

# Reopening? How do we get out of the red?

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus April 26, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus* 

Lots of national news on reopening on Friday and now over the weekend.

So using some of the resources in the last post, Gadfly is trying to get a grip on the Pennsylvania reopening plan and how it might affect us.

The following in brief. Consult the resources in the last post to fill in details.

## **The red-yellow-green plan:**

The state will utilize a three-phase matrix to determine when counties and/or regions are ready to begin easing some restrictions on work, congregate settings, and social interactions.

(See Ford Turner, **[“Wolf says Pennsylvania will use a three-phase approach to emerge from shadow of coronavirus starting May 8.” Morning Call, April 22, 2020.](#)**)

The entire state is in the red phase now.

The **red phase**, which currently applies to the whole state, has the sole purpose of minimizing the spread of COVID-19 through strict social distancing, non-life sustaining business, school closures, and building safety protocols.

As regions or counties move into the **yellow phase**, some restrictions on work and social interaction will ease while others, such as closures of schools, gyms, and other indoor recreation centers, as well as limitations around large gatherings, remain in place. For example, retail locations will be able to open with forthcoming guidance in place that is substantially similar to the worker safety and building safety order. Otherwise retail will be able to allow for curbside pickup. The purpose of this phase is to begin to power back up the economy while keeping a close eye on the public health data to ensure the spread of disease remains contained to the greatest extent possible.

The **green phase** eases most restrictions by lifting the stay at home and business closure orders to allow the economy to strategically reopen while continuing to prioritize public health. While this phase will facilitate a return to a “new normal,” it will be equally important to continue to monitor public health indicators and adjust orders and restrictions as necessary to ensure the spread of disease remains at a minimum.

## **What’s the yellow phase look like?**

We’re in the red phase now. Here’s the yellow phase:

### **Work & Congregate Setting Restrictions**

- Telework Must Continue Where Feasible
- Businesses with In-Person Operations Must Follow Business and Building Safety Orders
- Child Care Open with Worker and Building Safety Orders
- Congregate Care and Prison Restrictions in Place
- Schools Remain Closed for In-Person Instruction

### **Social Restrictions**

- Stay at Home Restrictions Lifted in Favor of Aggressive Mitigation
- Large Gatherings of More than 25 Prohibited
- In-Person Retail Allowable, Curbside and Delivery Preferable
- Indoor Recreation, Health and Wellness Facilities (such as gyms, spas), and all Entertainment (such as casinos, theaters) Remain Closed
- Restaurants and Bars Limited to Carry-Out and Delivery Only

- All businesses must follow CDC and DOH guidance for social distancing and cleaning
- Monitor public health indicators, adjust orders and restrictions as necessary

## How do we get out of “the red”?

The state is broken into regions. A key metric, but not the only metric for getting out of the red is for a region to have a coronavirus case rate of 50 or fewer per 100,000 residents over stretch of 14 days.

On last Wednesday, Lehigh County’s rate was 643 per 100,000 per the *Morning Call*.

We are in the Northeast region with such hot spots as Hazelton and Allentown.



Our health director already warned us at Tuesday’s City Council meeting that our reopening fate will be tied to such currently much hotter areas. Note, for instance, this article in this morning’s newspaper:

***Andrew Wagaman, “Coronavirus infection rate appears higher in Allentown than Philly and other cities. But why?.” Morning Call, April 24, 2020.***

That saying that has “marathon” and “sprint” in it comes to mind.

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