



Empire State Development (ESD) has created this detailed FAQ to answer immediate questions travelers may have regarding State regulations and general guidance related to the coronavirus.

BACKGROUND

Now a global pandemic according to the World Health Organization, 2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus was first detected in China and has spread worldwide. This virus causes a disease called COVID-19 and can lead to flu-like symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath. There are more than 100,000 confirmed cases in a growing number of countries internationally and the virus is now spreading in the United States. There are ongoing investigations to learn more about this virus. Senior citizens and people with underlying respiratory conditions are being advised to take extra precautions to guard against infection.

Individuals who are experiencing symptoms and may have traveled to [areas of concern](#), or have been in contact with someone who has traveled to these areas, should call their health care provider before seeking treatment in person.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check this site and the [CDC's COVID -19 webpage](#) regularly for updates.

New York State Department of Health has established a website and telephone number that provide the latest, most comprehensive information about the State's response to the virus.

- **NYS DOH Coronavirus Hotline:** 1-888-364-3065 (fully language assessible)
- **NYS DOH Coronavirus Website:** <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

TOURISM INFORMATION

Undoubtedly, travelers will have questions regarding their options during the COVID-19 outbreak. The New York State Division of Tourism continues to monitor developments regarding COVID-19, and specific information on the virus is available at 1-888-364-3065, www.health.ny.gov and www.cdc.gov. For now, here is a list of frequently asked questions:

Q: The Governor has recently banned gatherings of 500 or more people. How long will this last?

A: For the foreseeable future and until the risk has passed. Any changes will be announced by the Governor.

Q: I have tickets to a Broadway show and now shows are cancelled. What should I do?

A: Governor Cuomo announced that no gatherings of more than 500 people will be allowed, excepting schools, hospitals, mass transit, and nursing homes. That ban is effective starting at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 12. For gatherings under 500, the seating capacity will be cut in half. The Broadway League expects performances will resume the week of April 13. Ticketholders should contact their point of purchase regarding refunds or exchanges.

Q: I was planning to attend a major league sporting event in New York. What should I do?

A: Most major leagues have canceled scheduled games and/or upcoming seasons, including the NHL, MLB, NBA and the NCAA tournament. Please call ahead and check websites to see the latest information before you go.

Q: Is it safe to travel to New York City/New York State? Should I cancel my trip?

A: The CDC provides recommendations on postponing or canceling travel. These travel notices are based on an assessment of the potential health risks involved with traveling to a certain area. A list of destinations with travel notices is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

- **Warning Level 3:** CDC recommends travelers avoid all nonessential travel to destinations with Level 3 travel notices because of the risk of getting COVID-19.
- **Alert Level 2:** Because COVID-19 can be more serious in older adults and those with chronic medical conditions, people in these groups should talk to a healthcare provider and consider postponing travel to destinations with Level 2 travel notices.
- **Watch Level 1:** CDC does not recommend canceling or postponing travel to destinations with Level 1 travel notices because the risk of COVID-19 is thought to be low. If you travel, take the following routine precautions:
 - Avoid contact with sick people.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
 - It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Please consult your physician for any domestic travel related concerns especially if you are over 60 or have any health issues.

Q: I don't want to travel to NYS due to the spread of the virus. Can NYS help me with getting a refund on my airline/cruise?

A: Each company establishes its own refund policies, and the CDC and/or New York State cannot intervene to force a policy change. Some companies may base their policies on CDC's travel health notices. The decision to post or change the level of a travel health notice is based on the best available science and considers numbers of cases, sustained spread, geographic spread of cases, risk to travelers, and other factors. More information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak. For more information, visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/insurance>.

On Friday March 6, the Governor announced a **"Cancel for Any Reason" Travel Policy** that travel insurance companies and travel agents will offer to New York residents and businesses, giving them the ability to purchase coverage when making travel plans that would allow them to **cancel a trip for any reason**, including for **reasons related to coronavirus**. The Department of Financial Services [issued guidance](#) allowing travel agents and travel insurers to offer this type of coverage after DFS received consumer complaints that **such policies were not available in New York State**.

Q: What should I do if I'm visiting and I start feeling sick? Is there an emergency number to call or text?

A: Any visitor who believes they are experiencing coronavirus symptoms should:

- Seek medical care right away. Tell them about your travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Avoid further travel until the illness resolves.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Additionally, NYS has created a hotline at **1-888-364-3065**, where experts can answer questions regarding the novel coronavirus, as well as a dedicated website with updated information.

Q: Are any attractions closed because of coronavirus?

A: Many museums, sporting venues and other attractions are closing to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Additionally, Governor Cuomo has issued [guidance](#) restricting public gatherings and large-scale events. Please call ahead and check websites to see the latest information before you go.