



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2021

**Navajo Nation to return to “Orange Status”
starting on Monday due to the increase in COVID-19 cases**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday, the Navajo Department of Health issued three new Public Health Emergency Orders declaring “Orange Status” for businesses, schools, and revising in-person gathering limits for certain events in response to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases on the Navajo Nation. The new public health emergency orders will go into effect on Monday, August 16, 2021. The Navajo Nation’s mask mandate remains in effect. There is no daily curfew or lockdown in effect.

“As we’ve previously stated, based on the data and information from contact tracers the recent increase in new COVID-19 cases is largely due to social and family gatherings where people don’t wear masks and don’t take precautions. The other factor is people traveling off the Navajo Nation, not wearing a mask in public, and bringing the virus home and infecting other family members. The provisions under the “Orange Status” are not as stringent for businesses this time around because the data from contact tracers does not show that COVID-19 is being spread in businesses, but rather through social and family gatherings. We’ve been in this pandemic for over a year now and we should all know how to protect ourselves. The difference between this time last year and the uprise in cases we are seeing now, is that we have a high percentage of our people vaccinated and our public health experts have provided us with the guidance to reduce the spread of the virus,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-017 declares “Orange Status” for businesses. The 50% maximum occupancy level remains in place for the following:

- Restaurants, including indoor dining, drive-thru, curbside, and outdoor dining
- Marinas and parks, tour businesses must follow the Health Command Operations Center’s Reopening Guidelines for Tour Businesses
- Navajo casinos
- Lodging and hotels including campgrounds and RV parks
- Museums and zoos

Additional provisions for businesses:

- Personal care and services are allowed by appointment only, with cleaning between appointments
- Flea markets and roadside markets are allowed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Health Command Operations Center

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-018 declares “Orange Status” for all schools, which is defined as substantial transmission of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation. Schools must implement all the required core prevention strategies and conditional prevention strategies noted in the Safe Schools Framework previously issued by the Department of Diné Education including parent options, use of masks, physical distancing, student cohorting, hygiene, cleaning and ventilation, diagnostic testing, contact tracing, required reporting, and COVID-19 vaccinations.

The Navajo Department of Health recommends schools, especially those in communities with high transmission rates, following these guidelines:

- Implement more aggressive social distancing measures
- Hybrid learning is encouraged
- Limit gathering to 15 or fewer persons for non-classroom instruction events such as back-to-school, orientations, and other community gatherings
- Virtual learning is encouraged for those age 12 years and younger
- Require students, staff, and visitors to stay home if they are sick
- Promptly report exposures using the HCOC portal available at <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19> and notify the nearest local health facility

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-019 limits in-person gatherings to 15 people for the following:

- Social gatherings
- Traditional ceremonies
- Churches and other houses of worship
- Outdoor recreational activities
- Youth programs

Additional provisions for gatherings:

- 25 or fewer persons permitted for in-person meetings and trainings
- Drive-in gatherings limited to 50 vehicles or less

“Personal responsibility is key to bringing down the numbers of new infections. Our health care professionals have gone above and beyond to guide us and protect us. The choices we make every day impact the trend in new cases, so please be very careful, wear masks in public, and get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. We have to work together and support one another to keep our communities safe,” said Vice President Myron Lizer.

The Navajo Department of Health also noted the following:

- The Navajo Nation is activating additional contact tracers to provide more coverage
- The cluster investigation unit is actively identifying outbreaks and clusters in the communities
- Hospitals are preparing for more cases, including the need for more medical staffing in the event of another large surge
- The Delta variant is detected in most of the sequencing for the Navajo Nation
- In-person gatherings are a primary driver of clusters on the Navajo Nation

All public health emergency orders are available online at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>.

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For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

August 12, 2021

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-017

Public Health Emergency Order Declaring “Orange Status” for Businesses

- I. Paragraphs I – IX from Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-004 are incorporated herein, addressing the various Navajo Nation (Nation) authorities related to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency as well as escalating incidents and community spread of COVID-19 on the Nation.
- II. In response to COVID-19, the Navajo Nation has established the “Navajo Nation Reopening Plan,” to declare the Nation’s “status” according thereto, and to guide businesses in proper compliance with the plan. All provisions of this Order are to be interpreted to effectuate this intent. Failure to comply with any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health.
- III. The Navajo Nation is experiencing an upward trajectory (increasing) of cases; therefore, the Nation is moving from “Yellow” to “Orange” status for businesses. The Nation remains vigilant as neighboring states are reducing restrictions rapidly and new COVID variants are present and being monitored in states surrounding the Navajo Nation. As coronavirus vaccines are being made available on the Navajo Nation, all preventative precautions should continue to be adhered to after receiving the vaccine. The Navajo Nation recently documented cases of COVID-19 Alpha (B.1.1.7), Gamma (P.1/P.1.1), Epsilon (B.1.427/429), and Delta (B.1.617.2) within the Navajo Nation. According to the CDC, these variants and especially the Delta variant seem to spread more easily and quickly.
- IV. The safest place continues to be at home. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported in all 50 states, and the situation is constantly changing especially due to emerging variants (B.1.1.7 UK, B.1.351 South Africa, P.1 Brazil). Because travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, **staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.**”
- V. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)” and **“the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.”**

- VI. Pursuant to Navajo Nation Resolution No. CJN-36-21, signed into law on July 6, 2021, the Nation's roads are reopened to Visitors and Tourists, all Navajo Nation enterprises and Navajo businesses are open to Navajo citizens and non-Navajo tourists and visitors, in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols and applicable Public Health Orders.

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the NDOH enabling legislation (NNC Resolution No. CO-50-14) and in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Public Health State of Emergency Declaration (CEM Resolution No. 20-03-11):

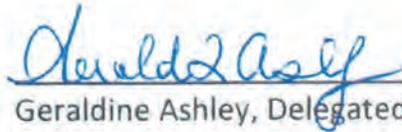
- A. The Navajo Nation Reopening Plan (updated August 12, 2021) is declared binding on all businesses on the Navajo Nation. Available at <https://www.navajoreopening.navajonnsn.gov/> .
- B. Per the Plan's "reopening status schedule," the Navajo Health Command and Operations Center ("NHCOC"), having evaluated the current state of the Navajo Nation per the gating criteria and public health considerations provided in the Plan, declares the Nation to be **Orange status**. All businesses shall be bound to the conditions and requirements of Orange status. The NHCOC will announce any future status changes by Public Health Emergency Order.
- C. Orange status is defined as: 50% of maximum occupancy allowed for most businesses to be open, including:
- Restaurants, including indoor dining, drive-thru, curbside, and outdoor dining.
 - Navajo casinos.
 - Lodging and hotels including campgrounds and RV parks.
 - Museums and zoos.
 - Marinas and parks. Tour businesses must follow the HCOOC Reopening Guidelines for Tour Businesses.
- D. Personal Care and Services are allowed by appointment only with cleaning between appointments.
- E. Flea markets and roadside markets are allowed in accordance with guidelines issued by the HCOOC.
- F. Gathering of 15 or fewer people are permitted for youth programs, consistent with guideline from the Health Command Operations Center. Per guideline, report all COVID-19 cases to local health care facility, and to the HCOOC COVID-19 Report Exposure Portal. For questions about reporting cases, call the Health Command Operations Center at (928) 871-7014.
- G. Not Allowed in Orange Phase: gyms, recreation facilities, movie theaters.

- H. All businesses are required to submit a COVID-19 Reopening Plan to the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development before reopening in Yellow Status. Reopening plans can be emailed to: navajoeconomy@navajo-nsn.gov

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements (consistent with HIPAA privacy standards).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect Monday, August 16, 2021 at 5:00 A.M. MDT, and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Health Command Operations Center.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 12th Day of August, 2021.



Geraldine Ashley, Delegated Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health



Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health
Health Command Operations Center

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

August 12, 2021

**Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-018
Public Health Emergency Order Declaring “Orange Status” for Schools**

- I. Paragraphs I – IX from Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-004 are incorporated herein, addressing the various Navajo Nation (Nation) authorities related to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency as well as escalating incidents and community spread of COVID-19 on the Nation.
- II. In response to COVID-19, the Navajo Nation has developed the “Navajo Nation COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework” to declare the Nation’s “status” according thereto and to guide the reopening of all schools, including Head Start, across the Navajo Nation in proper compliance with the Framework. All provisions of this Order are to be interpreted to effectuate this intent. Failure to comply with any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health.
- III. The Navajo Nation is experiencing an upward trajectory (increasing) of cases. The Nation remains vigilant as neighboring states are reducing restrictions rapidly and new COVID variants are present and being monitored in states surrounding the Navajo Nation. As coronavirus vaccines continue to be made available on the Navajo Nation, all preventative precautions should continue to be adhered to after receiving the vaccine. The Navajo Nation recently documented cases of COVID-19 Alpha (B.1.1.7), Gamma (P.1/P.1.1), Epsilon (B.1.427/429), and Delta (B.1.617.2) within the Navajo Nation. According to the CDC, these variants and especially the Delta variant seem to spread more easily and quickly.
- IV. Mask wearing is required in schools. All individuals on the Nation two (2) years of age and older shall wear masks while in public (any area outside your home where you could come within 6 feet of someone who is not from your household). (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-015, August 4, 2021)
- V. Pursuant to Navajo Nation Resolution No. CJN-36-21, signed into law on July 6, 2021, in-person instruction is allowed for schools operating within the Navajo Nation, in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols and applicable Public Health Orders.

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the NDOH enabling legislation (NNC Resolution No. CO-50-14) and in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Public Health State of Emergency Declaration (CEM Resolution No. 20-03-11):

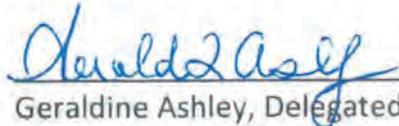
- A. The Navajo Nation COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework is declared binding on all schools, including Head Start, across the Navajo Nation. All schools are required to comply with the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework and the Navajo Nation School Reopening Plan. Available at <https://www.navajoreopening.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19-Safe-Schools-Framework>
- B. Per the Safe Schools Framework, the Navajo Health Command and Operations Center (NHCOC), having evaluated the current state of the Navajo Nation per the gating criteria and public health considerations provided in the Framework, declares the Navajo Nation to be in “Orange Status.” All schools shall be bound to the conditions and requirements of Orange status. The NHCOC will announce any future status changes by Public Health Emergency Order.
- C. Orange status is defined as: Substantial Transmission of COVID-19. Schools must implement all the required core prevention strategies and conditional prevention strategies noted in the Framework: parent options, use of masks, physical distancing, student cohorting, hygiene, cleaning and ventilation, diagnostic testing, contact tracing, required reporting, and COVID-19 vaccinations.
- D. There is high transmission of cases, therefore, schools should enhance the frequency and HCOC also recommends implementation of the prevention strategies, consistent with the COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework. Accordingly, HCOC recommends to schools the following particularly with communities with **high transmission rates** (listing of health advisories can be found at <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>):
 - a. Implement more aggressive social distancing measures.
 - b. Hybrid learning is encouraged.
 - c. Limit gathering to 15 or fewer persons for non-classroom instruction events such as back-to-school, orientations and other community gatherings.
 - d. Virtual learning is encouraged for those age 12 years and younger.
 - e. Require students, staff and visitors to stay home if they are sick.
 - f. Promptly report exposures using the HCOC portal (available at <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>) and notify the nearest local health facility (Indian Health Service or Tribal Health Organization). Exposures will be reported on the HCOC webpage of school exposures to notify the public.

- E. All schools are required to create, submit and implement a School Reopening Plan and complete an accompanying Reopening Readiness Assessment Attestation form. School Reopening Plans and completed Reopening Readiness Assessment Attestation forms should be submitted to the Department of Diné Education at: schoolreopening@nndode.org.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements (consistent with HIPAA privacy standards).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect Monday, August 16, 2021 at 5:00 A.M. MDT, and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the Health Command Center.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 12th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021.



Geraldine Ashley, Delegated Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health



Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health
Health Command Operations Center

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

August 12, 2021

**Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-019
Public Health Emergency Order Reemphasizing “Safer at Home” Order and
Updating Gathering Limits**

- I. Paragraphs I – IX from Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-004 are included with this Public Health Order, addressing the various Navajo Nation (Nation) authorities related to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- II. The intent and purpose of this Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-019 is to reemphasize the “Safer-at-Home” requirements and address updated gathering limits. The requirements of this Order may be extended or changed in a future order. These measures are intended to further ensure an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic by restricting movement of individuals on the Nation to limit contact to prevent the spread of the virus and minimize the strain on medical response capabilities. All provisions of this Order are to be interpreted to effectuate this intent. Failure to comply with any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health.
- III. Wearing a mask in public continues to be mandatory (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-015, August 4, 2021).
- IV. The Navajo Nation is experiencing an upward trajectory (increasing) of cases. The Navajo Nation remains vigilant as neighboring states are experiencing an increase of the Delta and other COVID variants. The Navajo Nation has documented cases of COVID-19 Alpha (B.1.1.7), Gamma (P.1/P.1.1), Epsilon (B.1.427/429), and Delta (B.1.617.2) within the Navajo Nation. According to the CDC, the Delta variant seem to spread more easily and quickly than the other variants and now the dominant variant in the US. As coronavirus vaccines continue to be made available on the Navajo Nation, all preventative precautions should continue to be adhered to after receiving the vaccine.
- V. The safest place continues to be at home. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported in all 50 states, and the situation is constantly changing especially due to emerging variants (B.1.1.7 UK, B.1.351 South Africa, P.1 Brazil). Because travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, **staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.**”

- VI. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)” and **“the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.”**

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that, pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the NDOH enabling legislation (NNC Resolution No. CO-50-14), and in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Public Health State of Emergency Declaration (CEM Resolution No. 20-03-11):

- A.** The Navajo Nation’s Safer at Home Public Health Emergency Order is still in effect and has not been rescinded. Under this **Safer at Home Order, individuals are required to exercise personal responsibility to remain safe, but are not ordered to stay home.**
1. Individuals must continue to exercise caution when engaging in public activities and practice everyday preventive actions, which include: wearing a mask in public, practicing social (physical) distancing, disinfecting high-touch surfaces, avoiding unnecessary travel, avoiding unnecessary public gatherings, and washing hands for 20 seconds.
 2. Individuals with COVID-19, or who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, are required to stay home and away from other people.
- B.** Gathering limits of 15 or fewer persons for the following:
1. Social gatherings.
 2. Traditional ceremonies, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
 3. Outdoor recreational events, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center’s guidelines. This includes walks, runs, bike rides, motorcycle events and similar events.
 4. Churches and other houses of worship, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines. Bible study group meetings of 15 or fewer people are permitted, consistent with the in-person training and meeting guidance.
 5. Youth programs, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-017, August 12, 2021).
- C.** Gathering limits of 25 or fewer persons remain in effect for in-person meeting and training, consistent with Navajo Health Command Operations Center guidelines.
- D.** “Drive-in” gatherings up to 50 vehicles are permitted if the organizers and participants adhere to the requirements herein. Such gatherings include parking lot gatherings for internet access, religious services, funeral services, graduations (consistent with Health Command Operation’s guideline), and similar events. Organizers must ensure the following are in place:

1. Outdoor “drive-in” gatherings only where people from the same vehicle remain in their vehicles.
 2. Vehicles are parked at least six (6) feet from other vehicles, in all four directions.
 3. Organizers and participants wear masks.
 4. Gathering is conducted in a no-contact manner and maintaining social distancing standards.
- E. All Businesses** must continue to comply with the requirements of Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-017 Implementing “Orange Status” for Businesses (August 12, 2021) or subsequent Order. Businesses must continue to address safety measures through policy and procedures of the following:
1. Ensure physical distance between personnel, customers, and any member of the public at the place of business is maximized, and that keeping six-feet between persons is possible at all times. Temperature screening for customers is optional but highly encouraged when transmission of cases increases.
 2. Wearing a mask in public continues to be mandatory (Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-015, August 4, 2021).
 3. Provide standards for how to respond to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 among employees. The policies and procedures shall further provide contact information for the nearest healthcare facility, and such information posted conspicuously at the place of business (e.g., informational poster). The place of business shall contact the healthcare facility immediately in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 to consult about next steps. Places of business shall report suspected or confirmed cases to the Navajo Health Command Operation Center by calling (928) 871-7014 or the HCOC portal (available at <https://www.ndoh.navajonnsn.gov/COVID-19>).
- F.** There is no daily curfew in effect; however, the Nation’s curfew for children pursuant to Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code remains in full force and effect.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements (consistent with HIPAA privacy standards).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that it is greatly advised that the public take the following preventive precautions:

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
3. To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hands or finger if you must touch something.
4. Wear a mask and avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.

5. Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).

6. Refrain from gathering with individuals outside your household who are not yet vaccinated.

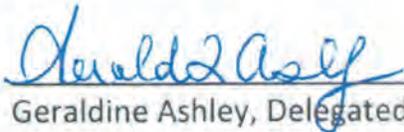
7. Limit unnecessary travel.

8. Get an influenza (flu) vaccination as soon as possible and when safe to do so, and in accordance with the above requirements.

9. All persons are highly encouraged to get any COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible and when safe to do so, and in accordance with the above requirements.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect on Monday, August 16, 2021 at 5:00 AM MDT and shall remain in effect until otherwise rescinded or modified by a subsequent Order.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 12th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021.



Geraldine Ashley, Delegated Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
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Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
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Health Command Operations Center

Definitions

Drive-In: means attending a gathering without leaving one's car.

Gathering: means any grouping together of individuals in a single connected location. (From Public Health Emergency Order dated March 18, 2020).

Social Distancing Requirements: Physical distancing by limiting contact of people within 6 feet from each other. (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-002, March 19, 2020).

Social Distancing Standards: Physical distancing by not shaking hands, standing several feet away from other people, avoiding crowds, etc.) (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003, March 20, 2020).