



**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**FOURTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDER**  
**REAFFIRMING CITY POLICY REGARDING OUTDOOR GATHERINGS AND**  
**EVENTS IN LIGHT OF EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the 2019 novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, can cause severe disease and death, particularly in older adult and other vulnerable populations; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 6, 2020, in response to the emerging spread of COVID-19, the Governor of Pennsylvania issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency which has been renewed and is still in effect; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic, or global epidemic; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 12, 2020, the City's Board of Health by emergency regulation added COVID-19 to the City's list of reportable and quarantinable diseases; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 17, 2020, the Mayor and the Health Commissioner jointly issued an Emergency Order prohibiting operation of non-essential businesses to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 19, 2020, the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health issued orders requiring all non-life-sustaining businesses to close across the Commonwealth, to help stop the spread of the virus and the Governor and Secretary updated the aforementioned orders and list of life-sustaining and non-life sustaining businesses on March 20, 2020 and multiple times thereafter; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 22, 2020, the Mayor and the Health Commissioner jointly issued an Emergency Order Temporarily Prohibiting Operation of Non-Essential Businesses and Congregation of Persons to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, which was approved as a regulation of the City by the Board of Health on March 26, 2020, which expressly authorized the Health Commissioner to issue such additional orders as the Commissioner determines are necessary or appropriate to limit the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 23, 2020, the Governor announced a *Plan for Pennsylvania* that set residents and businesses on a path to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to protect life from the dangers of this deadly virus, which included, *inter alia*, Red, Yellow, and Green Phases of reopening; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Health Commissioner determined on May 29, 2020, that Philadelphia could move to the Yellow Phase with additional, Philadelphia-specific restrictions that would apply in addition to restrictions established by the Governor, and thereafter issued a series of Orders gradually easing restrictions with respect to, *inter alia*, outdoor gatherings; and

**WHEREAS**, although the Governor announced that Philadelphia was authorized to join other southeastern Pennsylvania counties in moving to the Green Phase of reopening on June 26, 2020, the Mayor and Health Commissioner, in consideration of public health data and the noted effects on public health in June and July in states that had hastily reopened, including marked increases of positively identified COVID cases, took a cautious approach to moving to the Green Phase; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 26, 2020, the Mayor and Health Commissioner issued an order requiring the wearing of masks in many indoor and outdoor situations, and on July 1, 2020, the Governor issued a similar order; and

**WHEREAS** on July 3, 2020, the Mayor and Health Commissioner issued an Order that moved the City from the Yellow Phase to a Modified Green Phase and that, among other things, generally increased the permitted capacity for outdoor gatherings and small events, the rules for which were subsequently modified by further Orders on September 15, 2020 and October 23, 2020 to allow greater capacity at such events; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 22, 2020, the Mayor and Health Commissioner issued a Supplemental Order Regarding Application of the Modified Green Phase Emergency Order focused on the City's policy regarding gatherings of persons ("Supplemental Gatherings Order"), which expired on October 22, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, following the expiration of the Supplemental Gatherings Order the City continued to adhere to the policies set forth in the Supplemental Gatherings Order, adjusted as appropriate given the changes to health restrictions applicable to outdoor gatherings, and issued the Second Supplemental Gatherings Order extending the Order through January 1, 2021, and the Third Supplemental Gatherings Order, extending the Order through March 1, 2021, both with such appropriate changes as appropriate given current health restrictions; and

**WHEREAS**, after a steady decline and plateauing of daily COVID-19 case counts in Philadelphia beginning in May 2020, but in the Fall daily case counts began increasing dramatically to levels exceeding the peak experienced in April; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in early-to-mid November the country as a whole began experiencing a sharp increase in COVID-19 case counts, repeatedly breaking daily records, and began averaging more than 2,000 daily COVID-19 deaths (using a 7-day average); and

**WHEREAS**, those alarming national and local trends require tailored but significant intervention to limit the community spread of COVID-19 and its attendant morbidity and mortality; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 16, 2020, the Mayor and Health Commissioner, in order to address the mounting problems of increased COVID-19 spread, issued an additional broad-sweeping Emergency Order containing significant additional restrictions to many individual and group activities, including with respect to outdoor social gatherings, effective November 20, 2020 (the “November 16, 2020 Order”); and

**WHEREAS**, on November 27, 2020, the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Secretary of Health enacted orders imposing mitigation measures imposing density limitations, cleaning, and masking protocols, and requiring telework for all business operations unless such remote work was impossible; and

**WHEREAS**, effective December 12, 2020, the Governor of Pennsylvania and Secretary of State imposed additional restrictions state-wide, including limiting outdoor gatherings to a maximum of 50 people, which were in place through January 4, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Health Commissioner extended the November 16, 2020 Order, with certain modifications, through January 15, 2020, and thereafter issued a restated and consolidated emergency order, with certain modifications, effective January 16, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, after positive case rates peaked the week of November 29th 2020, case rates, hospitalizations and deaths have declined rapidly in Philadelphia and across the country through most of January and February, but community spread remains high; and the City most recently determined it was appropriate to issue a further modified order effective March 1, 2021 further rolling back restrictions; and

**WHEREAS**, the spread of COVID-19 through outdoor gatherings and activities is less likely than through indoor gatherings and activities, but still represents a significant risk, particularly in the absence of strict mask usage and distancing; and

**WHEREAS**, as the City has made significant reductions to its budget as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn, based on the projection of an approximately \$749 million deficit without such cuts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Managing Director’s Office of Special Events has seen a 50% reduction in funding; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of a reduced budget and the ongoing pandemic, there is an increased burden for hosting public events and the City must focus its resources on maintaining the health and safety of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City welcomes all forms of First Amendment expression, whether a protest, parade, festival, or any peaceful expressive activity, but must also safeguard public health and safety during these unprecedented and turbulent times; and

**WHEREAS**, the City further recognizes that at times gatherings organized to engage in protected speech are, by their nature, unpredictable such that a planned event for large groups can balloon without advance warning; and

**WHEREAS**, spontaneous gatherings have become frequent and the City wishes to avoid unnecessary confrontations because such confrontations can easily escalate an otherwise peaceful gathering into unrest or violence; increase the duration of the gathering; or increase the size of the gathering; and thus increase the probability of potential spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Health Commissioner have determined that it is again necessary to summarize the rules and guidance with respect to outdoor gatherings and the current posture of the permitting process for special events and demonstrations; and

**WHEREAS**, the scope of the pandemic during the winter remains in flux and has recently necessitated frequent changes to the City's and State's emergency orders that affect density limitations and gathering caps for outdoor gatherings in response to COVID-19 case rates that cannot be predicted significantly in advance; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to authority set forth in The Philadelphia Code and The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, the Mayor has broad authority over enforcement of City laws and regulations, and to set forth limitations on public activities during a state of national health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, Sections 6-205 and 6-206 of The Philadelphia Code; the Disease Prevention and Control Law of 1955, 35 P.S. § 521.1 *et seq.*; and applicable Board of Health regulations provide that the Department of Public Health may by order forbid the congregation of persons when necessary to prevent the further spread of a communicable and quarantinable disease and may take such other measures as are necessary to prevent the spread of such disease; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, James F. Kenney, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, and Dr. Thomas A. Farley, Health Commissioner of the City of Philadelphia, pursuant to all authority granted under the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, The Philadelphia Code, the Regulations of the Board of Health of the City of Philadelphia and applicable state law, hereby **ORDER** as follows:

## **Section 1. Outdoor Gatherings and Events**

Outdoor gatherings continue to be allowed for any lawful purpose, provided that they are conducted pursuant to all applicable orders and guidance and requirements of the Commonwealth and the City, including any applicable density limits, gathering caps, or activity limitations applicable at the time such gathering takes place, all as set forth in such applicable emergency orders and guidance; and all masking and social distancing requirements, including, but not limited to all requirements provided in the City's March 1, 2021 Spring Emergency Order of 2021 Establishing Safety Measures to Prevent the Spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Continuing to Advise that Philadelphians are Safer at Home, as it may be amended, The City of Philadelphia's *Reopening Guidance – Outdoor Performances and Events*, and The City of Philadelphia's *Reopening Guidance – Celebrations, Catering Halls and Special Events*. This Order does not reduce or otherwise impact the restrictions of any other emergency order issued by the City or Commonwealth, whether before or after the execution of this order.

## **Section 2. Special Event Permitting**

Given the City's limited resources, the burden for supporting public events, and the current public health risks posed by events during a pandemic, the City is not currently accepting permit applications for demonstrations or special events, but is continuing to reevaluate its capacity to accept and process applications for special event or demonstration permits and considering resumption of doing so. The City will publicly announce any decision to resume permit acceptance and issuance. During the period when applications for special event or demonstration permits are not being evaluated, the City will not be enforcing such permitting requirements.

During the period the City is not accepting permit applications, peaceful gatherings that would otherwise require a special event or demonstration permit, including but not limited to demonstrations, parades, or festivals, may continue to lawfully occur without such special event or demonstration permits. The Police Department shall provide public safety support to such gatherings in order to assure the safety of individuals participating in such gatherings as provided in Section 3 of this Order.

All other permitting, licensing and legal requirements must be followed, to the extent applicable, including those related to but not limited to special parking facilities, hanging signs or banners, setting up tents, fireworks, food vending, and serving alcoholic beverages.

### **Section 3. Public Safety Support**

Organizers of gatherings may continue to request support for the safety of those gatherings by contacting the Civil Affairs Unit of the Police Department. The City will provide public safety support for the planning or execution of gatherings if the City determines that City services are appropriate to assure public health or safety, which may include decisions to close streets.

### **Section 4. Nonconfrontation-De-escalation Policy**

It is the City's policy to avoid unnecessary confrontations in the enforcement of its emergency orders (e.g., against gatherings of prohibited sizes), because confrontations can unnecessarily escalate; extend the duration of; and increase the size of an otherwise peaceful gathering that may end voluntarily. In the interest of City residents and employees, the City considers the peaceful nature of the gathering, its compliance with other laws and regulations, and the response or de-escalation efforts that best serve public health, safety, and welfare, in evaluating appropriate enforcement measures.

### **Section 5. Duration and Review**

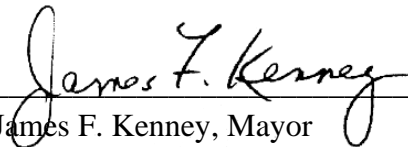
This Order memorializes the City's existing practice, shall be effective **March 1, 2021**, and shall remain in effect through **April 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.**, unless modified, suspended, superseded, or rescinded by subsequent order. This Order may or may not be renewed upon its expiration based on an evidence-based recommendation by the Department of Public Health.

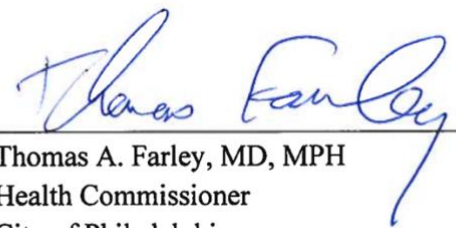
### **Section 6. Interpretation and Implementation**

a. Except to the extent of a direct conflict, this Order generally shall be interpreted as consistent with applicable orders and requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In the event of a direct conflict, the most restrictive order or requirement controls. The City shall continue reviewing inquiries and submissions regarding the applicability of the City's orders to businesses and activities.

b. Failure to comply with this Order shall result in orders to cease operations and the imposition of penalties, fines, license suspensions, and other remedies as provided for by law.

Date: March 1, 2021

  
James F. Kenney, Mayor  
City of Philadelphia

  
Thomas A. Farley, MD, MPH  
Health Commissioner  
City of Philadelphia