



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CITY OF CHICAGO LAUNCHES “PROTECT CHICAGO” STRATEGY TO MITIGATE FURTHER SPREAD OF COVID-19

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) today launched a new citywide strategy - “Protect Chicago” - an effort to help Chicago bend the COVID-19 curve for the second time. This strategy calls on all Chicagoans to change their behavior through targeted regulations, strong messaging, and a community-based outreach strategy. If changes are not made by Chicago residents, businesses, and visitors to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the city is on track to lose 1,000 more Chicagoans by the end of the year or even more.

“Chicago has reached a critical point in the second surge of COVID-19, demanding that we undertake this multi-faceted and comprehensive effort to stop the virus in its tracks,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The gains we have made this past year have been the result of our willingness to work together. Even in this difficult moment, we will continue to unite as we always have for our city in order to halt the rise we’re seeing, shake out of the fatigue we’ve been experiencing, and make the crucial difference in what our future is going to look like.”

A key pillar of the “Protect Chicago” strategy will be the implementation of several regulatory measures aimed at combating the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Chief among these new efforts is a Stay-at-Home Advisory, which calls on all Chicagoans to follow clear measures to protect their community and help us flatten the curve. Residents are strongly advised to adhere to the Advisory by following these guidelines, which will go into effect on Monday, November 16, 2020 at 6:00 a.m.:

- Only leave home to go to work or school, or for essential needs such as seeking medical care, going to the grocery store or pharmacy, picking up take-out food,

or receiving deliveries. If you do leave home, practice social distancing by staying 6 feet away from others and wearing a face covering at all times.

- Do not have gatherings in your home with anybody outside of your household (except for essential staff such as home health care workers or educators), even with trusted family or friends.
- Avoid all non-essential, out-of-state travel; if travel is essential, quarantining or testing negative prior to travel is required, depending on which state a traveler is originating from.
- Comply with City and State Orders, including wearing face coverings, limiting gatherings, and mandating early closure of non-essential businesses at 11pm.
- Practice social distancing and avoid touching surfaces frequently touched by others if you go outside to get fresh air.
- Use remote modes of communication like phone or video chat instead of visiting friends or family, especially on holidays such as Thanksgiving.

In addition to the Stay-at-Home Advisory, the City is imposing new restrictions to limit meetings and social events to 10 individuals (both indoors and outdoors), which will also go into effect on Monday, November 16, 2020 at 6:00 a.m. This capacity limit applies to events such as weddings, birthday parties, business dinners/social events, and funerals, and is applicable to any venue where a meeting or social event is taking place, including meeting rooms. However, the capacity limit does not supersede industries that have specific capacity guidelines in place, which include fitness clubs, retail stores, personal services and movie theaters (generally, 40% or 50 individuals max., whichever is fewer). More information on the new restrictions can be found at chicago.gov/reopening.

“We are at a critical point in our ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “Everybody needs to step up right now to flatten the curve, save lives and help our businesses reopen safely.”

These new regulations and the Stay-at-Home Advisory will be paired with the activation of a community-based outreach strategy that aims to reach all Chicagoans, especially those who live and work in COVID-19 hotspots, which are currently on Chicago’s Northwest and Southwest Sides. The “Protect Chicago” strategy will be pushed out citywide on digital assets and through collateral materials, all zeroing in on the guidance that will keep Chicagoans safe and healthy. The City plans to leverage more than 1,000 City workers, up to 550 contact tracers, and a network of hundreds of community-based organizations to reach Chicagoans who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19. The outreach team will be conducting data-based, geo-targeting efforts to focus on the highest-incidence zip codes, neighborhoods and census tracts to provide resources, information and support to individuals and families who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Chicago has seen spread in every zip code, age group, and race and ethnicity, and the City has partnered with minority-owned communications firms – Flowers Communications Group and Imagen Marketing Consultants – to ensure the strategy is targeted to COVID-19 hotspots and resonates with the communities most severely impacted by the virus.

“Protect Chicago” builds upon already-existing regulations and guidelines designed to manage the second wave of COVID-19. The City continues to recommend that Chicagoans avoid all gatherings in private residences, with an exception for essential staff such as home healthcare workers or educators. Furthermore, CDPH Health Orders require that indoor gatherings within private residences be limited to six non-household members. The City has the authority to fine individuals for breaking this requirement and hosting large social gatherings in their private residences. Lastly, earlier this week, CDPH updated the City’s [emergency travel order](#), however the recommendation remains for residents to avoid all non-essential, out-of-state travel.

“Protect Chicago” has been developed in coordination with CDPH to respond to evolving public health data and trends that show Chicago deep into a second surge of COVID-19. Chicago, the region, and the nation as a whole have experienced several weeks of steeply rising new daily cases, and the test positivity rate has also been increasing and is now above 14% in the city. Chicago is seeing more than 1,900 new daily cases based on a 7-day rolling average, which is a higher rate than at any time during the pandemic. While Black and Latinx residents continue to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, these increases are being seen across age, race and ethnicity.

“The data are troubling, and I’m very concerned we could be looking at tens of thousands of more cases, which would overwhelm the healthcare system and lead to hundreds more deaths,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “But we know what works and what we need to do to bend the curve. We did it once and I know we can do it again.”

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