



Statement from the Prime Minister

A statement from Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis on adjustments to the New Providence lockdown.

“In the past few weeks there has been a disturbing rise in COVID-19 cases in New Providence.

“Sadly, additional deaths have been confirmed and our hospital system is stretched to capacity. In coordination with our public health team and through conversations with community stakeholders, it was made clear that the only way to beat back this deadly virus would be to extend lockdown provisions with more restrictions.

“On Monday 17 August, I made the announcement of increased restrictions for New Providence with immediate effect in order to save lives.

“My first priority is always to protect the health and safety of every Bahamian. However, after I spoke Monday night Bahamians from all walks of life raised concerns with me.

“From these discussions two things are clear: There is broad understanding of the need to lock down New Providence in order to control and slow the spread of COVID-19; however, it is also clear that families and businesses need more time to prepare.

“I hear you. I understand you and know that in many cases we must make adjustments in the short-term to strengthen in the long run.

“Earlier today the Cabinet was briefed by officials of the Department of Meteorology and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) who are closely monitoring a weather system which on its current path may affect The Bahamas by Sunday.

“Given the feedback from community stakeholders and the threat of a weather system that is developing, we are making adjustments to the New Providence lockdown.

“This is to allow residents who were unable to secure sufficient food, medicine and water to access essential items, and to make the necessary preparations as we monitor the weather system.

“Starting tomorrow, Wednesday 19 August, grocery stores, pharmacies, water depots, gas stations and hardware stores will be allowed to open from 6am to 9pm, until further notice. Food wholesalers and manufacturers will also be allowed to operate during this period.

“The National Insurance Board will resume cheque distributions on Wednesday 19 August at the National Stadium.

“I will provide additional details as it relates to the lockdown for New Providence when I address the nation later this week. NEMA is expected to brief the public on the weather system on Wednesday.

“Your best interests guide my decisions. These are difficult times for our country.

“As you shop for essential items and make preparations, please abide by the public health guidelines. Stay physically distant. Wear your masks. Wash or sanitize your hands regularly.

“We will beat this second wave by working together. And, as your prime minister, I will always listen and make decisions taking your needs, thoughts and feedback into consideration.”

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