

# Kemp announces plans to incrementally reopen Georgia | Here's what that includes

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ATLANTA — Gov. Brian Kemp is working to get Georgia's economy back rolling again.

The governor held a news conference Monday afternoon with other state officials to discuss Georgia's response to COVID-19 and how they plan on slowly reopening the state.

"Last week, the White House issued guidelines for states to safely reopen our nation's economy," Kemp said. "We appreciate the leadership and share in the president's desire to reopen the economy and get Americans back to work."

He said the approach the state has taken so far has been guided by data and the advice of health experts. He continues to do so going forward.

"In the same way we carefully closed businesses and urged operations to end to mitigate the virus' spread, today we are announcing plans to incrementally and safely reopen sectors of our economy," Kemp said.

**Gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, body art studios, barbers, cosmetologists, hair designers, nail care artists, estheticians and their schools, and massage therapists can reopen on Friday, April 24, Kemp said.**

**"These entities have been unable to manage inventory, deal with payroll, and take care of administrative items while we shelter in place," he explained. "This measure allows them to undertake baseline operations that most other businesses in the state have maintained since I issued the shelter in place order."**

He said the measures would apply statewide and would be the operational standard in all jurisdictions.

"This means local action cannot be taken that is more or less restrictive," Kemp said.

**However, the governor made an important note that the businesses allowed to reopen would not be back to "business as usual."**

**"These entities will be subject to specific restrictions including adherence to the minimal basic operations, social distancing and regular sanitation," the governor said.**

**Kemp said the minimal basic operations include, but are not limited to:**

- **screening workers for fever and respiratory illness**
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- **enhancing workplace sanitation**
- **wearing gloves and masks if appropriate**
- **separating workspaces by at least six feet**
- **teleworking where at all possible**
- **implementing staggered shifts**

**"Subject to the specific social distancing and sanitation mandate, theaters, private social clubs, and restaurant dine-in services will be allowed to reopen on Monday, April 27," he said.**

**However, bars, nightclubs, operators of amusement park rides and live performance venues will remain closed, Kemp said. He said they will continue to evaluate what will be the best course of action for those types of businesses.**

The shelter-in-place order is still set to expire at 11:59 p.m. on April 30 for most Georgians. As for the medically fragile and elderly, the governor said they should shelter in place through May 13, which is the same date the state's public health emergency is set to expire.

Kemp said they would continue to monitor hot spots in the state that have seen a large number of COVID-19 cases.

Places of worship are allowed to hold in-person services, but under the Phase One guidelines with strict social distancing. Online and call-in services, Kemp said, remain as good options.

Kemp said he believes the state is also in a position where medical workers can resume elective surgeries "deemed essential." Many facilities paused those tasks to "reduce equipment and personnel shortages."

"Given the recent change in modeling as it relates to surge capacity and national supply as the needs of other states diminished, and following weeks of discussion with hospital leaders and medical providers, I believe Georgia is positioned to secure the necessary personal protective equipment for healthcare facilities to resume elective surgeries deemed essential," Kemp said. In phase one, for instance, the plan recommends strict social distancing for all people in public. Gatherings larger than 10 people are to be avoided and nonessential travel is discouraged.

In phase two, people are encouraged to maximize social distancing where possible and limit gatherings to no more than 50 people unless precautionary measures are taken. Travel could resume.

Phase three envisions a return to normalcy for most Americans, with a focus on the identification and isolation of any new infections.

"Today's announcement is a small step forward and should be treated as such."

