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Milwaukee Health Department Modifies COVID-19 Public Health Order *Revised Gating Criteria Also Clarify Reopening Steps*

Milwaukee – Significant changes in the current public health order will go into effect Friday, March 19th, changes that relax some restriction in the previous order. The new Public Health Order Phase 6 supersedes Order #4.4 which was in place for the past six weeks.

“The Phase 6 order reflects several COVID-19 trends including the reduced presence of the disease in Milwaukee and the lower percentage of positive COVID-19 test results,” Milwaukee Health Commissioner Kirsten Johnson said. “While we are taking a step forward, we are doing that cautiously because COVID-19 is still a dangerous threat in our city.”

Some of the noteworthy changes in the new public health order include:

- Restaurants and bars will see an increase in possible capacity and an easing of the restrictions on movement of patrons inside the establishment. While seating must be available and encouraged, it is no longer required unless a patron is eating or drinking.
- Museums can be open with capacity limits and protective measures including masking.
- Sporting events and recreational activities are now permitted to have up to six spectators per event participant with a limit of 750 fans indoors or 1,000 fans outdoors as long as physical distancing can be accommodated. An approved safety plan can allow larger crowds.
- The order no longer restricts visitors to long-term care facilities.

It is important to note that general provisions regarding safe business practices and protective measures remain in place. That includes masking, social distancing, surface cleaning, and policies to restrict employees who have been exposed to the disease or show COVID-19 symptoms. The Milwaukee Health Department will continue to enforce the order, and citations with potentially large fines will be issued for order violations.

The full order is available online at city.milwaukee.gov/MMFS.

The Health Department has revised the gating criteria used to establish the level of restrictions in the city’s public health order. The criteria were unchanged since they were first put in place almost ten months ago. They formerly included things such as hospital bed usage, contact tracing, and personal protective equipment availability. The criteria are being updated and simplified to include measures such as the number of cases per 100,000 people and vaccination rates.

The following chart is an overview of the new gating criteria;

Updated Gating Criteria

	Low Transmission	Moderate Transmission	Substantial Transmission	High Transmission	Extreme Transmission
Potential Moving Milwaukee Forward Safely Phases	Phase 7	Phase 6	Phase 5	Phase 4.4	Phase 4.5
Rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 over 7 days	0-9	10-49	50-99	100-149	>/=150
Percentage test positivity over previous 7 days	<5.0%	5.0% to 7.9%	8.0% to 9.9%	10.0 to 11.9%	>/=12.0%
City Adult Vaccination Rate	>/= 80%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Milwaukee Health Department will monitor these gating criteria over the coming weeks. Changes in the current Public Health Order Phase 6 are possible as the gating criteria either improve or deteriorate.

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