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# Governor Phil Scott and State Officials Announce the Vermont Forward Plan

## [Press Release](#)

April 6, 2021

*The plan serves as a roadmap toward fully reopening the economy, cross state travel, and events and gatherings in the months ahead*

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott and other officials today [outlined the State's stepped plan](#) to methodically and safely ease mitigation measures as more Vermonters are vaccinated. The roadmap – which is subject to change based on real time circumstances - offers Vermonters, municipalities, non-profits, and businesses the ability to plan with greater certainty for the months ahead.

“We’re in the last laps of this race and this plan shows how we can finish strong if we all do our part,” said Governor Scott. “We need Vermonters to look at this roadmap and recommit to following the guidance so we can finish this pandemic with the fewest lives lost; with our kids back in school before the school year ends; and take every one of the steps forward on the timeline. I’m personally asking all of you to do your part. Please, we need your help today as much as we did last year at this time.”

The Vermont Forward Plan uses vaccination rates as the key milestones for transitioning Vermont businesses to more general, universal guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19; modifying travel guidance; and when gathering size can increase between now and July 4.

“As we make progress in vaccination, we can now look forward to a time when Vermonters are largely protected from COVID-19,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “But we cannot simply wait for this to happen. We have to make it happen. Our actions — to prevent further spread and get vaccinated — will allow us to gradually, and safely, go about our lives once again, as laid out in this plan.”

Vermont has substantially completed vaccination of its most at-risk residents, including those over the age of 65 and those with certain high-risk health conditions, as well as school employees, and workers in child care, health care, long term care and public safety sectors.

The state’s data shows cases, hospitalizations and deaths significantly decreasing among the 65+ age group, which is nearly 90% complete. Other regions, like Israel and the United Kingdom, have seen their case counts fall considerably as they approached 50% vaccination among their population. This is a threshold Vermont is expected to cross before the end of the month, with 35% of our population currently having received at least one dose, and 21% are fully vaccinated.

Universal guidance also transitions away from sector-specific measures, and towards general mitigation measures across most sectors. This will make it easier for organizations and individuals to understand, implement and follow preventive and protective measures. Some sectors, like health care and education, will retain individual guidance.

“We know our businesses need to see the path forward as they continue to expand operations after many months of reduced capacity. We are grateful for all business owners have done to keep Vermonters safe and look forward

to our continued partnership in executing this plan,” said Agency of Commerce and Community Development Secretary Lindsay Kurrle. “One thing we have learned is this virus isn’t going away quietly, but we are confident that this plan can stay on track if all eligible Vermonters get vaccinated when it is their turn and continue to follow the health guidance between now and July 4.”

## **VERMONT FORWARD PLAN STEPS**

The steps in the roadmap (graphic below) offer dates for projected guidance changes and easing of certain restrictions. Three steps lead to July 4, when the State expects to transition universal guidance mandates into recommendations, and at which point things begin to feel much closer to how they did pre-pandemic.

The timeline is subject to change, but given current vaccination uptake and supply projections, the State feels confident the milestones can be met.

## **UNIVERSAL GUIDANCE**

Universal guidance has five main tenets: Stay home if you’re sick, wear a mask, ensure six-foot spaces and uncrowded places, practice good hygiene, and know the travel restrictions.

Simplifying the guidance across sectors allows for more consistency, adaptation with current science and public health recommendations, and greater adherence to these measures and precautions.

For the purposes of transitioning business operations to universal guidance in a phased-in approach, tied to increasing vaccinations, sectors have been placed into two groups:

- Group A: Low contact, short duration, outdoor and controlled environment
- Group B: Long duration or close contact environments

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development will lay out full guidance as each step forward is taken. All guidance updates will now be made available in a central location, at <https://www.vermont.gov/vermont-forward>.

For more information on:

- COVID-19 health information, guidance and data, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/covid19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/covid19).
- To register for vaccination, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](http://www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine).
- The Governor’s actions, visit <https://governor.vermont.gov/covid19response>.
- The State’s modeling, visit <https://dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling>.

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