



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Mexico travel restrictions in effect**

SANTA FE – The state of New Mexico is under a mandatory health advisory issued by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

“Without a vaccine, we have only a few tools against this awful, invisible enemy,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “We must wear our masks. We must avoid large groups of people. We must limit our travel outside of the home, particularly our time in enclosed indoor spaces. When we do these things, we can crush the virus, and we protect our families, our communities and our state from being overrun by illness. But the virus is booming in New Mexico right now. The increases we’ve seen here are some of the worst in the entire United States this fall. This kind of overwhelming and dramatic statewide spread signals one thing: Too many of us, succumbing to COVID fatigue, are no longer using those tools. We’re no longer taking those precautions. We are giving the virus too many opportunities to spread. And the enemy is taking advantage”

That is why anyone crossing a border into the state must adhere to the New Mexico public health travel restrictions.

Be aware: Businesses and law enforcement agencies are strictly enforcing the following restrictions for in and out of state travelers.

Below you will find some frequently asked questions and answers.

### **Are the borders closed in New Mexico?**

No. The surrounding borders are not closed. State roads remain open.

### **Will travelers with out of state plates be stopped by law enforcement or turned away at the borders?**

No. Unless law enforcement has reason to believe you are breaking the law or not adhering to the health advisory, you will not be stopped or forced to leave the state.

### **Does everyone in New Mexico have to wear a mask?**

Yes, except for those under the age of two or have a documented medical condition that prohibits wearing masks. Mask-wearing is mandatory in public for all individuals over the age of two, except when eating or drinking. Masks are required for all activities indoor or outdoor. This includes gyms, malls, grocery stores, private businesses, public parks, golf courses, shooting ranges, walking spaces and when sitting down at restaurants prior to being served. You do not have to wear a mask inside your personal vehicle. Only when you step out.

### **Is there a punishment if I choose not to wear a mask?**

Yes. If caught without a mask in public, you are subject to a \$100 fine.

**Are restaurants open?**

Yes, but only until 10 p.m. using outdoor seating at a limited capacity. Patio, pick-up and curbside service are available as well.

**What if you are just passing through New Mexico to get to another destination? Do you have to quarantine for 14 days in New Mexico?**

No. If you are just passing through, you do not have to stay here. However, you do have to limit your exposure to others. It is okay to stop at the rest areas, get gasoline and essentials but do not plan on sight-seeing or shopping.

**If you do spend the night in New Mexico, do you have to quarantine?**

Yes. You must stay inside your hotel or place of lodging as much as possible for the duration of your stay, up to 14 days or the amount of time you are visiting, whichever is less. Hotels, motels and places of lodging are only allowed to operate at 50% capacity at this time.

**I want to attend a special event in New Mexico and I only plan to be there for a day or so. Do I have to quarantine if I social distance and wear a mask?**

Yes. Now is not a good time to attend ANY social gathering, even if you live in New Mexico but especially if you are a visitor. Large gathering is defined as more than five people right now. A “mass gathering” is defined as any public or private gathering, organized event, ceremony, parade, organized amateur contact sport, or other grouping that brings together individuals in an indoor or outdoor space.

**What if I live in New Mexico and I want to travel out of state? Do I have to self-quarantine when I return?**

The mandatory health advisory is very clear. If you cross over the borders of New Mexico, you must self-quarantine for 14 days when you return home.

**Are there any exceptions to the quarantine order?**

Yes. The mandatory self-quarantine, as before, does not apply to:

- Persons employed by airlines
- Persons performing public safety or public health functions
- Military personnel and their dependents
- Federal employees
- Persons employed by a federal agency or national defense contractor
- Emergency first responders and health care workers
- Persons arriving in the state pursuant to a court order
- Persons who are employed or contracted by an essential business, as defined in the state’s operative emergency public health order, who are traveling into New Mexico to conduct business activities

Those arriving in the state pursuant to a court order do not have to quarantine for 14 days or for the duration of their time in the state, whichever is shorter, though all should follow COVID-safe best practices: Wear a face-covering in public and keep physical distance from others and limit travel outside of the home or place of lodging to only the essentials.

**Can I visit state parks in New Mexico if I live out of state?**

No. State parks are closed to out of state visitors at this time. You will not be permitted into a state park if you cannot show proof of residency. For those who live in New Mexico, you are now permitted to camp overnight.

### **Can out of state visitors come into New Mexico for a day hike?**

Not right now. New Mexico enjoys visitors but now is not a good time to visit. Unless you plan to quarantine for 14 days after you arrive.

### **What if I take my family camping in a different state and we spend our time outdoors, away from other people, adhering to social distancing? Do we all have to self-quarantine when we return?**

Yes. Even if you spend time outdoors, wearing masks and social distancing in another state, you must self-quarantine when you return to New Mexico for 14 days.

The executive order underlines that state residents leaving New Mexico for vacation or other leisure activities must quarantine upon returning to the state and makes clear that those residents quarantining after vacation or other leisure activities are not eligible for paid sick leave pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Non-compliant individuals are subject to involuntary quarantine by the New Mexico Department of Health under the Public Health Emergency Response Act.

### **Do out of state visitors have to self-quarantine even if they own a home in New Mexico?**

Yes. If visitors or part-time residents plan to stay in New Mexico longer than two weeks for any reason, you must self-quarantine for the first 14 days when coming in from another state.

If you are staying in New Mexico for fewer than two weeks, you also must self-quarantine for the duration of your stay or up to 14 days, whichever is shorter. (For example, if you plan to stay at a hotel for two nights before leaving the state, you must self-quarantine for the duration of your stay.)

Individuals who are quarantined upon arrival into the state may leave the residence or place of lodging in which they are self-quarantining only for the purposes of medical care or essentials.

Self-quarantining individuals should not allow others into the residence or place of lodging in which they are quarantined except for those providing medical care, emergency response or other individuals designated by the Department of Health. Family or household members may visit a quarantined person, but those visitors must then self-quarantine themselves for a period of no less than 14 days.

### **Does that apply to people in RV's as well?**

Yes. Travelers must self-quarantine wherever they are staying. Meaning, if you are passing through New Mexico and plan to spend a night at an RV park, you are asked to remain inside your RV. You can however, stop to use the rest areas, get food or seek medical care.

### **Are there any exceptions to the quarantine?**

- Yes. The mandatory self-quarantine does not apply to New Mexico residents who have left the state to obtain medical care.
- Or to residents who have left the state for less than 24 hours for matters attendant to parenting responsibilities.

### **What if travelers are simply passing through New Mexico to get to another destination in a different state?**

This is not a time to shop for souvenirs, visit state parks or sightsee. Please recognize that if you are traveling amid a global pandemic you are bringing the risk of a highly contagious and lethal virus with you and taking it with you as you go. You must wear a face-covering if you are in public while in the state. Please limit your activities to only the essentials. Otherwise you are allowed to travel through the state.

### **What if I'm a trucker and have to make deliveries in New Mexico?**

Most trucking services fall under the logistical transporting functions incorporated in the essential businesses of the state's operative emergency public health order and are exempt from the quarantine requirement. But all visitors in the state are still required to wear face-coverings and follow COVID-safe best practices.

The NMDOT sincerely appreciates your cooperation.

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**NMDOT**

*Mobility for everyone*

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