

Here are the changes Arizona casinos are making before reopening

Written by Administrator
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PHOENIX — The familiar sounds of the casinos -- the jingles from the slot machines and the occasional cheer from the blackjack table -- will soon return as some casinos in Arizona prepare to reopen this week, nearly two months after shutting down to encourage social distancing during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fort McDowell Casino near Fountain Hills, **Harrah's Ak-Chin Hotel and Casino** in Maricopa, **Lone Butte** in Chandler, **Wild Horse Pass** in Chandler, and **Vee Quiva** in Laveen all plan to reopen on May 15, the same day that Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey's stay-at-home order is set to expire.

Desert Diamond West Valley Casino extended its closure until May 15, but has not yet announced when it will reopen. **Talking Stick Resort and Casino** and **Casino Arizona** previously announced that they would remain closed through the month of May.

Though before the casinos reopen, each one will have its own rules and guidelines to encourage social distancing.

Here is what we know so far:

HARRAH'S AK-CHIN HOTEL AND CASINO

Harrah's Ak-Chin Hotel and Casino in Maricopa is scheduled to open at 9 a.m. on May 15, the casino recently announced. That includes the resort's rooms, depending on the number of

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reservations.

The casino said it will implement a number of changes to increase social distancing:

- Slot machines have been rearranged to allow for social distancing and seating will be limited at blackjack tables. The poker room, keno, and bingo will remain closed.
- Some dining areas and restaurants will open, including Dunkin Donuts, Copper Cactus Grill, Chop Block & Brew, and Agaves Restaurant, will be open and have social distancing in place. The Buffet, Oak & Fork, and Laurel Lounge will remain closed.
- More hand-sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the casino floor, employees will wear masks, and common areas will be cleaned more often.
- The events and conference center, fitness center, spa, and valet are closed.

FORT MCDOWELL CASINO

Fort McDowell Casino located northeast of Phoenix said it would reopen on May 15 and would implement a number of changes and protocols, including temperature checks, increased access to hand sanitizer, increased cleaning, and rules for those who take a bus to the casino.

The casino also set-up a [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on its website, www.fortmcdowellcasino.com

Some of the highlights include:

- Slots and limited blackjack would begin on May 15. Bingo and Silver Platter could reopen as early as May 22, but it depends on updated guidelines; poker is closed until further notice.
- Temperature checks will be conducted at entrances via handheld scanners and thermal scanners. Anyone with a temperature over 100.0 degrees will have to undergo a secondary screening and may not be allowed inside.
- Plexiglass barriers will be installed throughout the casino, at service counters, the hotel, restaurants, pools, and back of house.
- The layouts of the casino, slot machines, and restaurants have been changed to

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encourage physical distancing.

- Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances, lobbies, driveways, restaurant entrances, restrooms, and convention areas.
- Employees will have to wear masks and/or gloves, depending on where they work in the casino.

GILA RIVER CASINOS: LONE BUTTE, VEE QUIVA, AND WILD HORSE PASS

All three of Gila River's Hotels and Casinos -- Lone Butte, Vee Quiva, and Wild Horse Pass -- will reopen on Friday, May 15, a spokesperson confirmed to ABC15. A news release with more information was expected to be released on Tuesday morning, she said.

Vee Quiva and Lone Butte will reopen at 10 a.m. and Wild Horse Pass will reopen at noon, she said.

Some changes that were implemented include using plexiglass partitions at service counters, cashiers, slot machines, and blackjack tables. She said slot machines have been spaced out to encourage physical distancing. The spokesperson also said that some buffets and restaurants would reopen with social distancing in place.

Read more <https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/here-are-the-changes-arizona-casinos-are-making-before-reopening>