

The following guidance was released this week for the State of New Jersey. The highlighted text is applicable to our Elks operations. The CDC has also released new information regarding the wearing of masks. We are assessing both of these announcements and will be shortly announcing some changes to our Lodge COVID-19 policies.

Brigantine House Committee 4/28/21

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today announced the easing of restrictions for a variety of activities and higher outdoor capacity limits, effective May 10. The changes, which include higher outdoor gathering limits, higher large venue outdoor capacities, higher maximum capacities for private catered events, and more, come as COVID-19 metrics are on the decline and as more New Jerseyans continue to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

"Our robust COVID-19 vaccination program is starting to show results through lower COVID-19 case metrics including a decline in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations," **said Governor Murphy.** "This allows us to take steps so that New Jerseyans can have a much more normal summer including allowing for students to celebrate important milestones and events like graduations and proms in-person. We hope to announce further reopening steps in the coming weeks as more and more state residents get vaccinated."

"The continued cooperation with public health preventive measures and increasing vaccination rates among New Jersey residents allows for this easing of restrictions in the state," **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.** "We encourage all residents 16 and older to get a COVID-19 vaccine. It will not only protect you, but it will help us drive down community spread, so we can reopen the state further."

The changes include:

### **Outdoor Gatherings**

The outdoor gathering limit will be raised to 500 persons from 200 persons. COVID-19 metrics will continue to be evaluated with the hope of raising the limit again, perhaps considerably, prior to Memorial Day.

### **Large Venue Outdoor Capacity**

Outdoor capacity limits will be raised to 50% capacity for venues with 1,000 fixed seats or more. The current limit is 30% capacity for venues with 2,500 fixed seats or more. All attendees at these events are required to be six feet apart from other attendees, except that individuals who purchase or reserve tickets together may be seated together, but must be six feet away from all other groups or individuals in all directions.

### **Maximum Capacity for Indoor Certain Indoor Activities**

Capacity limits for indoor private catered events, including proms, will be raised to 50% capacity of the room in which the event is being held with a maximum of 250 individuals. The current limit is

35% capacity of the room in which the event is held with a maximum of 150 individuals. These events must continue to follow all indoor dining protocols.

The limit for political events, weddings, funerals, memorial services, and performances occurring indoors will similarly increase to 50% capacity with a maximum of 250 individuals. Indoor religious services will continue to operate at 50% capacity, without a numerical cap.

### **Dance Floors at Indoor Catered Events**

Dance floors will be permitted to open at indoor private catered events, including proms with masking and social distancing requirements in place. **Dance floors will remain closed at bars and other related businesses, such as nightclubs.**

### **Graduations and Proms**

Schools and universities will be able to utilize the newly-raised outdoor gathering and large venue capacity limits to hold more robust graduation ceremonies. Proms will benefit from the increases to indoor private catered event capacity and the allowance of dance floors at such events. The Department of Education (DOE) and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) will be issuing guidance to assist schools and institutions in preparing for these end-of-year events.