



Michael Watson
SECRETARY OF STATE



COVID-19 Tips, Resources and Relief Efforts

Friday, September 18, 2020

COVID-19

COVID-19 Cases in Mississippi

As of Friday, September 18, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) reported **497 new COVID-19 cases and 12 new COVID-19 related deaths**, bringing the **total number of COVID-19 cases in our state to 92,432** and the **total number of deaths to 2,792**.

Earlier this week, State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs and State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Byers hosted a Facebook Live forum to answer various questions from the general public. The virtual event covered questions regarding COVID-19 testing, treatments, mask-mandates, contact tracing, and more. While state case numbers are on a consistent decline, it is still vital for every Mississippian to stay informed about the virus and make wise decisions that will assist in the effort of "flattening the curve."

[Click here to watch a recap of the MSDH COVID-19 Facebook Live event.](#)

[Click here to view a map of COVID-19 cases.](#)

Relaxed COVID-19 Restrictions

Governor Reeves recently issued Executive Order 1522, which extends the social distancing measures under the Safe Return order with a few amendments relaxing COVID-19 restrictions. Under the amended Safe Return order:

- Group gathering limitations are now at no more than 10 indoors or 50 outdoors when social distancing is not possible.
- If people are able to social distance, group gatherings are set at no more than 20 indoors or 100 outdoors.



- Maximum capacity has also been increased to 75% for retail businesses, restaurants, gyms, and seated dinners at reception halls and conference centers.
- Party sizes in restaurants are now limited to 10 people per table, and gyms can be open 24 hours a day.

[Click here to read Executive Order 1522.](#)

First Round of Funds Released for Lost Wages Assistance Program



The Mississippi Department of Employment Security processed the first round of payments for the federal Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program. Some claimants may begin seeing their first payments by Saturday, September 19, 2020. MDES officials say benefits will be paid retroactively to eligible individuals based on available funding.

Mississippians who are unemployed or partially unemployed due to COVID-19 and are currently receiving a weekly unemployment benefit amount of \$100 or more from one of the following programs will be eligible to receive an additional \$300 a week in the LWA FEMA program:

- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)
- Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
- Extended Benefits (EB)
- Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)
- Self-Employment Assistance (SEA)

Claimants do not need to file a separate application to receive LWA. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) will make the LWA payments in the same manner as any payment from one of the above-listed programs payable for the week involved for all participating claimants. The \$300 LWA payment is subject to both federal and state income taxes.

[Click here to learn more about the LWA program.](#)

Executive Orders

[Executive Order 1524](#)

Executive Order 1524 extends the September 15th budget deadline for 24 Gulf Coast and inland counties.

[Executive Order 1523](#)

Executive Order 1523 declares a State of Emergency for the State of Mississippi as a result of the impending impact of Tropical Storm/Hurricane Sally.

[Executive Order 1522](#)

Executive Order 1522 extends the Safe Return order with a few amendments aimed to relax restrictions.

[Click here to view all Executive Orders.](#)

Emergency Contact Information

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(601) 933-6362

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

(800) 232-4636

[Mississippi Department of Employment Security](#)

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