

# New Restrictions Start Sunday: A summary of the governor's November 5 press conference

Governor Raimondo, DOH director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor and DEM director Janet Coit gave the weekly COVID press briefing today at 1pm.

The Ocean State is in the mindset of a second wave; today marked the third day in a week new coronavirus cases exceeded 500 in one day. There were 566 new cases since yesterday out of 15,785 tests. There are 182 people in the hospital, even higher than it was last week. Of those, 20 people are in the intensive care unit, and 11 are on ventilators. DOH also reports eight additional deaths.

"All arrows in weekly data [trends] are pointed in the same direction, pointed up." Governor Raimondo said today. DOH first started noticing slow upticks in data a month ago. Today she announced seven new restrictions effective starting on Sunday for two weeks:

- Stay-at-home advisory: Effective from 10pm to 5am weeknights, and starting at 10:30pm on weekends. Governor said they would not be heavy handed with enforcement or harass people, but that it was merely an advisory to be home between those hours.
- Early closures: Restaurants, bars, gyms, recreational facilities and personal service business must close by 10pm on weeknights, 10:30 on weekends.
- Venues of assembly: Capacity for indoor venues like arts venues, movie theaters, houses of worship is 50%, capped at 125 people. Outdoor venue limit is 66% of total capacity with a maximum of 150 people.
- Catered events: Limit for catered events is down to 25 people for indoors, 75 for outdoors. Governor also stated anyone with events a few weeks away are invited to contact DOH for an exemption to work with these new guidelines.
- Big box stores and malls: Capacity limit for these establishments is back to 1 person per 150 square feet.
- Business travel: Governor asking businesses to cancel any non-essential work related travel, noting she already canceled such travel for state employees.
- Mask guidelines: Masks will be required whenever Rhode Islanders are around people they do not live with, including outside and at the gym.

"Behavior change and mobility is what I'm gonna be tracking," said Raimondo. State officials aren't expecting to see impacts on data, as the two week time-frame will be too short to see real differences in the data. Governor Raimondo said she was looking for Rhode Islanders to change their behavior, to avoid more strict lockdown-type measures using a medicine analogy.

Sports venues will be able to reopen starting on Monday. Spectators will be limited to two per athlete for students. Mask wearing, distancing and all other regular COVID guidelines must be followed. Face coverings are required even for athletes. The governor asked venues to collect information for contact tracing.

Youth and amateur sports are re-ranked on a three-tier scale assessing risk of COVID spread. Low-risk sports can have competitive play and inter state tournaments, while more high contact sports cannot. Masks are still required at all sports, limited amounts of spectators, clear record keeping and contact tracing.

Restaurants, bars and related businesses can apply for grants from the state if they expect to lose revenue from early closure. Business owners are expected to fill out an application and self attest they lost revenue and will receive a grant between \$2,000 and \$10,000 within 30 days of applying. Full details will be available starting Monday at [tax.ri.gov](http://tax.ri.gov).

"It's pretty amazing the impact of one holiday," said the governor about the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. "The impact of that one can have if we don't follow the rules." COVID cases are exploding everywhere. The governor has been in talks with other governors in the New England region. Raimondo gave the example today of Canada, which saw record hospitalizations and new cases following their Thanksgiving on October 12.