

Governor Abbott Announces Phase Two To Open Texas

May 18, 2020 | Austin, Texas | [Press Release](#)

Governor Greg Abbott today announced the second phase of the State of Texas' ongoing plan to safely and strategically open Texas while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Under Phase II, restaurants may increase their occupancy to 50% and additional services and activities that [remained closed under Phase I](#) may open with restricted occupancy levels and minimum standard health protocols laid out by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

Additionally, the Governor announced that public schools in Texas have the option to provide in-person summer school so long as they follow social distancing practices and health protocols laid out by DSHS. These classes may begin as soon as June 1st.

"Today, tomorrow, and every day going forward is one step closer to medical discoveries that can treat and protect people from COVID-19—but until that day comes, our focus is keeping Texans safe while restoring their ability to get back to work, open their businesses, pay their bills, and put food on their tables," said Governor Abbott. "By continuing to use safe practices, we are slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting our most vulnerable. Now more than ever, we need to work together as one Texas. I ask all Texans to continue heeding the guidance of our state and federal medical experts and do their part to protect public health. If we all unite in our resolve, we will overcome this challenge."

Via [Executive Order](#), the following services and activities may open under Phase II.

- Child Care Centers (May 18)
- Massage and Personal-Care Centers (May 18)
- Youth Clubs (May 18)
- Rodeo and Equestrian Events (May 22)
- Bowling Alleys, Bingo Halls, Simulcast Racing, and Skating Rinks (May 22)
- Bars (May 22)
- Aquariums and Natural Caverns (May 22)
- Zoos (May 29)
- Day Youth Camps (May 31)
- Overnight Youth Camps (May 31)
- Youth Sports (May 31)
- Certain professional sports without in-person spectators (May 31)

All sporting and camp activities are required to adhere by special safety standards, and minimum standard health protocols have been established for all newly announced opened services and activities. Businesses located in office buildings may also open but must limit their occupancy to the greater of 10 employees or 25% of their workforce.

Additionally, restaurants may expand their occupancy to 50% beginning May 22. Bars—including wine tasting rooms, craft breweries, and similar businesses—may open at 25% occupancy but like restaurants, these occupancy limits do not apply to outdoor areas that maintain safe distancing among parties.

Opened services and activities under Phase II are subject to certain occupancy limits and health and safety protocols. For details and a full list of guidelines, openings, and relevant dates, visit www.gov.texas.gov/opentexas.

Certain counties experiencing surges in COVID-19 cases will have their beginning date of Phase II delayed until May 29. These counties include El Paso, Randall, Potter, Moore, and Deaf Smith. [Surge Response Teams](#) are actively working in these areas to increase testing, maintain hospital capacity, and ensure that COVID-19 is contained and mitigated.

During his remarks, the Governor also presented information on the state's hospitalization and positivity rates—two metrics the Governor and his team of medical experts have used to inform the state's ongoing plan to safely

and strategically open. Details on these metrics can be found in presentation slides, [Hospitalizations Chart](#) and [Positivity Rate Chart](#).

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