

## Nevada betting on health safety as Las Vegas casinos reopen

Written by Administrator  
Wednesday, 03 June 2020 18:10 -

---

By

KEN RITTER Associated Press

June 3, 2020, 10:11 PM

4 min read

4 min read

[Share to Facebook](#)[Email this article](#)

**LAS VEGAS --** After 78 days of historic quiet, cards will be cut, dice will roll and jackpots can jingle again 12:01 a.m. Thursday at casinos in Las Vegas and throughout Nevada.

There will be big splashes — even amid ongoing protests over the death of a man in police custody in Minnesota — and big hopes for recovery from an unprecedented and expensive shutdown prompted by the coronavirus pandemic.

“There’s a tremendous amount on the line, not only for casinos, but for the community and the state,” said Alan Feldman, a longtime casino executive now a fellow at the International Gaming Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. “This is an extremely important moment.”

Casino resorts that had been famously always open were shuttered in mid-March — idling Nevada’s key tourism and hospitality industry nearly 89 years to the day since gambling was legalized in 1931. Gov. Steve Sisolak’s emergency order closed non-essential businesses to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Now, property owners, state regulators and Sisolak, a Democrat who has been criticized for the closure, are balancing those concerns against the loss of billions of dollars a month in gambling revenue and almost half a million unemployed workers.

## Nevada betting on health safety as Las Vegas casinos reopen

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 03 June 2020 18:10 -

---

They are betting that safety measures — disinfected dice; hand sanitizer and face masks everywhere; limited numbers of players at tables; temperature checks at entrances to some resorts; touchless cellphone check-ins — will lure tourists back.

They know it will look different.

“I’m optimistic that customers will see that gaming properties invested time and effort to welcome them back to a safe and entertaining environment,” state Gaming Control Board chief Sandra Douglass Morgan said Wednesday.

The regulatory board required detailed health safety plans by last week, before giving the go-ahead to reopen.

Morgan didn’t specify if any plans were rejected, saying agents “communicated concerns or asked for clarification” from an unspecified number of the state’s 459 licensed casinos. The board also regulates nearly 2,000 bars, restaurants and convenience stores that have no more than 15 slot machines.

It won’t quite be business as usual when the iconic Bellagio fountains dance back to life at dawn Thursday. Analysts like Feldman think it will take a long time to recover.

“This is going to be a pretty long, slow climb,” said Feldman, who was with MGM Resorts when Las Vegas experienced an abrupt air travel stop after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, and later a crippling plunge in business during the Great Recession over a decade ago.

Recovery took years — reaching best-ever numbers last January and February: taxable casino winnings at \$1 billion each month; unemployment at an all-time low of 3.6%.

By April, casino winnings were a fraction of 1% of a year earlier, and unemployment reached 28.2%, topping figures in any state even during the Great Depression.

## Nevada betting on health safety as Las Vegas casinos reopen

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 03 June 2020 18:10 -

---

"I'm hopeful it is a consistent climb, without setbacks," Feldman added, "better than a surge and then a setback."

UBS gaming analyst Robin Farley noted for investors that the biggest casino operators, MGM Resorts and Caesars Entertainment, won't immediately open all their properties.

Wynn Resorts, the Venetian and Palazzo are slated to open Thursday morning, along with the landmark STRAT casino and tower, Derek Stevens' downtown properties and others around Las Vegas owned by Boyd Gaming and Red Rock Resorts.

Station Casinos properties are using slot machine icons with customer advisories to "Touch buttons. Not faces, and "Stay Reel Healthy."

The first visitors are expected to be area residents, then motorists from nearby U.S. states and then air travelers.

"The market still relies heavily on air traffic, and the longer stays in Vegas are usually tied to mass social gatherings, including conventions ... concerts and fights, all of which may take longer to recover," Farley said.

The message will be, "Thank you for coming and believing and trusting us. We're excited to have you here," MGM Resorts International chief executive Bill Hornbuckle said during a recent walk-through of the Bellagio casino floor.

Plastic partitions will separate mask-wearing dealers and three players at blackjack tables. Employees and guests will be able to use newly installed handwashing stations.

Convention halls, nightclubs, swimming pool parties and arena spectacles will remain mostly dark.

## Nevada betting on health safety as Las Vegas casinos reopen

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 03 June 2020 18:10 -

---

“It may be a little different,” Hornbuckle said. “But I think it will be memorable, personable and special.”

---

This story corrects the closure will have lasted 78 days not 58.

**Read more** <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/nevada-betting-health-safety-las-vegas-casinos-reopen-71054972>