Coronavirus Pandemic
FAQs: Phase One of Reopening Virginia

Why reopen in phases?
At the beginning of this pandemic, public health experts stressed the importance of "flattening the curve" – slowing the transmission of COVID-19 from person to person to prevent a heavy surge of cases that could overwhelm our healthcare workers and facilities. That is still important now. This disease still poses a serious risk to public health, and Virginia state officials are exercising evidence-based caution to prevent a second surge of cases.

What's open during Phase One?
Phase One of the Virginia state government's reopening plan began on Friday, May 15, 2020. During this phase, many businesses and public spaces are allowed to reopen with limitations. Some highlights:

- Restaurants and bars are open for take-out, delivery, and outdoor seating at 50% capacity
- Houses of worship are open for indoor services at 50% capacity and can continue holding drive-in services
- Non-essential retail stores are open at 50% capacity
- Salons and barbershops are open on an appointment-only basis with one customer per service provider
- Beaches are open for fishing and exercise only (Gov. Northam has indicated exceptions to this for Virginia Beach)
- Social gatherings are limited to 10 people or fewer
- Childcare is open for working families
- State parks are open for day use and some overnight use
- STILL CLOSED: Entertainment and public amusement venues (like theaters)
- STILL CLOSED: Gyms and fitness studios (some exceptions for outdoor classes)
- STILL CLOSED: Overnight summer camps
- STILL CLOSED: Schools

Note: this is only a brief summary. For more details on these businesses and information on other businesses like farmers markets, please click here to read the full Phase One guidelines for easing business restrictions from the Governor’s office.

Any type of business not listed in Section A of the document linked above must still adhere to the Virginia state government's general guidelines for businesses. Please click here to read those guidelines.
When does Phase Two begin?
The decision to further lift restrictions and move to Phase Two of reopening our Commonwealth will be made by the Governor and state officials – this is not a decision that I or any other Virginians at the federal level control.

Governor Northam has stated that Phase One restrictions will be in effect until midnight on May 28, at which point our state's public health experts will make a decision about how safe and responsible it is to move forward. Factors they will be weighing at that time include overall data trends for new cases and fatalities, hospital bed capacity, and availability of personal protective equipment.

Are masks still necessary?
This pandemic is not over, and the same commonsense measures that protected you in the first week are still prudent now. Health experts strongly encourage Virginians to continue teleworking if they are able, maintain six feet of distance from people who are not members of your household, and wear a face covering when you go out.

These are sensible steps we can continue taking to keep ourselves, our families, and vulnerable members of our communities safe.

*If you have an immediate need or question, please don't hesitate to call us at (202) 225-2815 or (804) 401-4110.*