



**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR**  
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Crystal Staley**

502-564-2611

502-545-3714

**Sebastian Kitchen**

502-564-2611

502-330-0799

**Gov. Beshear Asks Kentuckians to Stay Safe this Memorial Day Weekend**

*Governor urges Kentuckians to request mail-in ballot for primary elections*

*Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 22, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Friday updated Kentuckians on the fight against the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) ahead of Memorial Day weekend.

“This weekend, I do want to admit is a big weekend. It’s about being able to do more things than we have been able to do in a while and to make sure that we do them responsibly,” Gov. Beshear said. “So much of how this recovery goes, how we’re able to be healthy at work, how we’re able to keep our cases down depends on how we’re able to do this weekend and every weekend thereafter.”

The Governor also provided updates about absentee voting in the primary election, resuming youth sports, and unemployment insurance claims.

**Memorial Day weekend**

Gov. Beshear urged all Kentuckians to stay safe over the holiday weekend. The Governor and state health officials are asking all Kentuckians to keep gatherings to 10 or fewer people.

“I want to urge you though. This is a time that gets dangerous for us. People get complacent. We can have a tendency to reach the wrong conclusions sometime. We have taken our losses in Kentucky. We have families that have suffered because of this virus and because of the loved ones they’ve lost,” said Dr. Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

Other [guidance](#) includes wearing masks, maintaining social distancing of six feet or more, gathering outside instead of inside, washing hands frequently and covering food and individually wrapping plates.

“So please, Memorial Day is a time when friends and family come together to celebrate those who have sacrificed much before us, and are grateful for their service to our nation, I am grateful to all of you, Team Kentucky, nearly four and half million of you who have sacrificed to help us get here today to a better place,” Dr. Stack said.

### **Case information**

As of 5 p.m. May 22, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 8,426 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 141 of which were newly confirmed Friday.

“We now think that we have not only plateaued but are in a decline on overall number of cases, especially when you look at the amount of testing that we’re doing. And that is really good news,” said Gov. Beshear. “It doesn’t mean we’re out of the woods, but it’s really good news. It’s a place that I’m happy where we’re at.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported five new deaths Friday, raising the total to 391 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

“While it’s down from other days, today we’re announcing that we’ve lost five additional Kentuckians to COVID-19,” the Governor said.

The deaths reported Friday include a 74-year-old man from Barren County; an 88-year-old woman from Hopkins County; an 88-year-old man and a 97-year-old woman from Jefferson County; and a 72-year-old man from Shelby County.

At least 3,069 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus. For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#).

### **Absentee Ballot Application Portal online**

Gov. Beshear said Friday that a new Absentee Ballot Application Portal is now online. A link to the State

Board of Elections' portal can be found at [govoteky.com](http://govoteky.com). He urged everyone who plans to vote in next month's primary elections to go to the portal and request an absentee mail-in ballot.

"I want to thank our Secretary of State and Jared," said the Governor. "I would love to see us have a better primary response than we would have seen – so go online and request your ballot. We can do this. Thank you to everyone who has been involved."

"I am very proud to announce this new online portal," said Secretary of State Michael Adams. "As I have said before, I promised to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat, and this system does that. The best thing you can do is go online at [govoteky.com](http://govoteky.com) and apply for your ballot."

Jared Dearing, executive director of the State Board of Elections said, "I would like to thank the Governor, Secretary of State, my staff and the county clerks for all the work they have put in to make this possible. Over the coming weeks, it is important that everyone has time to make a plan to vote. I encourage you to visit [govoteky.com](http://govoteky.com) to make a plan to vote safe from home."

Dearing noted that some, limited in-person voting will be allowed to ensure everyone has the right to vote.

The deadline to register to vote is May 26. You can register to vote at [elect.ky.gov](http://elect.ky.gov).

Voters in every county of the commonwealth can request a mail-in ballot for the June primary elections. The last day to apply for a ballot is June 15. The primary elections in Kentucky will be held June 23.

### **Youth sports guidance**

Gov. Beshear said Friday that new guidance will be made available regarding youth sports.

The Governor previously said some youth sports would be allowed to resume June 15.

"That guidance is now posted. This is going to tell you the kinds of activities and youth sports that you can do and when you can do them," said La Tasha Buckner, general counsel and chief of staff to Gov. Beshear. "And the important health and safety requirements that go along with them.

The guidance reflects advice from the Kentucky Department for Public Health, guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, best practices from other states, as well as input from Kentucky youth sports leagues, professional teams and the Kentucky High School Athletic Association.

### **Unemployment claims update**

On Friday, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Deputy Secretary Josh Benton talked about the state's work to address the unprecedented number of jobless claims brought on by the pandemic.

"We are adding more adjudicators and individuals who can review claims on a daily basis," Deputy Secretary Benton said. "So that we can attack, we have put our best and most seasoned adjudicators on those that are remaining. We're also looking at technology options that can help us process claims more effectively."

Anyone with questions or seeking to make a claim should visit [kcc.ky.gov](http://kcc.ky.gov). To ask a question once there, click on the "Contact Us" button. Employers wishing to notify about employees returning to work should go to the site and select the "Employer Return to Work" button. There were 14,202 claims from March and 38,115 from April that remain unresolved. The state has processed 763,287 claims, paying out more than \$1.76 billion.

### **Healthy at Work**

Gov. Beshear announced that new guidelines are now available for fitness centers, auto racetracks and movie theaters, which all can begin operating again June 1. Auctions also can be held starting June 1. Horse shows can be held again starting June 8. Bars, gatherings with 50 or fewer people and venues that hold 50 or fewer people can reopen June 29, if they meet guidelines. Businesses that can open today, May 22, at 33% capacity can expand to 50% capacity a month later, on June 22, if they meet the guidelines. For more information on the Healthy at Work timeline and industry requirements, [click here](#).

Buckner talked about the continued reopening of businesses and government, including the Capitol.

"As of the 27th, we are going to open the Capitol to small groups of 10 or fewer, and this is on application," Buckner said. "And the reason for that is we want to make sure we can keep the capacity to where need to under our minimum requirements and small group requirements."

People can sign up to conduct self-led tours. Buckner said guests would be asked, but not required, to wear masks.

### **Remembering Phyllis George**

Gov. Beshear paid tribute to the life of former Kentucky First Lady Phyllis George ahead of her private funeral on Monday. George also was a groundbreaking sports broadcaster and former Miss America.

The Governor said a small private ceremony would be held in the Capitol this weekend and that it would be livestreamed on KET.

“This is a former First Lady who served an amazing role here in Kentucky,” the Governor said. “We’ve requested you tune in to KET to watch the funeral. It’s a private service, but it’s the way we can try to honor a former First Lady at a time when this coronavirus is still prevalent.”

Gov. Beshear honored her life and sent condolences to her friends and loved ones, including her children Pamela and Lincoln.

### **More information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) and the Governor’s official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor’s news conference at [tinyurl.com/kygovespanol](http://tinyurl.com/kygovespanol) (Spanish) and [tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations](http://tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations) (more than 20 additional languages).



*For official news and updates from the Beshear/Coleman administration, visit [governor.ky.gov/news](http://governor.ky.gov/news).*