

# Public Health Madison & Dane County: Issues order moving Dane County to Reopening Phase 1

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Earlier this week, Public Health Madison & Dane County released [Forward Dane](#), a phased reopening plan for Dane County during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, based on active monitoring of the [data-based metrics](#) outlined in the plan, an order has been issued that moves Dane County into Phase 1 of the reopening plan, effective May 26, 2020 at 8:00am.

“We released Forward Dane so everyone in the community could see the requirements that needed to be met for us to continue opening businesses, while still balancing the health and safety of our residents,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County.

“We are receiving hundreds of test results each day and have analyzed additional data from the community testing site at the Alliant Energy Center. We feel confident that our county can take the next step in the reopening process at this time,” continued Heinrich.

Phase 1 includes:

- Reopening all businesses—such as restaurants, gyms, and retail establishments—to 25% capacity with certain public health requirements and physical distancing.
- Indoor gatherings at commercial facilities of 50 people or fewer are allowed, with physical distancing
- Indoor gatherings at private residence of 10 people or fewer are allowed, with physical distancing.

- Outdoor gatherings of 50 or fewer are allowed, with physical distancing.
- Select businesses and activities with high risk for disease transmission are still closed.
- Park courts and fields are open, individuals must maintain physical distancing

“While we know that many businesses, and their customers, are eager for reopening and getting back to providing services, we want to stress that if a business doesn’t feel ready for an open date of May 26<sup>th</sup>, they should wait until they are comfortable and have all their systems in place to open,” said Heinrich.

“As businesses prepare to reopen, I encourage everyone to still take precautions to reduce the spread of disease: wash hands often, continue to practice physical distancing, and wear cloth face coverings” said City of Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “We all want to get back to ‘normal,’ but this is a phased approach to make sure we can still contain and mitigate illness; our fight isn’t over.”

As outlined in the [Forward Dane plan](#), certain data criteria must be met to move forward through the phases. Dane County will remain in Phase 1 for a minimum of 14 days, which is one incubation period for COVID-19. If criteria are met, Public Health will issue a Phase 2 order. If criteria are not met, they will be reassessed at regular intervals.

“It’s important to note that there is no end date for Phase 1 as of right now,” said Heinrich. “We’re looking at an absolute minimum of 14 days in that Phase, but the reality is that we could be in it for longer. Our data and metrics will inform the end date to Phase 1,” continued Heinrich.

“We have worked hard to listen to our business owners and support their reopening in a way that also supports the public’s health. I’m confident that Dane County’s data-driven response to this pandemic is the right approach for us to take,” said Dane County Executive Parisi.

While the phase we are in has changed, the virus has not: it is still as infectious and dangerous as it has always been. Businesses and workspaces are enacting measures to help keep us safe, but no matter where you go, there is still a possibility of coming in contact with the virus.

Community members need to remain vigilant and follow public health recommendations to protect themselves and each other:

- **Remember to physically distance from people you don't live with by staying 6 feet away.**
- **Wear a cloth face cover if you go out in public.**
- **Continue to follow everyday prevention measures:**
  - o Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - o Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - o Stay home when you are sick.
  - o Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - o Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - o Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- **Stay home as much as possible, especially if you are a [person at higher risk for severe illness](#).**

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Find more information and resources on coronavirus on our website, [publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus](https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus). Follow us on social media (@publichealthmdc on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) for updates.