



MUSEUM ALERT:

All museums in Illinois deemed a Phase 4 industry by the State

In recent discussions with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Association of Museums has learned more about the Executive Order of May 29 that defined museums as “amusements” and determined them to be a *Restore Illinois* **Phase 4 industry**. The following is from the Executive Order:

“Places of public amusement. ***Except as permitted by this Executive Order or by DCEO guidance, places of public amusement must remain closed to the public. Places of public amusement include but are not limited to, locations with amusement rides, carnivals, amusement parks, water parks, aquariums, zoos, museums, arcades, fairs, children's play centers, playgrounds, theme parks, bowling alleys, movie and other theaters, and concert and music halls.*** Places of public amusement, like other businesses, may continue to:

- i. Perform necessary activities to maintain the value of the business's inventory, preserve the condition of the business's physical plant and equipment, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for related functions.
- ii. Perform necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely.
- iii. Fulfill online and telephonic retail orders through pick-up or delivery.”

It was unfortunate but necessary that all of the various types of museums were grouped into one definition that applied to some locations, but does not take into account the museums that can reasonably open during Phase 3 (e.g. open air museums, zoos, botanical gardens and nature centers). Museums come in a wide variety of sites and structures and trying to define them all as functioning like “amusements” does not address their potential.

All across Illinois, we have heard from museums that had been planning Phase 3 openings in keeping with their interpretation of the *Restore Illinois* plan. It is important to note that museums had not been defined as Phase 4 industries prior to May 29. The State's May 29 determination of museums has put many museums that had publicly announced re-openings in awkward positions with their patrons who expected Phase 3 openings.

IAM encourages, in keeping with best practices, abiding by the State's plan for reopening- and waiting a few more weeks to open. We have asked the State how museums can get special permission to open early, and DCEO has shared that no special permissions to open early will be granted. DCEO is earnestly working on guidelines for the museum industry, in cooperation with a variety of museum representatives. Opening prior to Phase 4, and issuance of those guidelines, puts institutions at risk of being in breach of best practices, created for the protection of visitors, volunteers and staff alike.

Currently, there are a few museums opening against state guidelines. To those institutions that remain closed, this presents an unfair situation- both financially and in the public eye. Most members of the public do not realize that museums were determined to be Phase 4 industries. Opening early, and without industry-wide guidelines, puts many of our museums in a negative light to our patrons. The museums abiding by the *Restore Illinois* guidelines are losing out on visitors, potential income, and public goodwill. We have had multiple complaints about this unfair situation. Although we do not fully understand the legal implications of reopening against the State's guidelines, public health may be affected negatively if we do not adhere to strict cleaning protocols and guidelines.

Illinois Association of Museums has been asked to review the Phase 4 opening guidelines for museums, which will be released closer to the **earliest expected Phase 4 opening on June 26**. Again, we understand that museums are feeling pressure to open by the public, their members, and patrons because they see other museums violating the State's mandates. We support all of our members in the Illinois museum community and encourage everyone to share the State's directives.

