

COVID-19 Measures Adjusted

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on June 22, announced adjustments to the measures aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Effective June 24, the Order was modified to phase in new measures for places of worship and cinemas.

For places of worship, the maximum number of persons physically present will be determined as 70 per cent of the capacity, which is calculated based on one person for every 40 sq. ft. of the designated worship area.

Indoor theatres and cinemas will be allowed to open with the same size-based capacity limitation – one person for every 40 square feet or 70 per cent of seated capacity, whichever is lower.

Regarding drive-in cinemas, the maximum number of persons in any vehicle should not exceed the number permitted to be in the vehicle under the registration. For vehicles that are registered to carry more than seven persons, the maximum allowed will be eight persons. A vehicle designed to accommodate no more than 15 persons shall be the largest permitted.

The broader measures to take effect on July 1, 2021, are:

- The curfew hours for weekdays and Saturday will be 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. the following morning ending at 5:00 a.m. August 10, 2021. For Sunday, the curfew will begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 5:00 a.m. the following morning.
- As of July 1, 2021, fully vaccinated persons have the option of taking an



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

approved PCR test and upon presenting a negative result, they can be released from the Quarantine Order. The test will be done at the individual's own cost.

- The quarantine requirement for fully vaccinated persons will remain at eight days. For persons who are not fully vaccinated, the quarantine period remains at 14 days.
- The travel ban for South American countries (Brazil, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, and Paraguay) as well as for India and Trinidad & Tobago is also being extended until June 30, 2021.
- The age limit for the stay-at-home measure remains at 60. However, persons who are fully vaccinated are exempt from this.
- The existing work-from-home directive in the public sector has been extended until August 10, 2021.
- Funeral services will be allowed with a maximum of 30 persons present inside the church, other places of worship or funeral homes.
- For burials, the maximum number of persons who may be present at the graveside has been increased from 15 to 30.

- Burials can be done during the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Burials will be allowed Mondays to Fridays.
- For public sector events, such as handovers, or ground-breakings, a maximum of 50 persons must be maintained.
- For markets and vending in public arcades and public transportation centres, operating hours will be from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Mondays through Saturdays. Markets remain closed on Sundays.
- Amusement arcades which cater for young persons are allowed to reopen under protocols to ensure safety of the patrons.
- Beaches, rivers, zoos, water parks and attractions will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Monday to Saturday and from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, given the change in curfew hours.
- Parks, gyms and bars are subject to the existing restrictions and protocols and must close at least one hour before curfew begins.

In the meantime, the Government has contemplated two categories of events for entertainment: large and small.

Effective July 1, 2021, small events may resume with a maximum of 100 attendees including organisers and support personnel. These small events are categorised as either indoor or outdoor; each having gathering limits.

For indoor events, a cap on the number of persons who can attend is determined as 60 per cent of useable square footage.

More Funding Support for MSMEs



Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Hon. Audley Shaw, delivers the keynote address during the launch of the \$675 million Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (MSME) Loan Programme, at the Ministry's offices in New Kingston, on June 24.

MICRO, SMALL and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are now able to access \$675 million in additional funding support from the Government, under the new 4.75 per cent MSME Loan Programme.

The facility, which was officially launched on June 24, is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, through portfolio agency the National Export-Import (EX-IM) Bank, in tandem with Jamaica National Small Business Loans Limited (JNSBL).

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Sancia Bennett-Templer, and EX-IM Bank Managing Director, Lisa Bell, signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), formalising the programme's implementation arrangements.

The signing took place at the Ministry's offices on St. Lucia Avenue, in New Kingston.

The programme is intended to further assist

entities in the productive sector that have been adversely impacted by the economic fallout resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, by facilitating increased access to affordable financing.

Target sectors include agriculture, manufacturing (including agro-processing), and tourism linkages.

Approximately \$200 million, to be managed by JNSBL, has been programmed for micro businesses, which will be able to access between \$500,000 and \$5 million, repayable over 60 months at an interest rate of 4.75 per cent per annum, with a one-year moratorium.

EX-IM Bank will focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which will be able to borrow between \$5 million and \$25 million under similar terms.

Mr. Shaw, in his remarks, said MSMEs are critical to Jamaica's economy, noting that they are pivotal in driving innovation, development and job creation.

Gov't and Carib Cement Sign MOU to Use End-Of-Life Tyres as Fuel Source

THE GOVERNMENT of Jamaica has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Caribbean Cement Company Limited (CCCL) for the entity to use end-of-life pneumatic tyres in the cement-production process.

Under the arrangement, CCCL will convert used tyres at the landfills into an alternative source of fuel, thereby reducing costs and making a positive impact on the environment.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, who addressed the virtual signing ceremony held on June 22 at Jamaica House, said that the agreement will provide a solution to the indiscriminate disposal of used tyres and the stockpiling of the material at the landfills.

He said it is estimated that more than two million used tyres are generated in Jamaica per annum and



Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) and Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 22 at Jamaica House. Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Parnell Charles Jr, and Managing Director, Caribbean Cement Company Limited (CCCL), Yago Castro, also signed.

landfills receive approximately 185,700 tyres per year.

"Most of these tyres are indiscriminately disposed of along roadways, in gullies, stockpiled in open lots and, of course, stored in our landfills, and we estimate that we

have approximately two million tyres stockpiled at Riverton City," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Holness pointed out, further, that tyres are not biodegradable, and so leaving them in a stockpile is not a solution.

The Prime Minister commended CCCL on the innovation in transforming the used tyres into a fuel source.

May Pen Hospital Gets Two Additional Defibrillators



Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Robert Montague (left), and Chairman of the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ), Hon. William "Billy" Shagoury (right), display a defibrillator which he donated to the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon, during a presentation ceremony held at the Ministry on June 22. Also sharing in the occasion (from second left) are Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital, Eugenia Clarke-James and Senior Medical Officer at the hospital, Dr. Bradley Edwards.

Insurance Package Launched for Fishers and Farmers

THE COUNTRY'S fisherfolk and farmers can now access insurance coverage for vessels, vehicles and accessories through Advantage General Insurance.

The insurance package, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, was launched during a virtual ceremony on June 22.

It is the first of its kind in the industry and will provide fishers registered with the National Fisheries Authority with access to insurance coverage developed specifically for their needs.

Farmers will also benefit from specially discounted rates for insuring their cars and homes.

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In his address at the launch, Agriculture and

Fisheries Minister, Hon. Floyd Green, said that the initiative is significant as, "it is the first that our artisanal fishers will be able to go into an insurance company and take out a policy to protect their fishing vessels. It protects them against a wide array of perils. It protects them both at sea and on land".

"It gives them not only greater security, it gives them greater accessibility to the things they need to enhance their business," he noted.

Minister Green said that the scheme is affordable, with annual payments as low as \$45,000.

The package also provides a safety net against

accidental loss or damage to the fishing vessel and accessories by fire, explosion, malicious acts, flood, hurricane, typhoon, earthquake, volcano and other perils while onshore or offshore in Jamaican waters.

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