Beaches and Pools Frequently Asked Questions

4/29/2020

Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners Resolution 20-34 Relaxing beach restrictions with conditions

BEACHES

Which beaches will reopen?

The order allows all public beaches in incorporated and unincorporated Pinellas County to reopen, with social distancing requirements for beachgoers. That includes Sand Key Park, Fort De Soto and the portion of Fred Howard Park that has been closed. Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island state parks will remain closed until the state opens them.

When will the beaches reopen? Why aren’t the beaches reopening immediately?

To give the municipalities, law enforcement and other entities sufficient notice, the County deemed that the order opening Pinellas County beaches and public parking at beach accesses will take effect on Monday, May 4, at 7 a.m.

What are the restrictions on going to the beach?

You must adhere to CDC social distancing guidelines. People must not congregate in groups, and groups of 10 or more are prohibited. Keep at least six feet apart from anyone you don’t live with.

Do I have to wear a cloth mask to the beach?

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies). If you are going to the beach, you should practice safe social distancing. If you are sick, don’t go to the beach.
Are beaches open for just walking and exercising, or can you lay out or sit down on the beach?

The only restrictions included in the order is that beach users must adhere to the CDC guidelines. You can swim, surf, walk, or sit on the beach, as long as you maintain the required social distancing.

Is beach parking open? What about bathrooms?

Beach parking lots will be reopened to minimize impact on residents of beach communities. Beach bathrooms will be open and beachgoers must follow CDC social distancing guidelines.

Are beach volleyball and other beach and sports allowed?

Provided activities can take place with the required social distancing and within members of the same household, games and sports are allowed.

How will social distancing rules at the beaches be enforced?

Law enforcement will have a strong presence on the beaches and will enforce the social distance requirements. Signage along the beaches will remind beachgoers of the rules.

Will businesses on or near the beach be open?

Only when state orders allow for it. Governor DeSantis issued the executive order directing non-essential businesses to close, and only he has the authority to change that. Here is the list of essential businesses.

Will the rules on boating be relaxed?

Governor DeSantis issued the executive order regulating boating during the COVID-19 pandemic, and only he has the authority to change it. Here is the link to his executive order. County boat ramps remain open.
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners Resolution 20-33 Relaxing pool restrictions with conditions

POOLS

When will pools open?

The order allowing pools to reopen at 50% of their posted capacity takes effect Thursday, April 30, at 6 a.m.

What pools will reopen?

Pools located at hotels, motels, condominiums, apartment complexes, home owner associations and long term care facilities may reopen at 50% of their posted capacity. The County’s municipalities will decide individually whether to open their community pools.

What does 50% capacity mean?

Pools are limited to 50 percent of the stated bathing load in the water. Out of the water, there is no restriction to capacity. For people on the pool decks, people are required to practice CDC social distancing. No congregating in groups, 6-foot separation between those not from the same household.

What are the restrictions on pools?

To guard against the transmission of COVID-19, pools must operate at 50% of their stated pool maximum bathing load. Owners and operators must adhere to CDC social distancing guidelines. People should not congregate in groups and groups of more than 10 are prohibited. Those not part of the same family must stay at least 6 feet apart. Owners/managers must also follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting their facilities, which are available here: https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/operating-public-swimming-pools.html.
Can pool owners/operators stay closed or require additional restrictions?

There is no requirement for any HOA, condo complex, hotel, long-term care facility or other lodging establishment to reopen its pool(s). In fact, many hotels/motels are currently closed. Owner/operators can impose restrictions that are stricter than the County’s.

How will social distancing rules at pools be enforced?

Enforcement agencies will do checks and will enforce the social distance requirements. The Sheriff’s Tip Line remain open for reports of anyone endangering the community by not following county and state guidelines. (727) 582-TIPS(8477)

Can you get COVID-19 while swimming in a pool?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas. Proper operation and maintenance (including disinfection with chlorine and bromine) of these facilities should inactivate the virus in the water.

But, you can spread and be infected with the virus because of other people at the pool, which is why we are directing all pool users to practice safe social distancing, limit their interactions to the people they live with, and avoid groups with more than 10 individuals.

Are there any disinfecting requirements?

 Owners and operators must follow the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfection of facilities, which are available here: https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/operating-public-swimming-pools.html. Additionally, they should ensure compliance with DOH sanitation procedures.