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***Governor's Office and State Health Department Issues FAQs  
About the Latest Public Health Order***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GALLUP, NM (March 20, 2020) – The Office of the Governor and the New Mexico Department of Health have issued the attached set of Frequently Asked Questions about the latest update to the Public Health Order. The City of Gallup will abide by the clarifications as outlined in the attached release from the Department of Health, and we request that businesses and the community review and comply with the information outlined in the release.

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## **New public health order in effect**

SANTA FE – The public health order issued March 19 by Department of Health Secretary Kathy Kunkel temporarily strengthens earlier orders to include additional mandatory closures and guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19 disease.

The order enacts restrictions on bars and restaurants, among other businesses. It can be viewed and downloaded [HERE](#). Spanish version [HERE](#). All public health orders downloadable [HERE](#).

Here is more information about that order:

**Q: Why are gatherings of only 10 or fewer allowed?**

A: Everything the state of New Mexico is doing to combat COVID-19 is organized around one principle: To temporarily limit person-to-person contact, particularly in large groups. This is the best way to minimize spread of COVID-19 and prevent a spike in illnesses, particularly serious illnesses in vulnerable populations. Every day state officials re-evaluate the steps already taken and survey new opportunities to strengthen our response in order to prevent illness, save lives and avoid overloading our state's hospital system. Even 10 people in a closed space is too many if one of them carries the virus, but this number is an appropriate and aggressive baseline for mitigating the virus' spread throughout our state.

**Q: Why are restaurants, bars and other eateries closed?**

A: They are only closed to dine-in customers, under this order. Closing non-essential places where people gather is essential to getting New Mexicans to stay home in order to mitigate the spread of this virus. **You can still call in an order for pick-up or home delivery** from any restaurant that chooses to provide those services, and we

strongly encourage you to find other ways to help keep local businesses like these afloat during these difficult times.

**Q: What else has to close?**

A: The order specifically requires indoor shopping malls, recreational facilities, health clubs, resort spas, athletic facilities, theaters (including movie theaters) and flea markets to close. All casinos and horse-racing facilities are also required to close, except for those on tribal land, which is beyond the state's authority. However, most tribal casinos have closed voluntarily.

**Q: What is a resort spa?**

A: It is a larger spa – not a simple hair salon, barbershop or nail salon – that provides both lodging and professional therapeutic or relaxation services, including fitness and wellness programs. Salons and barbershops may remain open but, in accordance with the order, are strongly encouraged to limit operations to the greatest extent possible.

**Q: What is an athletic facility?**

A: Any place where people work out individually or in groups or watch sporting events. This includes gyms, skating rinks and indoor basketball courts, for example.

**Q: Does the order include specific exemptions?**

A: Yes. Although indoor shopping malls must close, if a restaurant in a shopping mall has an exterior entrance, it may provide take-out or delivery services just like other restaurants. Other exemptions from the order are airports and other transportation facilities, grocery stores, pharmacies, food vendors, shelters, courthouses, banks, correction and detention facilities, hospitals and other health-care facilities, congregate care facilities, and places of worship (during regular hours.) These are considered essential services and may remain open.

**Q: What about hotels and motels?**

A: The order requires hotels, motels and other places of lodging to operate at no more than 50 percent of maximum occupancy, but it exempts those operations providing lodging to health care workers or other individuals working in New Mexico. Hotels and motels may satisfy this requirement through attrition.

**Q: So other types of businesses are still exempt?**

A: The order exempts “typical business environments” from closing. That includes businesses, governmental organizations, political subdivisions or other entities engaged in commercial, industrial, charitable or professional activities. Those businesses may remain open, but **they should, per the order, limit operations to the greatest extent possible and minimize employee contact.**

**Q: Are pickup and delivery food orders safe? What if a food preparer has the virus?**

A: Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19, according to the federal Food and Drug Administration. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.

**Q: How will this order be enforced?**

A: The state will ramp up surveillance of businesses to ensure compliance. Violators of the public health order could lose their licenses to operate, face fines or even jail time. New Mexicans wishing to report a violation of the order may call their local non-emergency number and make a report. The state police, the Environment Department, the state Homeland Security Department and the state Regulation and Licensing Division are all empowered through the order to enforce these restrictions.

**Q: What if I'm unsure if an event falls under the order?**

A: Start by reading the amended order, which is available [HERE](#). If it's still unclear, err on the side of caution, and stay home.

**Q: How long will this last?**

A: The order is in effect until April 10. It may be amended and put into effect for a longer period of time as conditions warrant.

**Q: Where can I learn more about what New Mexico is doing to respond to COVID-19 and what's available to affected workers, businesses, students and more?**

A: [newmexico.gov](http://newmexico.gov) is being updated constantly as the state responds to the COVID-19 outbreak and identifies more resources for affected families and workers. For health-specific information about COVID-19, visit [cv.nmhealth.org](http://cv.nmhealth.org). If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and would like to be screened for a test, call 855-600-3453.

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