from individuals; and
 - Do not take public transportation unless urgent and absolutely necessary.
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