

PHMDC: New Dane County Public Health Order Released

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Public Health Madison & Dane County has issued [Emergency Order #16](#), which further continues the phased reopening of Dane County. The order goes into effect May 5 and will be in effect until June 2, 2021.

“Because our COVID-19 vaccination rates are among the highest in the state and the number of cases we’ve seen each day have stabilized, we are increasing gathering and capacity limits for all businesses,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. “Although more spaces are opening, people should still participate in activities based on their comfort with risks, because although we are making progress, we aren’t out of the woods yet.”

A summary of items that changed between Order #15 and Order #16 include:

- Gathering limits increased.
 - o Indoor gatherings with food and drink: Limited to 350 or less, with physical distancing except when in transit (up from 150).
 - o Indoor gatherings without food and drink: Limited to 500 people or less, with physical distancing, except when in transit (up from 350).
 - o Outdoor gatherings: Numbers are limited to ensure people who don’t live together can maintain six feet physical distancing at all times, except when in transit.
- Face coverings are not required when actively playing an instrument that has a

bell cover, as long as people are six feet apart at all times.

- Restaurants and taverns indoor dine-in capacity may be up to 75% of approved seating capacity, with physical distancing (up from 50% for restaurants and 25% for taverns).
- Businesses must limit the number of individuals inside their establishment to 75% of approved capacity levels indoors (up from 50%).

If a gathering is taking place inside an establishment, the establishment must comply with both the gathering limits and the capacity limits and abide by the lower number. Face coverings are still required in indoor public spaces.

“Increasing gathering and capacity limits, while still ensuring safety measures are in place for employees and customers, will set our local businesses up for success and allow customers to shop, dine, and enjoy their experience with more confidence,” said Satya Rhodes-Conway, City of Madison Mayor.

When Order #15 was enacted on April 7, the seven-day case average was 78 and the 7-day hospitalization average was 23. As of April 26, the seven-day case average was 64 and the 7-day hospitalization average is 32. Hospitalizations remain five-fold lower than the fall 2020 peak. On the day Order #15 was released, 39.2% of Dane County residents had at least one dose of vaccine. As of yesterday, that number was 58.4%. Track the latest data via the weekly [Data Snapshot](#) and [Data Notes blog post](#).

“Vaccination is our path out of this pandemic,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “People who are vaccinated are able to do things safely that unvaccinated people can’t, like hugging loved ones and gathering with friends without having to worry about masking or distance. Get vaccinated and get back to doing the things you love.”

Vaccine is readily available at the Alliant Energy Center community vaccination site. Appointments are recommended but not required. [See our website](#) for details.

“Continuing a measured re-opening approach is important since kids under the age of 16 aren’t able to be vaccinated yet. Keeping precautions in place continues to prioritize the health and safety of the community and will continue to be important until more people are able to be vaccinated,” said Jerry Halverson, MD, Chair of the Board of Health.

[See the full order for all details.](#)