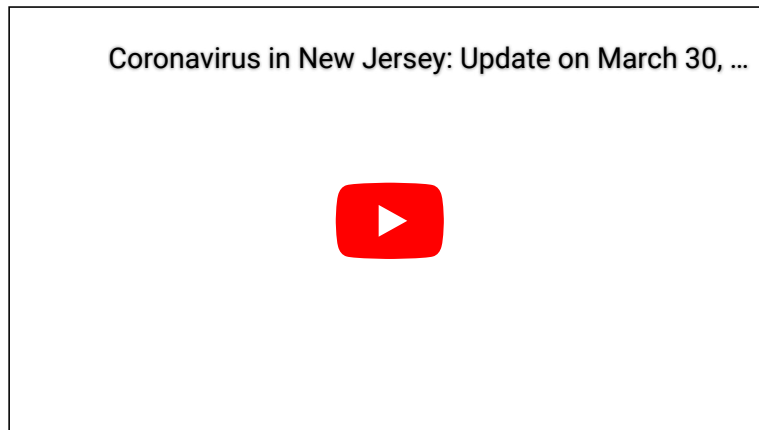


CORONAVIRUS

Gun shops are now considered essential businesses in N.J., Gov. Murphy says

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By [Alex Napoliello](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

Gun retailers in New Jersey can now open as an essential business during the [coronavirus](#) outbreak, Gov. [Phil Murphy](#) announced Monday in a reversal of his previous position on this issue.

Murphy's decision to deem firearm dealers an essential business follows guidelines issued by the federal Department of Homeland Security, which added gun dealers, ranges and manufacturers to its list of [essential business guide](#) for its coronavirus response on Saturday.

"It wouldn't be my definition, but that's the definition at the federal level and I didn't get a vote on that," Murphy, a Democrat, said at his daily coronavirus press briefing Monday.

The gun shops may re-open "by appointment only and under limited hours," Murphy said. He said the state would continue to enforce its regulations on gun sales.

Murphy's decision also comes after a federal lawsuit was filed by the New Jersey Second Amendment Society to reopen gun stores, calling Murphy's initial decision an [infringement on a resident's Second Amendment rights](#). The head of that group, Alexander Roubian, had condemned the governor's decision during two press briefings last week.

"I respect the Second Amendment," Murphy told Roubian at a briefing last week. "I have gotten not one complaint from anybody that they were trying to buy a gun and they couldn't."

Gun shop owners, who were [experiencing a spike in sales](#) in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, believed they are considered essential because they supply weapons and ammunition to current and retired law enforcement.

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