

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LARGE GATHERINGS IN BANQUETS, BALLROOMS, WEDDINGS, AND EVENT VENUES

Why are banquets, ballrooms, weddings, and event venues at 25% capacity?

The type of venues in North Dakota vary drastically from the Fargo Dome and Ralph Englestad Arena to a small wedding reception venue, which is why a tiered capacity cap system was developed. Utilizing this cap system, 25% allows for a significantly higher attendee number while maintaining the safety of the patrons.

If I go to the casino, does that mean I do not have to follow the mask mandate?

Activities by tribal members and non-tribal members within the boundaries of tribal reservations are exempted from the statewide mandates and executive orders but may be subject to restrictions by tribal authorities. Individuals need to follow the tribal laws.

Restaurants, banquets, ballrooms, and other event venues operated under Tribal Code or Tribal ordinance are exempt from the order but are strongly encouraged to follow COVID-19 guidance offered by the NDDOH and the CDC.

Are face coverings required in church service, while attending wedding or funeral ceremonies, or during confirmation, first communion and other faith-based classes?

No, face coverings are not required under executive order in church services or other religious ceremonies. All attendees are highly encouraged to follow health guidance provided by the [North Dakota Department of Health](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

What does it mean that “religious events, governmental proceedings, and academic institutional delivery settings are exempt”? Does that include all school, church, and government activities?

Yes, this includes all academic school events, religious events, and government activities. For example, wedding ceremonies are exempt however wedding receptions are not.

Are funerals and weddings exempt if done in a church?

Religious ceremonies are exempt. Wedding and funeral services are exempt however receptions following the ceremony must follow the capacity requirements.

What if a wedding or a funeral service is held outside of church, is it still a religious exception?

Yes, religious ceremonies are exempt from these requirements despite the specific location.

Can we still have confirmation or first communion classes?

Yes, the order does not apply to academic settings such as classrooms or religious settings. Face coverings are not required but are strongly encouraged.

Last week we were told that we could be in groups up to 10, and now the restart guidelines say we can be up 150 based on fire code. Can you please clarify?

Family groups or party sizes attending an event together are still limited to no more than 10 people. The maximum occupancy limit in the order applies to the total number of people allowed inside an event space at the same time and meets criteria of Tier 4 according to the [Large Gatherings Tiered Capacity Document](#). Larger gatherings serving food and drink would follow Restaurant/Bar. The service of food and drink must end at 10:00pm.

Can I still have Thanksgiving for 26 people in a family residence?

The order does not apply to residential homes.

If an event attendee or guest is still eating or finishing a drink at 10:00 pm, do we need to close and ask them to leave?

The language in the order is *service may be conducted between 4 am – 10pm*. The intent is to stop taking meal orders and last calls for drinks to allow customers adequate time to close service as close to 10:00 pm as possible.

Questions about Bars, Restaurants, and Food Service Establishments

Why are restaurants at 50% capacity?

All bars, restaurants and food service establishments are limited to 50 percent of their licensed seated capacity, not to exceed 150 patrons, and are closed to in-person service between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. Take-out, curbside and delivery will still be allowed during those hours, and North Dakotans are encouraged to take advantage and support local businesses.

The \$54 million Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grant will be available soon to help these businesses navigate this challenging time. Additionally, another \$70 million has been made available through the Bank of North Dakota to buy down interest on eligible existing debt for any business whose revenue was impacted negatively by COVID-19.

What impact does the hours of operation have on alcohol sales?

All applicable liquor licensing laws remain in place and apply to alcoholic beverage sales. Contact your local liquor licensing agency or the [ND Attorney General](#) for questions regarding alcohol sales.

What does it mean that I have to wear a face covering except when eating?

Patrons should arrive wearing a face covering and while waiting for meal and beverage service. Face coverings can be removed while eating and drinking provided tables are physically spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart.

Is back-to-back booth seating allowed under the order?

Tables in use for meal and beverage service must be physically distanced a minimum of 6 feet apart. The 6-foot physical distance includes customers seated at the table; therefore, back-to-back booth seating does not allow for adequate physical distancing under the order. Use of every-other booth would mostly likely meet physical distancing requirements under the order and is a better practice.

The order states that all food and beverage service must be provided to seated patrons; no “stand-up” service, or service to patrons in a waiting area is permitted. How does the order affect customers placing their orders at fast food counters, using beverage and condiment stations, salad bars and food buffets?

Restaurants, bars and food establishments may need to make changes to their operation under the order. These areas have already been recommended closed or modified under Orange-High Risk Level Smart Restart Restaurant/Bar Protocols. Such modifications include but are not limited to:

- Contactless/electronic ordering and payment systems are preferred or, if not feasible, disinfect all payment portals, pens and styluses after each use.
- Areas where lines form should be avoided unless social distancing can always be maintained, signs are posted, and floors are marked for social distancing. Face coverings are required.
- Provide employees easy access to soap and water for handwashing or access to hand sanitizer before entering/ leaving job sites and at cashier locations.
- Provide hand sanitizer at or near the entrance and cashier locations for use by the public.
- No standing room options. All food and beverages are consumed seated while social distancing. Tables (including people seated at the tables) are physically spaced 6-feet apart.
- No bar seating unless plexiglass or other physical barrier separates bartender from customer. If bar seating is open, allow for 1-2 guests, with six feet of separation between groups.
- Waiting areas (indoor or outdoor) should be marked for social distancing. Only one member of the party should be allowed in the waiting area while other members of the party wait in their vehicle.
- Advanced reservation or call-ahead seating is preferred.
- No standing room options.
- No self-service of food or beverage (buffets, salad bars, beverage stations) unless pre-packaged. Employees may handle utensils and offer pre-portioned servings for customers.
- Unwrapped bar straws and stir sticks should only be handled by staff wearing gloves.

- Disposable cups and utensils should be handled by staff only and served to the customer.
- Only pre-packaged condiments should be offered for self-service.

Last week we were told that we could be in groups up to 10, and now the restart guidelines say we can be up 150 based on fire code. Can you please clarify?

Family groups or party sizes attending a food establishment together are still limited to no more than 10 people seated at a table. The maximum occupancy limit in the order applies to the total number of people allowed inside the food establishment; which is figured at 50% of the total number licensed seats or up to 150 people at a time, whichever is fewer.

What about fast-food establishments? Can patrons place their order at the till and then immediately take a seat at a table and staff would have to bring their food to them?

Yes, customers can place orders inside fast food restaurants while wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing. When a line is present or forming, customers should take a seat and employees can bring them their food.

How did the governor's order restricting businesses offer more capacity?

Before to the order, the recommendations for restaurants under Orange-High Risk Level was 25% of licensed capacity but no more than 50 people at a time. For those that were already following the ND Smart Restart recommendations of 25 percent capacity in high-risk counties, the change to 50 percent allows them to safely welcome more customers into their establishments with face covering and distancing requirements.

If a patron is still eating or finishing at drink at 10:00 pm, do we need to close and as them to leave?

The language in the order is *service may be conducted between 4 am – 10pm*. The intent is to stop taking food and drink orders before 10:00 pm and to allow customers and staff adequate time to complete the meal service by 10:00 pm. Under the order, restaurants, bars and food service establishments are required to stop service and take last calls in order to close the business to the public as close to 10:00 pm as possible.

Source: Face Coverings Mandate State Health Officer Order 2020-08 (Effective Nov. 11, 2020– December 14, 2020) and Governor Burgum’s Executive Order 2020-43 (Effective Nov. 16, 2020 – December 14, 2020)