



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2020

Temporary Restrictions Lifted; CNMI Returns to Community Vulnerability Level BLUE

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres announced on Sunday that the temporary restrictions on in-person interactions, social gatherings, and business hours, which began on August 24, 2020, will expire at the end of today, September 6, 2020.

The CNMI officially returns to Community Vulnerability Level BLUE on Monday, September 7, 2020.

Since January, the Torres-Palacios administration through the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) has implemented strict, but necessary constraints on activities throughout the Commonwealth in an effort to prevent and control the spread of coronavirus throughout our community.

Due in large part to the proactive implementation of these risk mitigation measures, the continued success of the CNMI's COVID-19 preventative measures at the borders, as well as the cooperation of the community in adhering to guidance from CNMI health officials, the CNMI has been able to contain community transmission.

These last two weeks of temporary restrictions have been used to determine how widespread community transmission is within the CNMI and to prevent further spread of the virus.

The entire community is to be commended for washing their hands, wearing a mask, and watching their distance in public. However, it remains important to be vigilant and to not have our guard down, which requires all CNMI residents to work together.

"I want to thank all of our federal and local partners, our businesses, and everyone who calls the Marianas home for being with us in our efforts to keep our community safe from COVID-19. It has not been easy this year, but we can be proud knowing that the CNMI is one of the safest places in the world. Let's continue to be vigilant and work together," said Governor Torres.

With the expiration of the Governor's temporary restrictions, the CNMI returns to Community Vulnerability Level BLUE. This means:

CURFEW

Curfew Hours are now back to **2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.**

- Exceptions to Curfew Hours remain:
 - First responders while in performance of their official duties and displaying a COVID-19 Task Force-issued badge
 - Any person lawfully employed during the Curfew Hours or is in direct route of going to or returning from their place of employment

- Any person going to or returning from admission to the CHCC hospital or completion of treatment such as hemodialysis.
- Penalties for violating Curfew mandates
 - First-time offense violators found in public, including individuals found driving on a public road, outside of the curfew hours will be subject to a fine of \$200;
 - Second-time offense violators found in public, including individuals found driving on public roads, outside of the curfew hours will be subject to a fine of \$500;
 - Third-time or more offense violators found in public, including individuals found driving on public roads, outside of the curfew hours will be subject to a fine of \$750 and/or the impound of his/her vehicle by the Department of Public Safety;
 - Each passenger in a vehicle found driving on a public road outside of the curfew hours will be subject to the following fines:
 - \$100 for a first-time offense;
 - \$200 for a second-time offense;
 - \$300 for a third-time or more offense.

GATHERINGS

Gatherings of no more than 25 people in a single room or single space are permitted.

CHURCHES

Church services must limit attendance to 75% of allowed occupancy and maintain social distancing and sanitation guidelines.

BUSINESSES

All businesses that have facilities open to the general public may be open to the public from **5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.**

All businesses shall limit occupancy to 75% in accordance with supplemental regulatory guidance set by the Department of Public Works (DPW) Building Code.

Restaurants and bars must continue to serve dine-in customers under social distancing parameters and at 75% of their originally permitted occupancy.

- In addition to social distancing, restaurants and bars must conduct temperature screening of all employees and patrons prior to entering the establishment. For patrons, establishments must document patrons' name, phone number in a log which must be accessible to CNMI officials.
- Employees are required to wear facial coverings when providing service to the patrons and are included in the 75% occupancy limit.
- Patrons are also required to wear face masks whether dining inside or outside.

Gas stations are permitted to open to the public between 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

All businesses engaged in gaming, including the casino, video poker establishments, and e-gaming facilities, remain closed to the public, except if authorized to operate under an approved reopening plan by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

BUSINESS ENFORCEMENT

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, in coordination with and with the assistance of the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Commerce, Alcohol Beverage & Tobacco Control Division, the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and any other necessary Commonwealth agency, shall enforce business hours and social distancing requirements. Failure to follow will subject the violator to penalties available under the law or to the following:

- First-time offense violators will be subject to immediate closure of their business establishment for a period up to one month;
- Second-time offense violators will be subject to immediate closure of their business establishment for a period up to six months;
- Third-time or more offense violators will be subject to immediate closure of their business establishment for a period up to one year.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND GATHERINGS

All public parks, public pathways, and public beaches are open for all recreational activities and social gatherings, subject to the social distancing requirements regarding gatherings (no more than 25 people) and curfew mandate mentioned above.

- The Grotto remains closed.
- Mañagaha Island is open for recreation and gatherings, so long as social distancing requirements are implemented for both transport vessels and on-island activities.
 - Transport vessels must be subject to constant and consistent disinfection. This section will be enforced by the Department of Public Lands (DPL).

SCHOOLS

All public and private schools in the Commonwealth are permitted to resume in-person instruction and activities, subject to the review and approval of operational plans and site assessments by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, DPW, and CHCC.

All schools, both public and private, across the Commonwealth, are encouraged to facilitate alternative modes of education, such as distance learning through online means or a hybrid of both in-person and online learning.

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC continue to urge individuals to practice the Three W's: ***Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear a face covering.***

Individuals and businesses are encouraged to seek guidance regarding these protective measures. Please report any non-compliance of these directives to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force at 237-8034, 8035, 8036, and 8037.