



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

Updated December 21, 2020

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Recommendations will be updated and shared as new information becomes available.

The Pima County Health Department issued our last public health advisory on December 3, 2020. This current guidance outlines updated recommendations for all of Pima County including incorporated and unincorporated cities and towns to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Pima County Health Department continues to monitor data as well as evolving scientific understanding of the risks posed by COVID-19 and may modify this advisory in the future based on analysis of that data and knowledge.

What we know

COVID-19 is highly contagious and is spread primarily through person-to-person contact. Over the last two months, Pima County Health Department has identified an accelerated transmission of COVID-19 throughout Pima County.

This trend has been highly impactful on the availability of hospital bed capacity. We have surpassed critical levels of hospital bed usage due to the high rate of community-wide spread occurring in Pima County. In the last week, there have been multiple times when there has been no ICU bed availability in Pima County; at different times, hospital medical-surgical beds have also reached capacity. Modeling indicates that public health and healthcare resources in Pima County will continue to be further stretched and demand for those resources will overwhelm the healthcare system within the next two to three weeks. The recent decision by a major hospital on December 20 within Tucson to cancel all elective surgeries is a further example of the need for immediate intervention.

As this data illustrates, emergency departments and hospitals are full, and continue to face shortages of staff and critical supplies. Hospital workers are exhausted and there is no end in sight. Predictive modeling indicates that the number of Pima County COVID-19 cases ***just in the month of December*** will surpass the ***total*** number of cases that occurred in the ***nine months between March and the end of October***. Without significant changes in community activity, there will be continued growth in positive COVID cases and hospitalizations throughout December, resulting in preventable morbidity and mortality in our county population.

It is for this reason the Health Department recommends the following actions be taken by the residents of Pima County.

Curfew and Shelter-in-Place

- **Compliance with Mandatory Curfew from 10PM to 5AM** – All residents limit travel during these hours to essential activities as previously defined in the voluntary curfew announcement.
- **Voluntary Shelter in Place** – All residents should stay home as the best way to prevent the risk of COVID-19; trips and activities outside the home should be minimized. All activities that involve contact with people outside of one's household (defined by those who have not lived in your home for the last 14 days) increase the risk of getting COVID-19. Exceptions for this stay at home recommendation involve the following activities: seeking medical care, purchasing food/supplies for home consumption or use, outdoor exercise, pet care, connecting with homeless or domestic violence shelters, and attending work or school. Leisure, non-essential and holiday travel are strongly discouraged.
- **Voluntary Shelter in Place for Older Adults and Individuals with Serious Underlying Medical Conditions** – Older adults (those age 65 or older) and individuals with serious underlying medical conditions (including immunocompromised state, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity, serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease, and diabetes) are strongly urged to stay in their places of residence except to access critical necessities such as food and medicine.
- **Physical Distancing Requirements** – When outside their place of residence, all individuals must strictly comply with the following requirements to the maximum extent possible:
 - Maintain at least six feet of distance from individuals who are not part of their household;
 - Wear a face covering in and out of doors;

- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer;
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into their sleeve or elbow (but not into hands); and
 - Avoid all contact with anyone outside the household when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Face Covering Requirements** – As mandated by the Board of Supervisors, face coverings must be worn at all times;
 1. When indoors and not in one’s own residence or if indoors but unable to maintain 6 feet distance from individuals who are not members of the household.
 2. Whenever outdoors and within six feet of anyone outside one’s own household.
 - **Limitations on Gatherings** – Public and private gatherings of individuals from separate households remains strongly discouraged because it carries significant risk of spreading COVID-19. Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors wherever possible. **Limit gatherings to ten or less people.**
 - **Childcare and pre-kindergarten facilities** – these facilities may remain fully open based on their current activity

Businesses

- **All businesses including restaurants, retail or those in critical infrastructure sectors, are very strongly encouraged to follow the following rules:**
 - If the business is allowed to operate under this advisory:
 - Limit indoor occupancy to no more than 25% of their total occupancy, including personnel. Businesses must oversee entry and exit to ensure that maximum capacity is not exceeded.
 - Follow industry-specific guidance related to COVID 19 mitigation plans.
 - Maximize the number of personnel who work from home.
 - Retailers are encouraged to designate hours of operation for specific at risk populations including those over 65 and those who are immune-compromised. Businesses are encouraged to provide curbside operations.
 - Restaurants and other food service facilities may operate for takeout, delivery and curbside pickup. Persons in an establishment to pick-up a takeout order do not count towards the 25% indoor occupancy limitation, but those person must follow all other requirements, including proper physical distancing.
 - Outdoor recreational facilities may continue as long as group activities are limited to household members.
 - Medical facilities may continue to provide non urgent medical and dental care.
 - The following businesses and activities **should** temporarily **close**:
 - Indoor playgrounds and recreational facilities including indoor swimming pools
 - Fitness and dance studios except when all classes are outside, participants wear face coverings at all times, and physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained
 - Hair, nail salons and barbershops
 - Movie theaters (except that outdoor screenings are allowed if physical distance of at least six feet can be maintained)

Requirements Applicable to All Businesses

- **Continued Mandatory Reporting Regarding Personnel Contracting COVID-19** – Businesses and governmental entities should have all personnel immediately alert the business or governmental entity if they test positive for COVID-19 and were present in the workplace within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or within 48 hours of the date on which they were tested. Businesses and governmental entities must report these cases to the Pima County Health Department, and comply with all case investigation, contact tracing, and outbreak investigation measures by the County, including promptly providing any information requested. Businesses should instruct employees to follow isolation and quarantine protocols specified by the County, and exclude positive cases and close contacts from the workplace during the isolation or quarantine periods.