

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Allowing Beaches, Boardwalks, Lakes, and Lakeshores to Remain Open with Social Distancing Measures in Place

05/14/2020

TRENTON -- Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 143, allowing beaches, boardwalks, lakes, and lakeshores to remain open with social distancing measures in place. The Order takes effect on Friday, May 22.

"I'm thrilled to announce that the Jersey Shore will be open to families across our state and region in a way that is consistent with protecting the public health of every beachgoer," **said Governor Murphy**. "This action will ensure that New Jerseyans can enjoy our state's greatest natural resource ahead of the summer months."

"Today's announcement is a shot in the arm for our shore communities and will allow our beaches to open for Memorial Day with important public safety provisions in place," **said Cape May County Freeholder and Mayor of Sea Isle City, Leonard Desiderio**. "Under Governor Murphy's leadership, New Jersey is steadily moving forward through this unprecedented crisis."

Under Governor Murphy's Executive Order, the following shall remain closed on private and public beaches, boardwalks, lakes, and lakeshores: water fountains, picnic areas, playgrounds, pavilions, indoor recreational facilities, and other buildings and facilities, such as visitor centers. There is an exception allowing bathrooms, showering areas, and changing areas to stay open.

To limit physical interactions, the Order requires municipalities, lake commissions, private club associations or entities, and other local government to implement reasonable restrictions, including:

- Imposing non-discriminatory capacity restrictions;
- Requiring that members of the public practice social distancing;
- Developing and implementing lifeguard training and beach operation plans that address COVID-19 considerations;
- Removing, taping-off or otherwise blocking all benches and tables;
- Prohibiting the tying together of boats to prevent group gatherings;
- Developing and implementing a continuous public outreach campaign, including signage, social media, town and county websites, mobile device applications, radio, and banner-plane advertising;
- Prohibiting special events such as festivals, concerts, fireworks, and movies;
- Prohibiting all organized or contact activities or sports;
- Limit occupancy in public restrooms; and


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- Implementing sanitization protocols.

The restrictions also apply to public piers, docks, wharfs, boat ramps, and boat landings throughout the State. Municipalities, counties, any responsible commission, association, or unit of county or local government, and private beach clubs may impose additional restrictions to the ones listed above and retain the legal authority to close beaches or boardwalks if they choose to do so.

Due to the diverse nature of the shore and lake communities, the Order does not mandate specific social distancing measures. Examples of social distancing measures left to a municipality's discretion include but are not limited to the following:

- Demarcating six feet of spacing in any areas where the public may form a line;
- Limiting the number of lifeguards to each stand or tower, maintaining social distance between lifeguards, and adding stands or towers as necessary;
- Installing physical barriers between the public and employees in ticket or beach badge sale booths; and
- Limiting occupancy of ticket or beach badge sales booth to one person at a time.

The Order explicitly prohibits capacity limitations that discriminate against non-residents, low-income people, and other protected classes.

The Order also recommends, but does not order, that people wear a face covering while in public settings at the beaches, lakes and lakeshores when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

The Order further clarifies that restaurants and bars located on the beaches, boardwalks, lakes and lakeshores are still limited to delivery and take-out services only and that amusements parks and arcades, and other places of public amusement located on the beaches, boardwalks, lakes, and lakeshores remain closed. Any outdoor seating, such as tables or benches, must be removed, taped off, or otherwise blocked.

To be consistent with the restrictions established in the Order, swimming in designated areas and picnicking will now be allowed at State Parks and Forests, as well as county and municipal parks. Additionally, this Order reopens restrooms in parks, while requiring frequent sanitization measures, effective Saturday, May 16.

A copy of Executive Order No. 143 can be found here (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-143.pdf>).

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