

Nebraska State Orders – Updated August 20

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: No official stay at home order – the “21 Days to Stay Home and Stay Healthy” expired April 30

**Restaurants and bars can reopen and serve customers if they follow these [guidelines](#).

August 20: Nebraska health experts report 215 new cases of COVID-19 in the state, which brings the state total to 31,040. The Department of Health and Human Services indicates the state's total virus-related deaths rose by three to reach 371. State health officials say 160 residents in the state are hospitalized, with a total of 1,835 Nebraskans who have been hospitalized due to the virus. Total recoveries have risen from 22,798 to 22,941. Officials say 330,704 Nebraskans have been tested for the virus, 299,368 of them have come back negative ([source](#)).

August 18: Nebraska health officials announced 191 new cases of COVID-19 in the state on August 17. This brings the state total to 30,563. [Officials with the Department of Health and Human Services](#) also reported that the state's total virus-related deaths rose by one to 362. As of Aug. 17, 158 residents in the state are hospitalized with the virus, an increase of eight since Aug. 16. Thus far, 1,883 Nebraskans have had to be hospitalized due to the virus. Over the last 24 hours, Nebraska's total recoveries have risen from 22,483 to 22,647. Of the 325,782 people who have tested for the virus, 294,924 of those tests have come back negative ([source](#)).

August 13: As of August 12, Nebraska has reported 29,244 total cases of COVID-19. That's a 214 increase from the previous day's count. Nebraska is also up 5 deaths with a total of 356. There is a 36% hospital bed availability, 36% ICU bed availability and 80% ventilator availability ([source](#)).

August 11: The country's top medical experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and on the White House Coronavirus Task Force are warning that some Midwestern states are [seeing a shift in numbers](#) that could be a sign of troubling days ahead. In fact, as a result of its recent COVID surge, [Nebraska has moved into the "red zone,"](#) according to CDC Director **Robert Redfield**, MD ([source](#)).

August 6: The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services reported 222 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday. As of Aug. 4, there have been 27,178 total cases in the state of Nebraska. Thus far, the DHHS has reported 332 COVID-19 deaths in Nebraska. There have been 287,394 total tests administered, with 259,927 coming back negative. There are currently 151 active hospitalizations with 19,764 people reported as recovered ([source](#)).

Come Saturday, Aug. 1, 27 of the state's 93 counties will be clear of most restrictions prompted by the coronavirus. The nine-county Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will be the third local health district to move to Phase 4 of the state's reopening plan. Counties impacted are Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow. Phase 4 loosens restrictions on private and public gatherings, moving into a recommendation and guidance phase for limitations in restaurants, bars and other public and private locations ([source](#)).

July 29: Come Saturday, Aug. 1, 27 of the state's 93 counties will be clear of most restrictions prompted by the coronavirus. The nine-county Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department will be the third local health district to move to Phase 4 of the state's reopening plan. Counties impacted are Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow. Phase 4 loosens restrictions on private and public gatherings, moving into a recommendation and guidance phase for limitations in restaurants, bars and other public and private locations ([source](#)).

July 23: Nebraska has seen a surge of people testing positive for coronavirus this week, according to state health officials. On July 22, the state health department's [online virus tracker](#) showed more than 600 new cases of the virus since the beginning of the week, including 264 cases on Monday and 343 on Tuesday. The state's total stood at 23,190 by Wednesday, July 22. The site also shows nine COVID-19 deaths so far this week, bringing the state's total to 310 since the outbreak began ([source](#)).

Since July 20, Lincoln residents are required to wear a mask in some public settings. The decision, part of a new directed health measure announced by Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird at a Friday afternoon news conference, comes as the number of coronavirus cases in Lancaster County has risen in recent weeks ([source](#)).

July 21: The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has announced that the Loup Basin Public Health Department will move to Phase 4 of the state's reopening plan starting Friday, July 24. Phase 4 removes capacity restrictions on bars, restaurants, child care centers and a number of other indoor businesses. It also allows outdoor venues to operate at 100% of capacity and indoor venues such as arenas and event centers to operate at 75% of capacity, although events of 500 or more people still must submit plans to the local health department ([source](#)).

JULY 15: Minnesota health officials expressed concern about the state's rising COVID-19 positivity rate on Wednesday, July 15. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) calculates the seven-day average test positivity rate, or percentage of COVID-19 tests coming back positive, every day. On Wednesday it was 4.8%, up from 4.7% the day before, and up from 4.4% a week ago. MDH has said previously that it will be concerning if the rate goes to 5% for more than five days in a row ([source](#)).

Here is a [list](#) of places in Minnesota where face coverings are required as of July 15 ([source](#)).

As of July 13, people who live in group homes and other congregate care facilities were once again allowed to attend day service programs. Many of those programs were closed for months due to the coronavirus pandemic ([source](#)).

The Minnesota Zoo is set to welcome back visitors on Friday, July 24 with limited attendance and new safety guidelines ([source](#)).

July 6: Four counties [entered Phase 3 of reopening](#) July 6, joining the rest of Nebraska with loosened COVID-19-related restrictions. Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties in central Nebraska, and Dakota County in northeast Nebraska, had the most [severe outbreaks](#) early on in the pandemic, but have since seen low infection rates ([source](#)).

June 29: Effective July 6, all of Nebraska will be in Phase 3 of re-opening as the Grand Island area joins the rest of the state. New directed health measures (DHMs), easing restrictions on businesses and activities, will take effect Monday July 6 for Dakota, Hall, Hamilton and Merrick Counties. These four counties are moving from Phase 2 to Phase 3 of reopening, which will put all of Nebraska's counties in Phase 3 ([source](#)).

June 25: Because of the number of people who have lost jobs either temporarily or permanently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Nebraska is now offering extended unemployment benefits for the first time in nearly 40 years. The Nebraska Department of Labor said June 22 that the people who exhaust their regular unemployment benefits and/or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits will be eligible for an additional 13 weeks of benefits ([source](#)).

June 19: Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts [has told local government officials that they won't get federal coronavirus relief funding](#) if they require individuals to wear face masks in government buildings ([source](#)).

Some of the changes coming to Nebraska June 22 as part of their Phase 3 are that indoor venues, including arenas, theaters and libraries, can step up to 50% of their occupancy, not to exceed 10,000 people. Outdoor venues, including stadiums, can go to 75% occupancy, also not to exceed 10,000. Social distancing of 6 feet between groups will become "guidance" rather than an enforceable offense ([source](#)).

Nebraska may lose \$250 million in revenue over CARES Act tax breaks. Nebraska Tax Commissioner Tony Fulton detailed the findings of a recent report to the Legislature's Revenue Committee on June 16 ([source](#)).

June 15: Much of Nebraska will move into Phase 3 of the state's reopening plan on June 22, Gov. Pete Ricketts announced June 15. Phase 3 will affect 89 counties and includes sports and fan attendance for youth games. Attendance will not be limited to specific household members. Contact team sports can begin games and practices on July 1. Hall, Merrick, Hamilton and Dakota counties will enter Phase 2 next Monday ([source](#)). The full list of reopenings under Phase 3 can be found [here](#).

The United States Department of Agriculture has rolled out the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program to aid the nation's agricultural community. CFAP is making \$16 billion in direct payments to farmers and ranchers to compensate them for coronavirus-related price drops and market disruptions. Nebraskans interested in CFAP should contact their local Farm Service Agency to inquire about submitting an application. Details of the program are available online at farmers.gov/cfap. The USDA is accepting applications through Aug. 28, 2020 ([source](#)).

June 10: Nebraska could suffer nearly \$3.7 billion in agricultural income losses this year due to the coronavirus if economic conditions do not improve, the Nebraska Farm Bureau estimated June 10 ([source](#)).

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will begin restoring limited overnight lodging in park cabins June 18 while continuing to protect the public and staff from the spread of COVID-19 ([source](#)).

May 29: Nebraska takes a step forward in reopening on June 1 as new directed health measures take effect throughout the state allowing more types of venues and events to operate ([source](#)). The full order issued on May 29 can be found [here](#).

During his daily COVID-19 briefing on the state's response to the pandemic, Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts announced department of motor vehicle offices across the state will begin holding driving tests again ([source](#)).

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts announced more businesses may reopen for customers beginning June 1, including bars and wedding venues, as long as guidelines are followed ([source](#)).

On April 24, Gov. Ricketts announced that certain businesses -- but not bars -- will be allowed to reopen May 4 and serve customers by following safety guidelines ([source](#)).

The Nebraska Crossing Mall in Omaha will be the first major mall to open following the Coronavirus shutdown ([source](#)).

On April 14, Gov. Ricketts announced a waiver of nutrition labels for some pre-packaged foods. This waiver will expedite delivery. Labels must still include ingredients, name/place of business, manufacturer or distributor, net quantity and allergy information. The goal is to allow restaurants to offer more items without the strict rules grocery stores must follow ([source](#)).
