

Good Afternoon Business Leaders,

Today, Governor Walz announced a three-step process that will lead to **an end of all COVID-19 business and social gathering capacity limits, distancing requirements, and state-established mandatory closing times by May 28, and an end to the statewide masking requirement by no later than July 1.**

As we share this great news, I want to personally thank you all. Your businesses and employees have made extraordinary sacrifices and will be remembered as some of the true heroes of this pandemic. It's important to recognize that this does not mean the pandemic is over. We have simply loosened its grip on us. We now double down on the most effective tool to combat COVID-19 – vaccines.

Here are some highlights for the new guidance, which you'll see reflected in updates on the [Stay Safe MN website](#) soon:

- **Step One:** Starting at Noon tomorrow, May 7, we will start with initial steps to relax some state restrictions, primarily in outdoor settings. We will:
  - Remove limits for outdoor dining, events, and other get-togethers, and end the mask requirement outdoors, except at events with controlled access over 500 people. So unless you're in a very large crowd at a formal event, you don't need to wear a mask when you're outside.
  - Provide recommendations (not state restrictions) for fairs, parades, and other outdoor celebrations to highlight best practices to stay safe and make summer in Minnesota great.
  - Increase occupancy and group size for all indoor activities and events, moving capacity percentages up and removing all overall caps.
  - Eliminate the mandatory closing time provision and increase table size and group size to 10.
  
- **Step Two:** On May 28, the Friday before Memorial Day, nearly all other restrictions will come to an end, including for indoor events and gatherings. Certain requirements will remain:
  - Face coverings indoors and for the largest outdoor events (500 and above) with controlled access.
  - Businesses must continue to have plans that keep their employees safe – as they have from the beginning of the pandemic – guided by one universal state guidance document that will include no new requirements.
  - Important consumer protections will remain in place, including the eviction moratorium and anti-price gouging order.
  
- **Step Three:** The remaining statewide face covering requirement and the requirement for business preparedness plans will end once 70% of Minnesotans aged 16+ get their vaccine – that's 3,087,404 Minnesotans – but no later than July 1. Critical work on vaccines will continue and local jurisdictions and other entities may still require masks.

Our progress so far – and our path forward – relies on Minnesotans 16 and older getting the vaccine. These vaccines are safe and effective, and it has never been easier to get a shot. Walk-in vaccinations are available in many places. Visit

[VaccineConnector.mn.gov](https://vaccineconnector.mn.gov) to find a find a vaccine opportunity near you.

This past year has been an extraordinary journey for all of us, and it has been so challenging for all of you. While we'll meet again to discuss where things are at and continue our conversations, I did want to take this moment to thank you all for your engagement, your leadership, your advice, and your sacrifice over this last year. While I know there has not been agreement on every step of this journey, my team and I have learned so much from all of you, and your advice and feedback have been instrumental in crafting a responsible and thoughtful approach in Minnesota.

I'm personally grateful to all of you and look forward to much brighter days ahead.

Yours,

Steve

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