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New York State Easing COVID-19 Related Restrictions – What You Need to Know

In effect since May 19th, most commercial businesses in New York State have been open at 6-foot social-distanced capacity, rather than at specific percentage capacity limits. Governor Cuomo, along with the governors of New Jersey and Connecticut, collectively last month announced the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, citing significant progress in vaccinations and a reduction in hospitalizations. Offices are included as part of the new order.

Also, since May 19th, New York state adopted the CDC’s “Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People” for most business and public settings. That means vaccinated individuals can go without wearing masks or physically distancing, except where masks are required by federal, state, local, or tribal rules and regulations. This includes local business and workplace guidance. The state is allowing businesses to eliminate the six feet social distancing requirement if ALL patrons within the establishment, or in a designated part of the business, present written or digital proof of full vaccination status.

According to the state, and consistent with CDC guidance, public schools, transit, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities will continue to follow the State’s existing COVID-19 health guidelines until more New Yorkers are fully vaccinated.

Commercial and social events in the state, such as catered receptions, are now permitted to exceed prior capacity rules. Starting May 19, large-scale indoor event venues can operate at 30% capacity. Large-scale outdoor event venues have been allowed to operate at 33%. Attendees older than four may still need to present proof of vaccinations or a recent COVID test.

For a more in-depth list of open businesses, capacity regulations and industry specific guidance, please visit New York Forward at <https://forward.ny.gov/>. There you can find all up-to-date mandatory guidelines for manufacturing employers and employees and other businesses and public establishments. Please also feel free to e-mail me anytime with your questions or comments at tiffanylatinog@macny.org.