



County of Cayuga

Office of the Chair
Hon. Aileen McNabb-Coleman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOINT RELEASE CAYUGA COUNTY CHAIR & PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

May 14, 2020

Cayuga County and Central New York Region qualify for Phase 1 reopening on May 15th

New York State is taking the approach of reopening its economy in phases and by regions. Cayuga County is part of the Central New York Region along with Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, and Cortland counties. Together we have met all the metrics set by the state for phase 1 reopening.

Starting tomorrow, May 15th, businesses in certain sectors are eligible to reopen if they can meet the safety guidelines provided by the New York State Department of Health:

- Construction
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting
- Retail (limited to curbside or in-store pick-up or drop-off)
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade

Eligible businesses, in addition to existing businesses that have been open during COVID-19, that plan to reopen need to take the following steps:

1. Go to [New York Forward](https://forward.ny.gov/industries-reopening-phase) website <https://forward.ny.gov/industries-reopening-phase>
2. Click on your industry sector
3. Read the summary guidelines
4. Mandatory and recommended safety practices
5. Read and affirm the detailed guidelines
6. Click the link at the end of the document to affirm to the state that you have read and understood your obligation to operate in accordance with this guidance
7. Print the business safety plan template and retain this document on the business premises

This process needs to be followed by both

- non-essential businesses that are permitted to re-open and
- essential businesses that were previously permitted to remain open



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“We as a community and a region have reached an important milestone today. We were able to contain the transmission of the coronavirus without overwhelming our healthcare system because residents and businesses acted in a restricted and safe manner for the past two months,” said **Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Chair of the Cayuga County Legislature**, “Thanks to your sacrifices during this time we are able to slowly and carefully start the reopening of our economy tomorrow. This does not mean, however, that the pandemic is behind us and we can resume our normal activities. The threat of a second wave of infections is real and we must not let our guard down. Now more than ever, we need to remain vigilant about social distancing and personal safety measures.”

Cayuga County Health Department Statement on Phase 1 Re-Opening

As Central New York and Cayuga County re-open tomorrow, the community must understand what this means for businesses, employees, and individuals. It is important to reflect and remember the steps we took as a community to slow the spread of the virus and continue to practice them in order to keep our community healthy and keep businesses open. The various mitigation strategies implemented were able to reduce the transmission of the virus in the community, allow our healthcare system to prepare, and have brought us to the point of re-opening.

We must remain vigilant with our preventive measures. When monitoring our data, the Health Department identified an increase of cases linked to stretches of warmer weather and when groups of individuals gathered socially. In moving forward, we must continue to:

- stay home when sick
- avoid close contact with people who are sick
- practice social distancing
- wear face coverings in public
- limit gatherings of any number of people
- wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds or more and frequently during the day, especially before eating
- avoid touching your eyes nose and mouth
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, handles, desks, phones, etc.)
- cover your cough or sneeze.



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Testing for essential workers and businesses that are opening under Phase 1 will continue to be available in the coming weeks. As we look to control the spread of this virus, we will continue to immediately perform contact tracing upon confirmation of a positive case. This work will continue to be a critical component of reducing/preventing the spread of illness in our community.

“We must continue to be responsible business owners, employees, customers, and neighbors. Much of what happens in Phase 1 will determine our future and the timeline of the Phase 2 roll out,” said **Kathleen Cuddy, Cayuga County Public Health Director**, “As your local health department, we want to move forward together as a community in a smart, focused way that does not trigger renewed spread of the virus or overwhelm our local healthcare and hospital system. The Cayuga County Health Department will continue to monitor this situation and provide routine updates.”
