

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

August 19, 2022

**Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-008
Public Health Emergency Order Reemphasizing “Safer at Home” Order, Updating Gathering
Limits, Introducing School and Business Guidelines and Declaring “Medium Risk” for the
Navajo Nation COVID-19 Status**

- I. Paragraphs I – IX from Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-004 are included with this Public Health Order, addressing the various Navajo Nation (Nation) authorities related to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- II. The intent and purpose of this Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-008 is to reemphasize the “Safer-at-Home” requirements, updating gathering limits, introducing school and business guidelines, and declaring the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Status. The requirements of this Order may be extended or changed in a future order. These measures are intended to further ensure an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic by restricting movement of individuals on the Nation to limit contact to prevent the spread of the virus and minimize the strain on medical response capabilities. All provisions of this Order are to be interpreted to effectuate this intent. Failure to comply with any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health.
- III. Wearing a mask in public continues to be mandatory (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-007, August 19, 2022) and previous mask mandates Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-015 and 2020-0017 are rescinded.
- IV. The Navajo Nation is experiencing a slight downward trajectory (decreasing) of cases. The Navajo Nation remains vigilant as neighboring states have lifted mitigation strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Navajo Nation has documented new cases of COVID-19 Omicron sublineages (BA.4 and BA.5) within the Navajo Nation. According to the CDC, the Omicron variant seem to spread more easily and quickly than the other previous variants. CDC continues to identify Omicron variants of concern. Breakthrough infections are expected and some treatments are not as effective against infection with Omicron. As coronavirus vaccines continue to be made available on the Navajo Nation, all preventative precautions should continue to be adhered to after receiving the vaccine.

- V. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **“delay travel until you are up to date with your vaccines”** and **“Getting vaccinated is still the best way to protect yourself from severe disease, slow the spread of COVID-19, and reduce the number of new variants.”**

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that, pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the NDOH enabling legislation (NNC Resolution No. CO-50-14), and in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Public Health State of Emergency Declaration (CEM Resolution No. 20-03-11):

- A.** The Navajo Nation’s Safer at Home Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-005 is still in effect and has not been rescinded. Under this **Safer at Home Order, individuals are required to exercise personal responsibility to remain safe, but are not ordered to stay home.**
1. Individuals must continue to exercise caution when engaging in public activities and practice everyday preventive actions, which include: wearing a mask in public, practicing social (physical) distancing, disinfecting high-touch surfaces, avoiding unnecessary travel, avoiding unnecessary public gatherings, and washing hands for 20 seconds.
 2. Individuals with COVID-19, or who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, are required to stay home and away from other people.
- B.** Gathering limits of 50 or fewer persons for the following:
1. Social gatherings.
 2. Traditional ceremonies, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
 3. Youth programs, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
 4. Holiday gatherings, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
- C.** In-person meeting and training is permitted at 50% of maximum occupancy for indoor seating areas, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
- D.** Churches and other houses of worship is permitted at 50% of maximum occupancy for indoor seating areas, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines. Bible study group meetings are permitted consistent with the in-person training and meeting guideline.
- E.** Gathering limit of 50 or fewer persons for outdoor recreational events, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center’s guidelines. This includes walks, runs, bike rides, motorcycle events and similar events. HCOC encourages COVID-19 vaccine verification of participants by event administrators.

- F. "Drive-in" gatherings are permitted if the organizers and participants adhere to the requirements herein. Such gatherings include parking lot gatherings for internet access, religious services, funeral services, graduations (consistent with Health Command Operation's guideline), and similar events. Organizers must ensure the following are in place:
1. Outdoor "drive-in" gatherings only where people from the same vehicle remain in their vehicles.
 2. Vehicles are parked at least six (6) feet from other vehicles, in all four directions.
 3. Organizers and participants wear masks.
 4. Gathering is conducted in a no-contact manner and maintaining social distancing standards.
- G. Fair events are allowed at 50% of maximum occupancy for indoor seating areas and 75% of maximum occupancy for outdoor seating areas, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center's guidelines. HCOC encourages COVID-19 vaccine verification of attendees by event administrators.
- H. Gyms, wellness centers, and recreation facilities will be allowed at 50% of maximum occupancy or less dependent on 6 feet physical distancing, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
- I. Outdoor gatherings are permitted and individuals must follow mask mandate (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-007, August 19, 2022).
- J. **All Businesses** must continue to comply with the Navajo Health Command Operations Center guideline for businesses (available at latest news <https://www.ndoh.navajonnsn.gov/COVID-19>). Businesses must continue to address safety measures through policy and procedures of the following:
1. Ensure physical distance between personnel, customers, and any member of the public at the place of business is maximized, and that keeping six-feet between persons is possible at all times.
 2. Wearing a mask in public continues to be mandatory (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2022-007, August 19, 2022).
 3. Encourage COVID-19 vaccine awareness.
 4. Provide standards for how to respond to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 among employees. The policies and procedures shall further provide contact information for the nearest healthcare facility, and such information posted conspicuously at the place of business (e.g., informational poster). The place of business shall contact the healthcare facility immediately in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 to consult about next steps.
 5. All businesses must keep an up-to-date COVID-19 safety plan.
 6. All businesses are permitted at 100% maximum capacity.

7. This PHEO rescinds all PHEOs that reference any previous policies related to businesses that are replaced by the COVID-19 Business Guideline. This includes PHEOs 2022-04, 2021-020, 2021-017, 2021-013, 2021-011, 2021-009, 2021-005, 2020-029, 2020-028, 2020-012, 2020-011, and 2020-010.
- K. All Schools** must comply with the Navajo Health Command Operations Center guideline for schools. School must continue to comply with the COVID-19 Safe School Guideline that include core prevention strategies and optional testing strategies. The core prevention strategies focus on the following: vaccination, ventilation, illness policy, COVID-19 testing, masks, cluster investigation, hygiene and cleaning, and physical distancing (available at latest news <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>).
 1. All schools must submit a School Mitigation Plan and Assurance form to the Department of Diné Education at schoolreopening@nndode.org.
 2. Limit gathering to 50 or fewer persons for non-classroom instruction events such as back-to-school, orientations and other community gatherings.
 3. Limit sport event attendance to 50% of maximum occupancy for indoor seating areas and 75% of maximum occupancy for outdoor seating areas, and consistent with HCOC guideline for school sporting events.
 4. Require students, staff and visitors to stay home if they are sick.
 5. This PHEO rescinds all PHEOs that reference the COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework which is replaced by the COVID-19 Safe School Guideline. This includes PHEOs 2022-06, 2022-03, 2022-02, 2021-0018, and 2021-14.
- L.** There is no daily curfew in effect; however, the Nation’s curfew for children pursuant to Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code remains in full force and effect.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements (consistent with HIPAA privacy standards).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that it is greatly advised that the public take the following preventive precautions against COVID-19:

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
3. To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hands or finger if you must touch something.
4. Wear a mask and avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
5. Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).

6. Refrain from gathering with individuals outside your household who are not yet fully vaccinated or received a booster vaccine dose (if eligible).

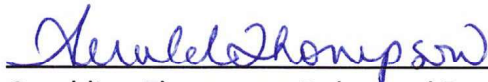
7. Limit unnecessary travel.

8. Get an influenza (flu) vaccination as soon as possible and when safe to do so, and in accordance with the above requirements.

9. All persons are highly encouraged to become fully vaccinated or receive a booster vaccine dose (if eligible) as soon as possible and when safe to do so, and in accordance with the above requirements.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect on Friday, August 19, 2022 at 5:00 A.M. MDT and shall remain in effect until otherwise rescinded or modified by a subsequent Order.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 19th DAY OF August, 2022.



Geraldine Thompson, Delegated Program Supervisor I
Navajo Office of Environmental Health & Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health



Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health
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Definitions

Drive-In: means attending a gathering without leaving one's car.

Gathering: means any grouping together of individuals in a single connected location. (From Public Health Emergency Order dated March 18, 2020).

Social Distancing Requirements: Physical distancing by limiting contact of people within 6 feet from each other. (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-002, March 19, 2020).

Social Distancing Standards: Physical distancing by not shaking hands, standing several feet away from other people, avoiding crowds, etc.) (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003, March 20, 2020).