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SPOTLIGHT

FEATURED

## Child care centers can reopen Monday, bars can reopen Friday

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Greg Abbott

Gov. Greg Abbott on Monday announced Phase II of the Reopen Texas plan.

“From day one our mission has been to use data and doctors to open Texas in a safe and responsible way to contain the spread of COVID-19,” Abbott said.

Among the facilities that can open effective Monday are child care centers, youth clubs such as YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club, massage and personal-care businesses and beauty companies.

Businesses that are located in office buildings can open at the greater of 10 employees or 25 percent of its workforce provided they maintain social distancing.

A full list of businesses that can open can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas>.

Effective Friday, restaurants can open to 50 percent capacity.

Bars, wine tasting rooms, craft breweries can open at 25 percent capacity.

Other facilities that can open Friday at a 25 percent capacity include bowling alleys, bingo halls, skating rinks, equestrian events, zoos and aquariums. Special guidelines are in place and can also be found at the website.

On May 31, day youth camps, overnight youth camps, youth sports and professional sports, without in-person spectators, can reopen.

Abbott said summer school can take place as early as June 1.

“As we open up, we must continue to place health and safety foremost,” Abbott said.

Abbott said data has helped guide the decisions of reopening Texas.

“Every decision I have made and every decision I’m making today has been unanimously supported by our team of medical experts,” Abbott said.

Abbott said one of the factors the state has used to make the decision to reopen is the positive rate of COVID-19 – the number of people who have tested positive compared to the number of COVID-19 tests conducted.

“The past month has shown a downward trajectory in the positivity rate,” Abbott said.

On April 13 the seven-day rolling average was about 13.8 percent. Currently it’s about 5 percent.

Abbott said hospitalizations and hospital capacity was another metric used. He said as of Sunday the state had fewer people hospitalized for COVID-19 since April 21.

John Hellerstedt, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, said while the state is moving into the next phase of reopening the safety measures shouldn’t change.

“We’re going to come back closer together now with the things we’re recommending like face coverings, hand sanitization, sanitizing surfaces and personal hygiene,” Hellerstedt said. “Those will work because they work against every germ there is, including COVID-19. But this is a test of us as Texans to make sure we do care about ourselves and each other. And we’re taking these steps that we are confident will allow us to open Texas and remain safe at the same time.”

Abbott said the state has taken steps to respond to and contain COVID-19. For example, he said the state distributes more than 1 million facemasks per day. He said in the first half of May, Texas has more than doubled than tests conducted than March and April combined with 24,000 per day.

“More important was our ability to identify and respond to COVID-19 hotspots,” Abbott said.

He said the majority of the areas that have sudden increases in cases are from nursing homes, jails and meat packing plants.

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