



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2020

Navajo Nation to implement more public health measures on Monday as health experts recommend online learning and advise against reopening casinos

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Friday, the Navajo Nation finalized two public health emergency orders and one executive order that will go into effect on Monday, Nov. 16 for a three-week period. The new measures reinstate a stay-at-home lockdown order for the entire Nation, close Executive Branch government offices with the exception of essential employees, call for all schools on the Navajo Nation to close temporarily, and declares “red status” for all businesses requiring new safety measures as COVID-19 cases continue to rise rapidly.

On Friday, Navajo Nation reported 97 new cases of COVID-19 while the state of New Mexico reported 1,237 new cases, Arizona reported 3,015 new cases, and Utah reported 2,150. The United States reported a single-day record-high of over 150,000 new COVID-19 cases as well.

“With nearly 900 new cases of COVID-19 reported on the Navajo Nation in the last week and with surging cases across the country, we have to implement these public health measures to protect our Navajo people and reduce the spread of this virus. In addition, our epidemiologists recently identified 34 communities with uncontrolled spread of COVID-19. We are inching closer and closer to a major public health crisis in which we could potentially see our hospitals filling up with patients. Our health care system on the Navajo Nation cannot sustain a long-term surge in COVID-19 cases. The safest place to be is at home here on the Navajo Nation,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

Executive Order No. 010-20 requires government offices and enterprises to close beginning Nov. 16 thru Dec. 6, with the exception of essential employees as determined by division directors and enterprise management, to maintain essential services and functions of government. President Nez noted that all CARES Act projects and processes are required to proceed without disruption or setbacks to meet upcoming deadlines.

The order also requires public schools, including state public schools, grant schools, private schools, higher education institutions, early childhood programs including CCDF, Head Start, FACE programs, and all after school programs on the Navajo Nation to be online from Nov. 16 to Dec. 6, to protect students, teachers, parents, and others from COVID-19 risks. To view Executive Order No. 010-20, please visit: <https://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/From-the-Office/Executive-Orders>.

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-30 implements a three-week stay-at-home lockdown order and restricts travel off of the Navajo Nation and in-person gatherings. Individuals may leave their place of residence only for emergencies or to perform essential activities such as obtaining food or groceries, obtaining medicine, gathering fire wood with appropriate permit, and others.

Only essential businesses will be allowed to operate during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (MST) daily – weekdays and weekends. All essential businesses including gas stations, grocery stores, laundromats, and restaurants and food establishments are required to ensure employees and customers wear masks, practice social distancing, disinfect high-touch surfaces, access to hand wash stations, sanitizers and gloves, and limit the number of customers in any enclosed areas. Restaurants and food establishments must operate on a curbside or drive-thru basis only. All places of business and governmental offices are encouraged to report employee exposures to the Navajo Health Command Operations Center at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/covid-19>.

“In order to reduce cases, we have to isolate the virus. The more people move about and travel, the more cases of COVID-19 we will see. The data from our public health officials indicates that we are near the peak of new cases that we experienced in April and May. We brought down the number of cases before, and we can do it again with safe practices and prayer,” said Vice President Lizer.

“The daily increase of new COVID-19 cases on the Navajo Nation mirrors the United States upward trajectory and dangerously approaches our record-high cases in early May. The Navajo Healthcare System isn’t overwhelmed now, but further bed capacity with adequate medical staffing are a concern. Isolation and quarantine sites are available for the Navajo people, please seek these services to further reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Safe isolation is important especially if this can’t be done at home. We all have a role to play to protect ourselves and our relatives,” said Navajo Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim.

After several recent discussions with public health officials regarding the surge in COVID-19 cases, President Nez vetoed a resolution that requested support for the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise’s reopening plan for casinos at a minimum of 50-percent capacity. President Nez said he recognizes and understands the economic impacts and remains committed to finding additional alternative funds to support businesses and enterprises. In August, the Navajo Nation approved \$24.6 million in CARES Act funds to avoid lay-offs of gaming employees.

“We cannot put a price tag on the health, safety, and lives of our Navajo people. Revenues do not outweigh the precious lives of our elders, children, and gaming employees. We recently learned that the enterprise did experience a positive case in their gaming facility, so how safe will our elders and visitors be when we cannot predict the spread of the coronavirus? To the gaming employees, board members, and their families, we ask for your patience and understanding due to the significant rise in COVID-19 cases and we are willing to find a way to provide additional support,” added President Nez.

Public Health Emergency Order 2020-029:

<https://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/Portals/0/FILES/Latest%20News/NDOH%20Public%20Health%20Emergency%20Order%202020-029%20Dikos%20Ntsaaigii-19.pdf>

Public Health Emergency Order 2020-030:

<https://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/Portals/0/FILES/Latest%20News/NDOH%20Public%20Health%20Emergency%20Order%202020-030%20Dikos%20Ntsaaigii-19.pdf>

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

November 13, 2020

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-029

Public Health Emergency Order Declaring “Red 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. 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. 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.**”
- IV. 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.”**
- V. The Nation’s roads remain closed to Visitors for the duration of the declared public health emergency, and Visitors are advised to refrain from traveling to the Navajo Nation. Tribal parks will not be accessible to Visitors and Tourists during this time. Visitors and Tourists will be informed when the Navajo Nation can safely welcome Visitors back to the Nation.

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant 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 is declared binding on all businesses on the Navajo Nation. Available at <https://www.navajoreopening.navajo-nsn.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 in **Red status**. All businesses shall be bound to the conditions and requirements of Red status. The NHCOC will announce any future status changes by Public Health Emergency Order.
- C. In the Red Status, the reopening condition for Grocery Stores is 20 persons or less in the store.
- D. Red status is defined as: Grocery stores: 20 persons or less in the store. Gas stations: 5 persons or less in the store. Laundry facilities: 10 persons or less and 2 people per household. Dining or waiting establishments: allowed drive-thru only (food, banks, financial institutions). Adhere to compliance with the curfew. Not Allowed in Red Phase: Youth Programs, Casinos and video poker, museums, barber shops, hair salons, nail salons, flea markets, roadside markets, marinas, parks, gyms, recreation facilities.

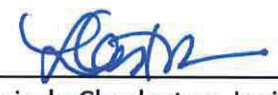
NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements (consistent with HIPAA privacy standards).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect Monday, November 16, 2020 at 8:00 A.M. MST, 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 13th DAY OF November, 2020.


Herman Shorty, Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health


Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health


Lucinda Charleston, Incident Manager
Dikos Ntsaaígíí – 19
Health Command Center
Navajo Department of Health

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

November 13, 2020

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-030

Re-issuing Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) Lockdown Order for Three (3) Consecutive Weeks

- 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. A Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) Order had been in effect for all residents of the Nation, requiring individuals to limit their movement within and outside of their immediate communities and to limit contact with individuals who are not in their immediate household. (Public Health Emergency Orders No. 2020-003 (March 20, 2020) and No. 2020-004 (March 29, 2020)). Under that Order, individuals could leave their place of residence only to perform “Essential Activities” which primarily include activities and tasks essential to health, safety, and welfare. That Order also advised that public gatherings in excess of five (5) people should be avoided. The Nation has most recently been under a “Safer on the Navajo Nation” Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-014 (October 16, 2020), individuals were encouraged to exercise personal responsibility but were not ordered to stay home. Individuals on the Navajo Nation played an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 on the Nation by exercising caution when engaging in public activities and by practicing everyday preventive actions, including wearing masks in public, practicing social (physical) distancing, disinfecting high-touch surfaces, avoiding unnecessary travel, avoiding unnecessary public gatherings, and washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds. Individuals can slow the spread on the Navajo Nation again by practicing preventive measures and staying safe, staying local, and staying on the Nation.
- III. The Navajo Nation is experiencing an alarming rise in positive COVID-19 cases and uncontrolled spread in 34 communities across the Navajo Nation. These cluster cases are a direct result of family gatherings and off-Reservation travel. They also have lead to an outbreak and a second surge in cases on the Navajo Nation. Cases in surrounding states and across the country have been on an upward trajectory for the last two (2) months and there is uncontrolled spread in nearly every state. Some states, including states surrounding the Nation, are experiencing a record high number of cases. These circumstances have the potential to overwhelm the health care system on the Navajo Nation if not mitigated immediately. As a preventive measure, a Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) Order is warranted.

- IV. The intent and purpose of this Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-023 is to re-issue the Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) requirements, effective immediately and continuing for a period of at least three (3) weeks, including weekends. This Order may be extended. 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 to 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.
- V. **Individuals are required to STAY HOME and to STAY ON THE NAVAJO NATION. Refrain from off-Reservation travel. Individuals are also advised not to gather with anyone outside your immediate household and to stay within your local communities.**
- VI. To mitigate the risk, individuals are required to stay home (isolate or quarantine) and self-monitor for the next three (3) weeks. Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may be contagious. Isolation separates people who may be sick from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of those who are exposed to a contagious disease.
- VII. 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. 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.**"
- VIII. 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."**
- IX. The Nation's roads remain closed to Visitors for the duration of the declared public health emergency, and Visitors are advised to refrain from traveling to the Navajo Nation. Tribal parks will not be accessible to Visitors and Tourists during this time. Visitors and Tourists will be informed when the Navajo Nation can safely welcome Visitors back to the Nation.

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the Navajo Department of Health 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. All individuals on the Navajo Nation shall **Shelter in Place** and must stay at home and strictly limit movement within and outside of their immediate communities, and limit public contact with others. Individuals may leave their place of residence only for emergencies or to

perform "**Essential Activities,**" defined herein, which primarily include activities and tasks essential to health, safety, and welfare or in the event of an emergency, as described below:

1. To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their immediate family or household members (including, but not limited to, livestock and pets), such as, obtaining critical medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for an imminent health need.
 2. To obtain necessary services or supplies such as canned food, dry goods, produce, pet supplies, meat, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residential living. When people need to leave home to obtain such necessities, they should do so in limited numbers and should at all times adhere to **Social Distancing Standards** (such as: not shaking hands, standing several feet away from other people, avoiding crowds, etc.).
 3. Individuals are still permitted to cultivate food (i.e. farming) and tend to livestock. However, plan ahead to purchase hay and feed, if needed.
 4. Individuals are not required to remain indoors. Outdoor activity is encouraged and individuals may leave their immediate residence or home site area for exercise such as running or hiking, so long as movement is restricted to no more than five (5) miles from one's home.
 5. Wood collection and hauling, with an appropriate permit issued by the Navajo Nation Forestry Department, is a permissible activity; however, groups are limited to no more than 5 people, masks are required, maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible, and use hand sanitizer. Coal collection and hauling is also permissible with the same preventive measures.
 6. Refrain from gathering with individuals from outside your immediate household.
 7. Practice all individual preventative measures including wearing a mask in public, avoid public gatherings, maintain social (physical) distancing, remain in your vehicle for curbside and drive-through services.
 8. These restrictions do not apply to Essential Employees reporting to or from duty at an Essential Business that is exempted from closure below, provided that the employee must have official identification or a letter of designation from their employer on official letterhead which includes a contact name and number for verification.
- B. All Businesses** not otherwise exempted herein shall be closed. The closure and cease operation requirement do not apply to Healthcare Operations, Essential Governmental

Functions, or Essential Infrastructure Activities (as those terms are defined below). **The closure requirement also does not apply to gas stations, grocery stores, laundromats, restaurants, food establishments, and hay vendors, provided they comply with the following requirements:**

1. Operate only between the hours of 7:00 A.M. MST and 3:00 P.M. MST daily.
2. Ensure that adequate social distancing is practiced.
3. Ensure that high-touch surfaces are regularly disinfected and thoroughly clean retail store areas and employee work areas.
4. Ensure that employees and customers wear masks.
5. Make efforts to ensure that customers have on-site access to handwashing stations, sanitizer, or gloves.
6. Limit the number of customers in any enclosed area.
7. Restaurants and food establishments must operate on a curbside or drive-through basis only.
8. And otherwise comply with the requirements of Public Health Emergency Order No. 29 Declaring "Red Status" for Businesses (November 13, 2020).


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

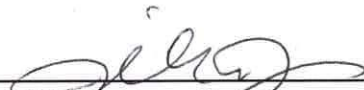
NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that it is greatly advised that the public take the following preventive precautions:


1. **All persons on the Navajo Nation are required to stay home and leave home only when absolutely necessary for their health, safety, or welfare or as described herein.**
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Wear a mask and avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
6. 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).
7. Avoid all public gatherings.
8. Avoid all non-essential travel.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take effect on Monday, November 16, 2020, and shall remain in effect through December 6, 2020 or until otherwise rescinded or modified by a subsequent Order.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 13th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2020.


Herman Shorty, Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health


Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health


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Definitions

Emergency: a serious, unexpected, or dangerous situation requiring immediate action, including a medical condition that requires immediate treatment.

Essential Activities: (1) activities or tasks essential to the health and safety of one's household (including livestock and pets), such as obtaining critical medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for an imminent health need, or participating in a Traditional Navajo ceremony or prayer; (2) obtaining necessary services or supplies (such as canned food, dry goods, produce, pet supplies, meat, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of a residence); (3) engaging in daytime outdoor activity such as walking, hiking, or running (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003, March 20, 2020); (4) Voting (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-009, May 14, 2020); (5) Cultivate food (i.e. farming) and tend to livestock (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-015 (June 16, 2020)); (6) Working for an essential business or in an essential government function, or providing essential infrastructure services; (7) Wood collection and hauling (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-024 (September 29, 2020)); (8) Hunting with a permit from the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-026 (October 22, 2020)).

Essential Businesses: Healthcare Operation, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Infrastructure (e.g., courts of law, medical providers for urgent care, public utilities, and critical school operations such as nutrition programs) (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-002, March 19, 2020 and expanded through Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003, March 20, 2020 to include food cultivation (including farming and livestock), grocery stores, food banks, convenience stores, hardware stores and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of groceries and non-grocery products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of residences, among other things).

Essential Employees: Those employees identified by Essential Businesses deemed to be necessary to the continued operation of those Essential Businesses.

Essential Governmental Functions: means all services needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government agencies and provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public. (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-002, March 19, 2020).

Essential infrastructure: Public works construction, construction of housing, water, sewer, gas, electrical, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services). (From Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003, March 20, 2020).

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).