

State amends capacity requirements for essential retail spaces

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Fewer lines outside stores

SANTA FE — The state's emergency public health order on Dec. 16 was amended to accommodate slightly increased capacity inside essential retail spaces, such as grocery stores and certain other large big box retailers that generate a percentage of their revenue from consumable food and drink products, as cold weather grips most of New Mexico.

In accordance with the state's graduated red-to-green system of measuring the risk of viral spread in specific counties, the changes establish that essential retail spaces:

May operate at 50 percent of maximum occupancy at the Green Level

May operate at 33 percent of maximum occupancy at the Yellow Level

May operate at 25 percent of maximum occupancy at the Red Level

Previously, essential retail spaces could operate with either a limit on maximum occupancy or a specific number of customers at one time, whichever was smaller. The change eliminates the latter provision.

The amended emergency public health order became effective Dec. 16.

"Our priority is ensuring physical distancing in high-traffic areas, like stores that people must frequent to meet essential needs," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said in a press release. "With colder weather here, we want to ensure that people aren't gathering in lines for an unsafe length of time."

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