



Dorchester County Health Department

“Working for Healthier People”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Dorchester County Health Department Explains New Safer at Home Advisory

Cambridge, MD (May 19, 2020) – As of Friday, May 15, the Stay at Home order was replaced by a Safer at Home public health advisory, moving Maryland into Stage One of the Roadmap to Recovery. Marylanders, especially those older and with underlying health conditions, are strongly advised to continue staying home as much as possible. However, Governor Hogan’s amended executive order allows the gradual reopening of retail establishments, churches, manufacturing, and some personal services. In order to safely move forward in recovery, certain public health precautions are still required.

Physical distancing measures are still required in all facilities and public settings. Face coverings are still required in retail and foodservice establishments and on public transportation. Face coverings may include scarves, bandanas, and homemade cloth masks that cover a person’s nose and mouth. The order requires use of face coverings for those over the age of nine, and reasonable efforts for children age two through nine.

Additionally, gatherings and events larger than 10 persons are still prohibited. This applies to social, community, recreational, leisure, and sporting gatherings and events.

Churches and houses of worship may begin to safely hold religious services, at up to 50 percent capacity, with outdoor services strongly encouraged.

Retail establishments cannot exceed 50 percent maximum occupancy and must post signage requiring staff and customers wear face coverings and stay six feet apart. Examples of retail establishments include grocery and convenience stores, clothing and sporting goods stores, farmer’s markets, pharmacies, laundromats, pet groomers, animal adoption shelters, car washes, art galleries, and more. Curbside pickup and delivery are strongly encouraged whenever possible.

Hair salons and barber shops may reopen with up to 50 percent capacity, by appointment only for hair services and with appropriate health and safety guidelines, such as face coverings and disinfecting areas.

Restaurants and bars must remain closed except for carry-out, drive-through, or delivery. The Order states food and beverages must be promptly taken from the premises.

According to State’s Attorney William H. Jones, there has been some confusion regarding the use of face coverings in businesses. “Use of face coverings is still required in retail establishments. Retail establishments would include grocery stores, convenience stores, liquor stores, laundromats, or other stores where items for personal consumption or use are sold. Other businesses, where face coverings *may* be required by the business, would mean those where people enter for purposes other than shopping, such as an office building or maybe some other type of organization.”

“These face coverings must fully cover your nose and mouth to be effective and are designed to protect those around you should you have the virus but not be aware,” says Roger L. Harrell, Dorchester County Health Officer. “We are still seeing community spread transmission in Dorchester County. You still need to exercise good social distancing practices and wash your hands often to protect yourself and your family.”

Dorchester County businesses seeking signage and resources to safely reopen may contact Bill Christopher, Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, at 410-228-3575 or bill@dorchesterchamber.org and Susan Banks, Dorchester County Economic Development, at 410-228-0155 or sbanks@choosedorchester.org.

To review the Governor’s executive orders, interpretive guidance, and other Roadmap to Recovery resources, visit governor.maryland.gov. For Maryland Department of Health information and resources about COVID-19, visit coronavirus.maryland.gov. For the most up-to-date Dorchester County information, visit dorchesterhealth.org and follow Dorchester County Health Department’s Emergency Preparedness Facebook page at www.facebook.com/dorchesterhealthemergencypreparedness.

Dorchester County residents with general questions or concerns about COVID-19 can call the Dorchester County Health Department at 410-228-3223 Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm or the Maryland Call Center at 2-1-1 after hours.

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