



Delaware General Assembly State of Delaware

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General Assembly Announces Plan for March Session

House and Senate session to be conducted in person, masking and vaccination-or-test requirement discontinued, Legislative Hall open to public on session days.

DOVER – As the General Assembly prepares to return to session next week, legislative leaders announced several changes to previous COVID-19 restrictions for Legislative Hall.

House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf and **Senate President Pro Tempore Dave Sokola** announced Friday that due to significant declines in case counts, hospitalizations and positive test results, Legislative Hall will re-open to the public on session days.

Staff, lawmakers and visitors will no longer be required to wear masks or face coverings in the building, although it is strongly recommended in gatherings where people cannot maintain safe social distancing. Those who are unvaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear a mask at all times when interacting with other people, especially in any public settings.

Legislative staff and legislators also will no longer be required to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test to be able to enter Legislative Hall. This follows the new policy for other state buildings.

“Since the beginning of this pandemic and throughout the past two years, we have said that our building policy would be guided by health experts, CDC guidance, data, and current trends in our state. In recent weeks, we have closely monitored the latest developments with COVID-19 and have been encouraged to see the improvements,” said **Rep. Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach**. “We have modified our building policy several times, changing with the realities of the situation. This new policy reflects the ongoing improvements and our efforts to get legislators and staff fully vaccinated. I’m pleased to be returning to a more normal session atmosphere.”

Both the House and Senate will meet in person at Legislative Hall on to consider legislative agendas during March. House and Senate committees will continue to meet virtually via Zoom until further notice. Members of the public will be able to attend all virtual committee meetings and deliver comments on pending legislation. Links to register for each meeting will be posted on

the [General Assembly's website](#). If there are any changes to this system, they will be announced in advance.

Legislative session will continue to be broadcast online via the General Assembly website. This will enable the public to continue to view their government from the convenience and safety of their homes.

“One of the positive outcomes from our move to virtual session and virtual committee hearings over the last two years has been a substantial increase in the public’s participation in the legislative process,” said **Sen. Sokola, D-Newark**. “Democracy works best when the public is engaged, and the last thing the Speaker or I want to do is make it harder for people to have their voices heard when we return to in-person session. Our goal now is to soon marry the two together seamlessly so the public can participate in committee hearings in-person or virtually depending on what is most convenient to them.”

On session days, a limited number of seats in the gallery of each chamber will be available to members of the public on a first-come, first-served basis. The foyers, cafeteria seating area and library will be open to the public. Guests wishing to meet with their legislators are encouraged to call ahead of time to schedule an appointment. Masking for Legislative Hall visitors is encouraged, but no longer required.

The House and Senate floors will be closed except to members, staff, special guests, and witnesses. The cafeteria will be closed for food service, but seating will be available for those who need workspace.

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