



Dear Residents,

Please see the following press release from the New Jersey Department of Health.

**N.J. Health Department Issues Guidance for Winter Holidays, Celebrations
Limit Indoor Gatherings, Choir/Caroling Protocols, Outdoor Activities Recommended**

TRENTON – Limiting attendees at indoor gatherings, virtual or outdoor visits with Santa, and measures for choirs and parades are among the recommendations outlined in holiday health and safety guidance released today by the New Jersey Department of Health.

“Sharing celebrations with family and friends are important holiday milestones,” said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. “However, this year will be a holiday season like no other, and we must continue to maintain our vigilance against COVID-19 and celebrate safely and responsibly to ensure healthy holidays.”

Travel outside of your home should be limited. Gatherings must comply with current indoor and outdoor limits. Indoor holiday gatherings should be limited to immediate household members if possible. If hosting a small holiday gathering, limit people touching common items, such as serving utensils. Avoid buffets and drink stations, and seating arrangements should encourage social distancing. Clean commonly touched areas often, and guests should wear masks when not eating or drinking.

Tree lightings, menorah lightings and other holiday gatherings should be held outdoors whenever possible and abide by current gathering limits.

It is strongly encouraged that people consider alternatives to visiting Santa at indoor locations, such as virtual visits or outdoor socially distanced visits/photos with Santa. If malls and other indoor locations still choose to offer in-person visits, it should be a touchless experience, and visits should be reservation-only, be socially distanced and limited in time. Santa, staff and guests over age 2 must wear masks. Santa should be behind a plexiglass shield in an open area, and children should not be permitted to sit on Santa’s lap.

The guidance also sets protocols for choirs and caroling due to the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. All singing groups should be socially distanced from each other and their audience during each performance. Singing groups that perform in public must be at least 10 feet away from others or have a physical barrier between them and the audience. All performers and guests must wear masks, and performances must adhere to indoor and outdoor gathering limits.

In addition, holiday parades are discouraged. For those taking place, organizers should consider limiting in-person attendance and must maintain a list of names and phone numbers for all participants, which should be turned over to the local health department to assist with contact tracing. Parades should be socially distanced, and all participants should wear masks. Parade participants should not be permitted to throw items to spectators from floats or cars.

All vendors and organizers should observe social distancing and masking should be observed by staff, shoppers and sellers at winter holiday villages/flea markets/stores. Reservations should be considered to limit crowd size, and winter holiday villages and flea markets should be held outdoors when possible.

For more information, visit <https://nj.gov/health>.