

## Texas Ends COVID-19 Lockdown



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Greg Abbott, the Governor of Texas, celebrated Texas Independence Day on March 2 by announcing the end of COVID-19 lockdown. The Governor has officially declared that [statewide COVID-19 restrictions will end in Texas effective March 10](#). All businesses - restaurants, cinemas, bars, bowling alleys, etc., will no longer have to follow occupancy limits and can serve 100% of their customers going forward. There will also be no statewide mandate on wearing masks, and people are free to once again be out and about without any such requirement.

To date, Texas has reported 2.6 million confirmed cases of COVID-19. Forty-three thousand people have died from the virus. However, the Governor is optimistic about the pandemic's course in the state. Hospitalisation rates have declined, and the number of positive cases has dipped with a testing positivity rate at under 10%. However, it is important to note that the World Health Organization recommends a rate of 5% or lower for a region to be considered "out of the woods".

Nearly 87% of Texans remain unvaccinated, but Abbott is confident that every Texan will have access to the vaccine before the end of spring. Why he is in such a hurry to end COVID-19 restrictions remains unclear. While some support his announcement, there are others urging Abbott to reconsider his decision, especially that of lifting the mask mandate. Abbott has responded by saying that restrictions will no longer be enforced on people, and people should instead demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility so that all Texans can resume their normal lives.

[President Joe Biden](#) does not seem to be in favour of this decision and is urging patience. He says that while there may be light at the end of the tunnel, this is not the time to let our guard down. People must continue to be vigilant and look out for one another, he says. On the other hand, Abbott asserts that vaccinations have altered the course of the pandemic and that things are going to get better in the coming weeks and months.

[Dr Rochelle Walensky](#), the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, points out the fact that the new variants are spreading, and any negligence at this time could be a step back.

Is this the right decision? Or does Abbott's executive order put all Texans at risk? Only time will tell.

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