

# Guidance for Public Officials on COVID-19

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April 28, 2020

In conjunction with Governor's Gordon's plan to transition Wyoming to a new phase of the COVID-19 response, the Wyoming State Health Officer has issued continuations of three statewide orders through May 15, 2020. The new orders include provisions for **distinct** Countywide Variance Orders as well as specific **exceptions to the current orders**. These provisions recognize the ever-changing nature of the COVID-19 outbreak as well as the fact that conditions can vary greatly by county.

This document is intended for statewide, county, and local public officials, and provides:

1. An outline and description of changes that have been made to the statewide public health orders, effective May 1, 2020 (Page 2).
2. Descriptions of the metrics that will be analyzed on a regular basis to inform decision-making with respect to statewide or countywide changes (Pages 3-4).
3. Guidance for county officials, describing the process for seeking Countywide Variance Orders or other exceptions to the orders beginning on May 1, 2020 (Pages 4-5).

The ongoing goal of the statewide COVID-19 response effort is to continue to **protect lives** while **incrementally easing restrictions** in order to recover Wyoming's businesses and economy.

Wyoming residents and businesses should continue to monitor and follow all Wyoming Department of Health guidelines related to COVID-19.

## Key Takeaways

- Wyoming is taking steps to slowly ease economic restrictions.
- Wyoming will be taking a measured approach for changes to the statewide public health orders.
- Decisions going forward will be based on data, not dates, and will be made to ensure protection of the public health.
- Less-restrictive, or more-restrictive, measures may be put into place based upon health data across the state.

## Summary of Changes to Statewide Orders

The current statewide public health orders have been modified as follows:

- **Order #1 continued.** The statewide public health order closing/restricting bars, restaurants, theaters, gymnasiums, child care facilities, K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and trade schools has been continued through May 15, 2020, with the following exceptions:
  - Gymnasiums may open in a limited capacity, subject to the provisions outlined in the Order;
  - Up to five customers at a time may enter a restaurant to pick up food and drink orders, with appropriate social distancing;
  - A distinct Countywide Variance Order that is less restrictive or more restrictive than the Statewide Order may be requested by the County Health Officer and approved by the State Health Officer. County Health Officers may also request exceptions to specific provisions contained within the three statewide orders.
  - Childcare centers or home daycares may re-open or continue to operate, with certain restrictions and precautions.
  
- **Order #2 continued.** The statewide public health order forbidding gatherings of ten (10) people or more has been continued through May 15, 2020.
  - A Countywide Variance Order that is less restrictive or more restrictive than the Statewide Order may be requested by the County Health Officer and approved by the State Health Officer. County Health Officers may also request exceptions to specific provisions contained within the three statewide orders.
  
- **Order #3 continued.** The Statewide public health order for the temporary closure of nail salons, hair salons, barber shops, massage therapy services, tattoo, body art and piercing shops, and cosmetology, electrology, and esthetic services has been continued through May 15th, but with new parameters to allow for limited re-openings.
  - Nail salons, hair salons, barber shops, cosmetology, electrology, and esthetic services, massage therapy services, tattoo, body art, and piercing shops may open in a limited capacity, subject to the provisions outlined in the Order;
  - A Countywide Variance Order that is less restrictive or more restrictive than the Statewide Order may be requested by the County Health Officer and approved by the State Health Officer. County Health Officers may also request exceptions to specific provisions contained within the three statewide orders.

All three orders will remain in effect through May 15, 2020.

## Data-Driven Decision Making

The Department of Health will work with counties to continue tracking priority metrics to inform decisions related to public health orders and the restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Priority metrics include:

- Epidemiological metrics. These data are collected by the Department’s team of epidemiologists and include the number of COVID-19 positive cases, broken out by type of transmission and where the tests were performed (e.g., Wyoming Public Health Lab or private/commercial labs).
- Hospital capacity metrics. These data are reported to the Department by hospitals on a daily basis and include total bed capacity and total COVID-19 admissions, as well as state and county supplies/stockpiles of PPE.

The table below provides more detail on these metrics, including the conditions sought for each. Metrics will be assessed and monitored regularly to inform any actions and/or approval or denial of Countywide Variance Orders or other specific exceptions to the current orders.

Statewide and County Metrics	Desired Condition
Number of positive cases	Reduction over multiple weeks
Percent of cases attributed to community spread	Maintenance or reduction for multiple weeks
Percent of total tests that are positive	Maintenance or reduction for multiple weeks
Total reported COVID-19 hospitalizations	Reduction for multiple weeks
Total reported hospital bed capacity	Maintenance or increase for multiple weeks
Total ICU bed availability	Maintenance or increase for multiple weeks
Daily COVID-19 testing volume	Increased testing volume
Testing capacity	Ability to test symptomatic patients
PPE supplies	Adequate supply of PPE available
County-specific Metrics	Desired Condition
COVID-19 outbreaks in communal settings	Zero current outbreaks (e.g., nursing homes)

The metrics outlined above provide a holistic view of the current state of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wyoming. They are crucial for informing the state’s multi-phased strategic plan to continue to mitigate the spread and effects of COVID-19 while also taking safe and appropriate measures to ease restrictions that have an impact on Wyoming and her citizens.



Wyoming state officials will work directly with each county and use, among other important information, the metrics and priorities listed above to incrementally revise Statewide Public Health Orders that ease restrictions on businesses and activities while continuing to reduce the risk to our communities. As monitoring of the outbreak continues, it may become necessary to tighten restrictions if conditions warrant additional measures.

## Countywide Health Orders and Variances

### Countywide Variance Orders

A County Health Officer may request a Countywide Variance Order that is less restrictive (or more restrictive) than a Statewide Order. To be approved, any Countywide Variance Order must be signed by both the County Health Officer and the State Health Officer. The County Health Officer should discuss the proposed order with the State Health Officer. Counties should draft the proposed order in conjunction with the State Health Officer and submit it to the State Health Officer for approval and signature. When determining whether to approve a proposed County Variance Order, the State Health Officer will consider the priority metrics identified above, as well as county-specific information. Approved Countywide Variance Orders may be rescinded immediately, upon written notice, as conditions warrant according to the State Health Officer.

### Specific Exception Requests

Exceptions for individual businesses and specific activities that are restricted by the statewide orders may also be requested. These exception requests must be made first to the County Health Officer. Businesses, schools, or others requesting exceptions shall submit to the County Health Officer a written plan for operating while protecting the public health. If the County Health Officer believes the plan is sufficient to protect public health, the plan must then be submitted to the State Health Officer for consideration. The State Health Officer will consider these exceptions on a case-by-case basis based on the written plan submitted. When determining whether to approve the exception, the State Health Officer will consider the priority metrics identified above, as well as county-specific information. In addition, the support of local community officials will also be a consideration given their role in oversight and enforcement. If approved in writing by the State Health Officer, counties shall document the approved exception by writing an “exception approval letter” signed by the County Health Officer.

Any school or school district requesting an exception shall assure that it is also in compliance with all the requirements of the Department of Education. Any exception granted by the State Health Officer relates only to the Statewide Public Health orders; it does not create any exception to the requirements of the Department of Education.

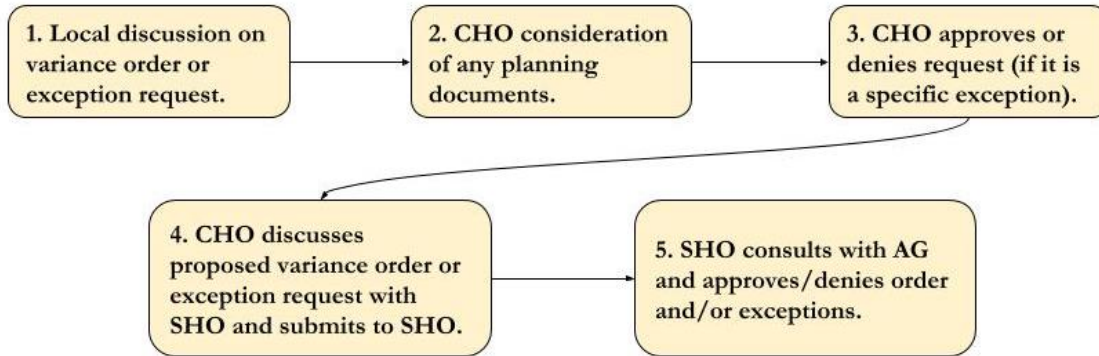
### Planning Documents

Businesses seeking to have restrictions eased through a specific exception request should submit written plans to their County Health Officer for consideration. Planning documents should include, at a minimum:

- Identification of how appropriate social distancing will be encouraged and enforced;
- Identification of how patrons will be screened for symptoms of respiratory illness; and,
- Identification of how appropriate hygiene and sanitation best practices will be followed.

## Process to Request Countywide Variance Orders and/or Exceptions

The following process shall be followed when requesting a countywide order or specific exception:



CHO = County Health Officer | SHO = State Health Officer | AG = Attorney General

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
- Local partners, including CHO, county commission, law enforcement, and the county attorney, should discuss any Countywide Variance Order and/or exception being sought.	- Planning documents may need to be developed depending on the content of the variance order and/or any other exceptions.	- CHO approves or denies request, if a specific exception is being sought. If denied, return to Steps 1 and 2, if appropriate.	- CHO discusses proposed variance order or exception request with SHO. Counties draft proposed variance order or exception request in conjunction with the State Health Officer and submits to State Health Officer for approval.	-SHO reviews and consults with AG. The proposed order and/or exception requests are approved or denied. If denied, SHO and CHO may discuss any changes necessary.