



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on November 14, 2020

## Defying Logic, Democrat Virginia Governor Northam Hands Down Stiffer COVID Regs

RICHMOND, Va. — Democrat Governor Ralph Northam announced in a Friday press conference that Virginia will have much tougher COVID restrictions starting at midnight Sunday. The new restrictions include a limit of 25 individuals for in-person gatherings and an expanded mask mandate. This, despite the fact that Virginia has not seen any major spikes in COVID cases.

“COVID-19 is surging across the country, and while cases are not rising in Virginia as rapidly as in some other states, I do not intend to wait until they are. We are acting now to prevent this health crisis from getting worse,” Governor Northam said during his press conference. Taking the typical faux fatherly tone he reserves for times when he has to give Virginia residents a stern talking-to, Northam added, “Everyone is tired of this pandemic and restrictions on our lives. I’m tired, and I know you are tired too. But as we saw earlier this year, these mitigation measures work. I am confident that we can come together as one Commonwealth to get this virus under control and save lives.”

These new restrictions come just in time for the holidays.

That fact is not lost on Dr. Carlton Stadler, a member of the American College of Emergency Physicians who works as a Central Virginia emergency medicine physician. A strong advocate for stricter restrictions, Stadler — who predicts “having just under 400,000 [deaths] in January or February given the exponential spread of [the virus]” — encourages families to limit gatherings during the holiday — like he says his family will be doing. “We are going to keep a close circle this holiday. We aren’t going to be traveling out and certainly won’t be bringing in any family either,” Stadler [told](#) Richmond CBS affiliate WTVR.

WTVR also reported that the following measures will take effect at midnight on Sunday, November 16:

**Reduction in public and private gatherings:** All public and private in-person gatherings must be limited to 25 individuals, down from the current cap of 250 people. This includes outdoor and indoor settings. This does not apply to schools or churches, gyms, businesses



Gov. Ralph Northam (AP Images)



and restaurants.

**Expansion of mask mandate:** All Virginians aged five and over are required to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces. This expands the current mask mandate, which has been in place in Virginia since May 29 and requires all individuals aged 10 and over to wear face coverings in indoor public settings.

**Strengthened enforcement within essential retail businesses:** All essential retail businesses, including grocery stores and pharmacies, must adhere to statewide guidelines for physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and enhanced cleaning. While certain essential retail businesses have been required to adhere to these regulations as a best practice, violations will now be enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health as a Class One misdemeanor.

**On-site alcohol curfew:** The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol is prohibited after 10:00 p.m. in any restaurant, dining establishment, food court, brewery, microbrewery, distillery, winery, or tasting room. All restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms must close by midnight. Virginia law does not distinguish between restaurants and bars, however, under current restrictions, individuals that choose to consume alcohol prior to 10:00 p.m. must be served as in a restaurant and remain seated at tables six feet apart.

Breaking that down, it means that without any substantial increase in COVID cases — much less COVID *deaths* — Governor Northam has slashed the number of people “allowed” to gather by 90 percent. He has furthermore increased the level at which businesses are required to act as the enforcement arm of the government. While businesses had previously been required to follow COVID regulations about masks as a “best practice,” this newest batch of regulations will be enforced by law — with the Virginia Department of Health empowered to charge business owners and managers with a Class One misdemeanor for violations. In Virginia, someone convicted of a Class One misdemeanor could face up to 12 months in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

As Richmond NBC affiliate NBC12 [reported](#):

And you can expect stepped-up enforcement of safety guidelines at essential retail places like grocery stores and pharmacies. Violators could have their operating permit pulled and face a class one misdemeanor.

And the new dictate also lowers the age for children required to wear a mask from 10 down to five. This disagrees with previously cited “science” showing that small children do not increase the spread of the virus.

In a strange twist, alcohol regulations somehow come into play. The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol is prohibited after 10:00 p.m. in any restaurant, dining establishment, food court, brewery, microbrewery, distillery, winery, or tasting room. Is there some new scientific evidence linking alcohol to the spread of the virus?

And since consistency has never been a hallmark of liberalism, Governor Northam has exempted schools, churches, gyms, businesses, and restaurants — even while stating in his press conference:



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We know this virus is spreading in indoor places like restaurants where people take off their masks. It's spreading at small social gatherings like dinner parties and it's spreading when people ignore the science and don't think they need to wear a mask inside.

If the virus is spreading in "restaurants where people take off their masks," why would restaurants not be included in the full round of regulations, including those limiting crowd sizes to 25? That Northam's new regulations are arbitrary is one of the only things about this whole thing that seems clear.

So, without any rhyme or reason, Northam has stretched forth his hand and declared that tighter restrictions are needed, businesses will be tasked — under threat of jail time, fines, and closure — with enforcing those new restrictions, and schools, churches, gyms, businesses, and restaurants are exempted from the limitation of crowd size.

That does bring up an interesting question, though. This writer has spent the better part of this morning wondering, "Where do people gather that is not a school, church, gym, business, or restaurant?" And what is Northam's new dictate really all about?



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