



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Contact: San Francisco Joint Information Center, dempres@sfgov.org

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**SAN FRANCISCO ALLOWS MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR OPEN
ACTIVITIES**

Beginning Thursday, May 20, San Francisco will allow a greater range of activities and remove some operational requirements on open activities as it continues to prepare for full reopening.

San Francisco, CA — Director of Health Dr. Grant Colfax and Health Officer Dr. Susan Philip today announced that as of today May 20th, San Francisco will update the Health Order to loosen restrictions on existing open activities and come more fully into alignment with what is allowed by the State, including recent changes the State has made to its guidance. This is an effort to slowly phase out operational requirements on businesses and other activities as the City prepares to fully reopen over the summer.

These updates include expanding guidelines to allow for a broader range of activities in indoor dining and bars, indoor houses of worship, personal services, real estate, recreational sports programs, and out of school time programs. The health order will additionally reduce restrictions around participants in small indoor gatherings and some operational requirements will be lifted for outdoor live, seated events, recreational sports programs, and out of school time programs. Two generally applicable requirements – the requirement that businesses screen all personnel and patrons before allowing them to participate in on-site activities and the requirement that businesses must submit and receive approval for their health and safety plan in order to establish sections for fully vaccinated patrons – will no longer be required. It is important to note that in some instances State law requires that screening remain for certain business types and activities. The health order will be updated later today, May 20 and these changes will take effect at that time.

“San Francisco is looking more and more every day like the vibrant city that it always has been,” said Mayor Breed. “We have shown the world how resilient we are, and now we’re on the road to recovery. As we approach the last phases of reopening, we will keep doing all we can to build back all of the best parts of our city so that all of us can thrive. We are ready to do this with the same urgency, partnership with the community, and commitment to equity that we have had throughout this pandemic.”

San Francisco Department of Public Health is making these changes in an effort to continue San Francisco’s progress towards full reopening. At this point, the City has been assigned to the least restrictive yellow tier on the State’s [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) and as of May 6, 2021 had reopened all activities closed during the COVID-19 pandemic to some degree. San Francisco’s



public health indicators, including its rate of new COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 hospitalizations, and its vaccination rate all continue to perform outstandingly well. The City's case rate averages 18 cases a day, the lowest average the City has seen since it first declared a state of emergency in March of 2020. As of May 19, 76% of the eligible San Francisco population has been vaccinated, meaning the City leads every other American city, and indeed most of the world in its rate of vaccination.

“Currently, our economy is more open, and we are interacting more with each other than we were when we entered our third surge this past winter. But instead of surging again and going into another lock down, our case rates and hospitalizations continue to fall. That is the power of the vaccines at work in our city,” says Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of the Department of Public Health. “I want to encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated so that we can continue to bring this pandemic to heel and get back to the things we love.”

“I'm delighted to say that we are in the homestretch of our reopening,” states Health Officer Dr. Susan Philip. “I want to applaud San Franciscans for their commitment to following the public health guidelines. Our diligence meant that we had the lowest death rate for a city of our density in the country. We now get to enjoy the fruits of our efforts with further loosening of our health restrictions. We have every reason to be optimistic that we will remain on target for fuller reopening on June 15. In the meantime, keep up the good work and get vaccinated.”

The State has made a goal to fully re-open activities that were closed or curtailed during the State's emergency order by June 15, 2021. While the State has not yet released details about what full reopening will entail, San Francisco is moving now to increase the level of activity and the flexibility in operating under current guidelines so that the City continues to progress smoothly towards a full reopening. With these loosened restrictions, businesses will have increased flexibility to build out their own operational procedures and protocols as they deem appropriate in the post-COVID context.

“As San Francisco's momentum to reopen continues, I want to recognize the diligence and sacrifice of our businesses and their workers for getting us here,” said Kate Sofis, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “We are excited that these important strides will help bring visitors and residents back into our downtown, our cultural attractions, and our neighborhood commercial corridors and support the next phase of our economic recovery.”

A list of the changes that will impact specific activities under the new Health Order that will be updated later today, May 20, and can be found below.

Activities to Resume Thursday, May 20, 2021

The following activities may expand:

- Outdoor Ticketed and Seated Performances, Spectator Sports and other Live Events
 - Except for fully vaccinated sections, which have greater capacity allowances and do not require physical distancing, patrons no longer need to show evidence of testing or vaccination.



- Up to three households may sit together per ticketed group of six individuals (increased from one household).
- Dining – outdoor and indoor
 - Patrons are no longer required to be seated at tables to be served and consume food and beverages. Bar tables without seats and other unseated configurations are allowed for groups of up to eight people with at least six-foot distancing between groups.
 - Food preparation at bars and tables (such as that performed at sushi bars, Benihana, etc.) is allowed with relaxed distancing between patrons and personnel, where distancing is not feasible.
- Indoor bars without meals
 - Distancing requirements are relaxed at bar counters, in keeping with seating requirements for dining.
 - Patrons may stand and consume beverages while at stationary entertainment like pool tables, or arcade games, in groups of up to eight people with at least six-foot distancing between groups, consistent with indoor dining guidelines.
- Personal care services – outdoor and indoor
 - Patrons may remove face coverings for services involving tattooing or piercing of the mouth, neck or face and for massage services.
- Out of School Time programs for children and youth – outdoor and indoor
 - Cohort size limitations are lifted, programs may serve as many children and youth as state licensing allows.
 - The three-week minimum requirement is lifted, though still encouraged.
 - Adult visitors may enter facility (masked) for pick-ups/drop-offs.
 - Fully vaccinated adults may volunteer with proof of vaccination.
- Real estate transactions
 - Real estate open houses are allowed following small indoor gatherings guidelines.
- Small indoor gatherings including social gatherings in private settings
 - Face coverings may be removed to eat or drink in gatherings involving more than one household following indoor dining guidelines as well as any additional capacity and safety requirements specific to small indoor gatherings. Outdoor gatherings and/or the removal of face masks only with other fully vaccinated individuals is still recommended.
- Outdoor adult and youth sports
 - Participants no longer need to show evidence of testing or vaccination, even when masks are removed.



- The requirement to wear masks during outdoor high-contact and moderate-contact sports is relaxed to align with the State requirement that participants wear masks during practice and competition as tolerated.
- Adult and youth sports – outdoor and indoor
 - Tournaments involving more than one game per team per day are allowed if all teams follow the requirements for collegiate sports in the State’s Institutions of Higher Education Guidance.
- Indoor houses of worship and political demonstrations
 - Organizations may establish sections for fully vaccinated congregates/participants that do not require physical distancing. Overall, 50% capacity and face covering requirements remain.

The following requirements will be lifted:

- Patron and personnel health screening
 - The on-site screening requirement for patrons is lifted, except where State guidance requires it (such as for outdoor community sporting events and personal care services).
 - The on-site screening requirement for personnel is lifted, except where State regulatory agencies such as OSHA require it. Employers are still required to develop and implement a process for screening employees for COVID-19 symptoms, but businesses are encouraged to ask personnel to self-screen before arriving on-site.
 - San Francisco Department of Health screening forms (attached as part of Appendix A to the Order) will continue to be updated for business that wish to keep using them.
- Fully vaccinated sections/ health and safety plans.
 - The requirement that venues must get approval of a health and safety plan to implement a fully vaccinated section is lifted. Health and Safety plan requirements that relate to the size of the event are still required.

San Francisco’s reopening updates will be available online today, May 20 at [SF.gov/reopening](https://www.sfgov.gov/reopening).

###