

# Movie theaters reopening

## Movie Theaters in Michigan are starting to reopen

### Gathering limits eased

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued major executive orders on the afternoon of September 25, 2020 that will reopen most movie theaters. Local theaters will be able to open starting October 9th, according to Whitmer's office. But businesses will have to keep record of those entering their facilities in case of an outbreak, so they can be contacted later.

*"We're excited to reopen, and we have every intention to open Oct. 9. We're prepared,"* said Erik Gubert, marketing director for MJR Digital Cinemas.

This theater chain is planning to show a mix of classic films and movies that have opened in recent weeks at other theaters around the country, including "Tenet" and "New Mutants."

Masks will be required in theaters and in the lobby area, except when patrons are eating and drinking and the showtimes for the movies will be spaced out to allow for less congestion in the lobby areas. Whitmer's new order also "relaxes restrictions" on social gatherings and organized events. Currently, gatherings are limited to 10 people indoors and 100 people outdoors in much of Michigan.

Friday's announcements came 199 days after Michigan reported its first cases of COVID-19. The state has now confirmed 120,526 cases of the virus and 6,790 deaths linked to it.

Paul Glantz, chairman of Emagine Entertainment, said he got a heads-up about the governor's order at about 1 p.m. Friday. Glantz said Emagine's nine closed Michigan theaters will reopen Oct. 9, and his team will be trained on new safety and social distancing protocols.

Emagine is planning to proceed with its Juneteenth Film Festival, which will show movies such as "Do the Right Thing," "If Beale Street Could Talk," "The Color Purple" and "I Am Not Your Negro" at the Emagine Royal Oak theater. The festival was originally going to be held in June, as the name suggests, but was postponed after state Attorney General Dana Nessel's Office said opening the theater would violate Whitmer's executive orders. Cinema Detroit's Paula Guthat was shocked when she heard that theaters were going to open on October 9th and said that she was elated and relieved to hear the news.

*"I didn't think we would be reopening this year,"* Guthat said.

The complex, which was originally two-screened, will be scaled down to one screen upon reopening. The large auditorium, which holds 125 people, will be limited to a capacity of 20-25 people, with seats marked off between parties. The smaller theater, which only holds about 20 people, will be closed.

Although the cases have been rising and we are still in a state of a global pandemic, the openings of the movie theaters provide hope that we are moving in the right direction together.

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