



Frequently Asked Questions
[Emergency Order 17](#)
Updated December 29, 2020

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What has changed in EO-17 (the Easing Up Order) compared to EO-16 (the Modified Hunker Down Order)?

- Bars and restaurants are open at 25% capacity indoors, with physical distancing and seated table service only. Businesses may not serve alcohol after 11:00 p.m.
- Entertainment businesses (such as bingo halls, theaters, and private clubs) are open at 25% capacity. Food service is permitted with restrictions.
- Organized sports resume indoor scrimmages among players from the same team.
- Gyms, personal care businesses, and retail businesses increase capacity from 25% to 50%.

2. What restrictions from EO-16 remain in place?

- Requirements for individuals, including that residents must continue to limit physical contact with people outside of their households.
- Gathering limits, including the requirement that most indoor gatherings are limited to six people in a single enclosed indoor space, and most outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people.
- No indoor organized sports competitions between different teams. Practices and competitions involving ice rinks must remain outdoors.
- Requirements for visitor logs, remote work when possible, and worker protections requiring hotels and other employers to communicate regarding known COVID-19 exposures.

3. Why have gathering limits remained the same?

The Municipality of Anchorage continues to experience very high COVID-19 case numbers and high levels of COVID-19 related hospitalizations. EO-17 attempts to ease restrictions on businesses and prepare the community for more students returning to classrooms in public schools without resulting in a surge in cases and hospitalizations by maintaining restrictions on higher risk individual behavior, including gatherings.

4. Why are hospitality businesses more restricted than other businesses, such as retail?

Restrictions on hospitality businesses are based on the scientific understanding of how COVID-19 spreads. The risk of transmission increases in enclosed indoor spaces where people are not wearing masks, spending a prolonged period of time together.

Indoor dining is a particularly high-risk activity because individuals from multiple households spend extended periods not wearing masks, often within 6 feet of each other. Multiple studies have implicated indoor dining as a source of COVID-19 transmission since the start of the pandemic. The CDC published findings from a case-control investigation of patients at 11 US health care facilities that found adults who tested positive for COVID-19 were twice as likely to have reported dining at a restaurant than those with negative test results. A recent study in Nature using Google mobility data identified restaurants' re-opening as the leading source of additional infections following COVID-19 related shutdowns. Researchers from the Yale School of Management found that restaurant closures were associated with reduced COVID-19 mortality 4 and 6 weeks later.

The risk transmission is higher in dine-in situations than retail stores, for example, where individuals never take off masks and only come into passing contact with others.

GENERAL BUSINESS QUESTIONS

5. Do gathering limitations apply to workplaces?

Gathering limitations do not apply to general workplaces, such as open office space or number of employees allowed in their normal work area. Gathering limitations do apply to in-person events or meetings held within an organization or business.

In addition, EO-17 requires businesses and organizations to have employees work remotely or at home if doing so does not adversely impact the delivery of services or business operations.

If a business public-facing or a retail store, the limitation of 50% of building occupancy applies.

6. Can businesses and/or organizations apply for a restriction exemption from Emergency Order 17?

No. There are no exemptions from the restrictions and/or gathering limitations other than those already listed in EO-17.

7. Does a business need to close if employees are unable to work from home due to the nature of the business?

No. Businesses must follow all protocols in EO-17.

8. Do businesses need to alert all employees in a building of a positive case, or is it just the employees who work on the same floor and/or workspace as the positive individual?

A business should alert all its employees who work in the same building as a positive case. Businesses should avoid naming the individual who tested positive for COVID-19. In addition, businesses should alert those individuals who are close contacts of the individual to their possible exposure and instruct them to [quarantine](#) and get [tested](#).

9. How do I get my business deemed essential?

EO-17 doesn't designate essential/non-essential businesses.

10. If my business was deemed essential during the first hunker down order, do I need to follow the capacity restrictions in EO-17?

All businesses must follow the orders and restrictions detailed in EO-17.

11. Who decides if my work can be done remotely?

Under EO-17, remote work is no longer just an option to be encouraged for employees who can perform their job remotely. We are aware of the spread of COVID-19 even in office situations where individuals have not been within six feet of their coworkers due to the long number of hours spent in the work environment sharing air with others who may not know they are infected. Under EO-17, employers must require employees to work remotely when their work can be done remotely without significantly impeding business operations. The employer is responsible for making the determination of whether business operations are significantly impeded by an employee working remotely. Where an employee's presence at the physical workplace is only necessary during a portion of the work week, employers should require remote work on the remaining days.

12. If a business isn't following the emergency orders, how do I report them?

You may send an email to COVID-19-business@anchorageak.gov, or you can file online at <https://www.muni.org/anchorageworks/CRM/ServiceRequest/ServiceRequestCategory>. When filing online, choose **Land Use/Zoning request and Report a violation of an Emergency Order** and then Request Type: COVID 19

EXERCISE AND SPORTS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

13. Why does EO-17 treat sports involving indoor ice rinks more stringently?

Sports that take place on indoor ice rinks are at a uniquely high risk due to environmental conditions, including reduced air flow, low humidity, and low temperature that make them more conducive to spread of the COVID-19 virus.

14. Do gathering limitations apply to outdoor sports teams?

No. However, spectators are only allowed if the total number of people at outdoor sporting event is less than the outdoor gathering limit of 10 people. This includes all players, coaches, officials, trainers, and team medical professionals, and spectators. In addition, each household group must maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet from other groups.

15. Do gathering limitations apply to indoor sports practices?

Indoor sports practices are limited to players, coaches, trainers, and team medical professionals. The number of participants is not subject to the indoor gathering limitation, but a minimum of 10-foot distance between players, coaches, trainers and others must be maintained at all times. Additional information about organized sports and EO-17 can be found here: [ATTACHMENT E](#).

16. Do athletes need to wear a mask while outdoors AND maintain a 10-foot distance from others while exercising?

No. While it is recommended that athletes *both* wear a mask and maintain 10 feet of physical distancing during exercise, it is permitted for athletes to skip one of the two requirements outdoors. This means athletes may play games like hockey outdoors, where physical distancing is not possible, so long as they wear a mask. Or, athletes in high-exertion events like sprint ski races may choose not to wear a mask, so long as they are able to generally maintain 10 feet of physical distancing. Athletes doing high intensity exercise alone outdoors are not required to wear a mask as long as they maintain at least 10 feet distance from others. Specific masking requirements for downhill ski and tubing operations are addressed in a separate FAQ question.

17. How do the outdoor sports requirements in EO-17 apply to downhill ski and tubing facilities?

Downhill ski and tubing facilities are required to follow guidelines for organized or group sports activities, including masking and distancing requirements. Masks are required at all times, both inside and outside due to the populated nature of those areas. Ten-foot distancing between household groups is required during exercise and 6-foot distancing at all other times. No indoor dining is permitted at downhill ski and tubing facilities. Additional information about organized sports and EO-17 can be found here: [ATTACHMENT E](#).

QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER SERVICES

18. How do the new emergency orders impact healthcare and dental care providers? Are they subject to any additional restrictions?

EO-17 does not impose specific capacity limitations or operation limitations on health care or dental care providers. Health care providers operate under the State of Alaska's mandates and guidelines for patient care during COVID-19. EO-17 impacts office operations to the extent that staff must work remotely if doing so doesn't significantly impede the delivery of care or business operations.

19. Will MOA bus service be discontinued or reduced as a result of the EO?

No. Transportation on a common carrier is not a gathering under EO-17, and is not subject to the gathering limits.