



Beaches to reopen Monday, pools this Thursday, with restrictions

April 28, 2020

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners issued modified orders on Tuesday allowing for the conditional reopening of public beaches, public beach parking areas, and common area swimming pools. The pools and childcare facility playgrounds may reopen Thursday at 6 a.m., and the beaches will open Monday, May 4, at 7 a.m.

- Pools at hotels, motels, homeowner associations, apartment complexes and long-term care facilities are limited to 50 percent of the stated pool maximum bathing load. Owners and operators must adhere to CDC social distancing and sanitation guidelines.
- Childcare facility playgrounds may reopen with CDC social distancing and sanitation requirements. However, facilities must continue to comply with the state order that requires social distancing and no groups larger than 10. Play equipment used by one group of children must be cleaned and sanitized before use by another group of children.
- Public beach visitors must adhere to CDC social distancing guidelines. Groups of more than 10 are prohibited, and people not from the same family must stay at least 6 feet apart.
- Public beach restrooms must meet CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfection. Concessions, including snack bar and kayak and chair rentals, will remain closed pending new direction from the state regarding nonessential businesses.
- Sand Key Park, Fort De Soto Park and all of Fred Howard Park will reopen with the beaches. Honeymoon Island and Caladesi Island state parks will remain closed until reopened by the state.

Essential and nonessential businesses

Businesses not listed as essential under Gov. Ron DeSantis' Safer at Home order of April 1, 2020, must remain closed until the state order is rescinded, expires on Thursday, or a new state order is issued. Absent new guidance from the state, Pinellas County will revert to its own Safer at Home order of March 26, 2020, subject to amendments the Board could make when it meets again Friday at 9:30 a.m.

Data-driven approach

The Board opted to take this first step to reopen the County's economy and amenities

based on COVID-19 trending data. Trends indicate a flattening or downward trajectory in the number of cases, number of positive test results and demand on the local healthcare system - resulting from the cooperation of citizens with the restrictions put in place. County Administrator Barry A. Burton and Sheriff Bob Gualtieri received input from health officials, municipal partners and community stakeholders in advance of Tuesday's meeting. The Board also heard from Department of Health Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee Choe on Tuesday.

Due to the ongoing risk presented by COVID-19, citizens are required to continue to practice social distancing, hand washing and other good hygiene habits to protect themselves and others. Those over age 65 and/or having underlying health conditions are encouraged to take even more steps to minimize their risk of exposure.

Pinellas CARES local financial assistance

In other action, the Board also approved the Pinellas CARES financial relief programs, which are funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance will support eligible individuals and families who have lost their jobs or significant income due to COVID-19 with one-time assistance paying overdue rent, mortgage and utility bills. Payments will be disbursed directly to the utility, mortgage or other eligible agency to which the individual bills are due.

Pinellas CARES Small Business Grants will offer one-time \$5,000 grants to eligible small businesses with 25 employees or less to cover expenses such as employee wages, vendor bills and rent. The emergency relief is targeted to specifically help local businesses with a commercial location in the county cover immediate financial needs caused by the pandemic.

Funds can only be used to pay for financial losses caused by the pandemic that have not already been paid for by insurance or by another federal aid program.

Additional information about how to apply to each program will be posted this week at www.PinellasCounty.org/Covid19. The County will also be conducting broad public outreach on these programs and will issue additional media updates over the next several days.

The COVID-19 website also provides information about the County's COVID response, recommendations, frequently asked questions, health information and links to a variety of assistance.

