Reopening Nebraska for Business: Post COVID-19
April 30, 2020

The State of Nebraska is easing some restrictions aimed at stopping the spread of the novel coronavirus. This does not mean life returns to normal: There is currently no cure or vaccine for the highly contagious virus.

And Gov. Pete Ricketts, who is softening some of the rules, said social distancing should be upheld. What is being softened and by how much depends in part on location. Some restrictions are being lifted statewide; others are targeted to certain areas.

The governor has said he wants a “tailored” approach to reopening that favors places, like the Omaha metropolitan area, that have been less affected. Restrictions are upheld in hot spots like Grand Island.

What is changing?
Public gathering spots including churches, restaurants, barbershops and beauty salons, tattoo parlors and massage services get to reopen, under certain conditions.

Where?
Churches and other houses of worship can reopen for services and for weddings and funerals statewide.

The restaurants, hair, nails, tattoo and massage businesses can reopen in 59 of Nebraska’s 93 counties.

Included are the metro-area counties of Douglas, Sarpy and Cass. The other counties sit in the following public health districts: East Central (Columbus, Genoa, Albion); Four Corners (David City, York, Seward); Loup Basin (Broken Bow, Callaway, St. Paul); North Central (Valentine, O’Neill, Osmond); Northeast (Wayne, Thurston); Panhandle (Chadron, Scottsbluff, Sidney); Southwest (Ogallala, Imperial, McCook); and Southeast (Tecumseh, Nebraska City).

Excluded are the following Nebraska public health districts: West Central (North Platte, Gothenburg); Two Rivers (Lexington, Kearney); Central (Grand Island); South Heartland (Hastings, Red Cloud); Dakota County (Dakota City); Elkhorn Logan Valley (Madison, West Point, Oakland); Three Rivers (Fremont, Wahoo); Lancaster County (Lincoln); and Public Health Solutions (Geneva, Beatrice, Fairbury).
When?
May 4 for the 59 approved counties; Lancaster County is tentatively scheduled for May 6. Local officials said Monday that they don’t know yet if they’ll lift restrictions by then.

What are the conditions?

Churches: Religious services are allowed statewide. Household groups must be separated by 6 feet. Nothing can be passed between people in attendance.

Restaurants: Can serve no more than 50% capacity at a time. No more than six at a table. Tables must be 6 feet apart. No salad bars, buffets or self-service. No bar seating.

Hair/nail businesses: Patrons and service providers must wear masks. No more than 10 people inside at a time.

Tattoo parlors: Patrons and service providers must wear masks. No more than 10 people inside at a time.

Massage studios: Patrons and service providers must wear masks. No more than 10 people inside at a time.

Childcare centers: Up to 15 children per room (up from 10 allowed previously).

Offices: Were never required to close and guidance stays the same.

What’s still closed?
» Schools
» Bars and movie theaters
» Nursing homes are off-limits to visitors
» Gentlemen’s clubs and bottle clubs
» Public gatherings can have no more than 10 people