



COVID-19

Dial 2.0

FAQ

A top priority has always been to prevent a breach of the hospital system. With the sustained decline in cases and hospitalizations and with vaccine distribution and higher levels of immunity in our 70+ population, there is now less pressure on the system. Colorado will continue to balance disease transmission with economic hardship through “Dial 2.0.”

Why was the dial changed?

Our top priority has always been to prevent a breach of the hospital system. Modeling projections indicate it is unlikely we will exceed our health care capacity in the upcoming months. Colorado will continue to balance disease transmission with economic hardship through “Dial 2.0.” At the same time, COVID-19 rates have been going down in the vast majority of regions. The state is changing the dial so that it’s easier to balance disease suppression with economic hardship, which can also impact health outcomes. These changes also make the dial more responsive to local conditions--counties will be able to move more swiftly to a level with greater restrictions when disease transmission is increasing, and to less restrictions when a decrease in transmission is sustained.

When does the new dial go into effect?

The new dial goes into effect on Saturday, February 6 at 9 a.m. MT.

Do counties need to apply or request for placement on the dial?

No, counties will be placed appropriately on the dial on Saturday. We will confirm metrics with the county prior to moving them to either a less restrictive or more restrictive level.

What’s different about the new dial?

The metrics that determine the dial level have changed. The range of disease incidence metrics will increase for all levels to better reflect a balance between disease suppression and economic activity, given the level of vaccinations occurring and decreasing COVID-19 cases

and hospitalizations. Additionally, instead of looking at the numbers over a 14-day period, this new dial will consider metrics within a 7-day period, making the dial more responsive.

When county cases are increasing, the state will not require mitigation plans but will still encourage them. Once a county hits the metrics for a more restrictive level, the state will confirm the metrics then move the county to the more restrictive level.

One capacity limit has changed in the new dial. In Level Yellow, restaurants may now operate at 50% capacity up to 50 people (or up to 150 with the social distancing calculator). Previously, the limit was up to 100 people with the social distancing calculator.

What hasn't changed in the new dial?

Five star businesses are still allowed to operate one level lower on the dial, except they may not operate in Protect Our Neighbors unless the county is formally in Protect Our Neighbors. Because caution is still a priority, counties in Yellow with a 5 Star Business Program may only operate in Blue once 70% of 70-year-olds in the state are vaccinated with at least one dose, expected to happen by the end of the month. Additionally, there are no changes to school settings in Dial 2.0.

What are the new metrics?

The new metrics are based on 7 day, instead of 14 day metrics.

- Counties in Level Green must now have no more than 15 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in one week OR a comparable number cases in counties with under 30,000 people.
- Counties in Level Blue must now have between 15 and 100 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in one week.
- Counties in Level Yellow must now have between 100 and 300 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in one week. The rate of positive tests must be no more than 7.5%.
- Counties in Level Orange must now have between 300 and 500 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in one week. The rate of positive tests must be no more than 10%.
- Counties in Level Red will now have more than 501 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in one week. At this level, hospital system capacity is constrained, and state assistance is requested for patient transport or staff augmentation.
- At Level Purple, statewide hospital capacity risks being breached and crisis standards of care are approaching.

Who decided how the dial would change?

The state met with several groups to draft Dial 2.0, including local public health agencies, county commissioners, mayors, and city managers. The state also asked Coloradans for feedback via a public web form. The input from these groups helped us tailor the new dial to best serve the needs of Coloradans at the local level.

How do counties move between levels?

A county is moved to a less or more restrictive level after metrics are confirmed by the county.

Dial 2.0 is designed so that counties can move more swiftly into more restrictive levels when their numbers go up. When a county's metrics are above their current level, CDPHE will have a consultation with the county. The county may be moved, even if testing rates are stable and hospitalizations are not yet impacted. The more restrictive dial levels are meant to curtail the rate of transmission, which eventually leads to higher hospitalizations, making incidence the leading metric.

The Red metric has been reset after careful consideration of the level of restrictions required to curb exponential growth once it nears a 7 day incidence of 500 cases/100,000 population. We recommend counties do a local order for Red once they near 500/100,000 cases. Lower incidence areas within a county can be carved out of the order. CDPHE will put a county in red when the county or regional hospital system is under pressure from a staffing or patient transport perspective.

Will the dial change again?

As more and more Coloradans get vaccinated, we plan to revisit the dial. We expect to have a draft of Dial 3.0 in the spring. We will seek input for this evolution and again for another update this summer.