

# Las Vegas casino reopening 'major milestone' for city, industry

By [Bailey Schulz](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal  
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A number of Las Vegas casinos are just a little over a week away from reopening their doors.

On Tuesday evening, Gov. Steve Sisolak confirmed that he's comfortable with casinos reopening June 4, adding that the state's Gaming Control Board would provide more details on reopening requirements on Wednesday. The date — first announced [last week](#) — comes more than two months after casinos were initially ordered to close.

While not all properties in the state will take advantage of the initial opening date, a number of operators said they're excited to open their doors to guests once again.

Caesars Entertainment Corp. spokesman Richard Broome confirmed Tuesday that Caesars Palace and Flamingo would be the company's first Las Vegas properties to reopen with lodging, dining, slot machines, table games and outdoors pools, and would do so "when specified by the governor." Staff will be brought back to match demand, Broome said.

“We look forward to welcoming back guests and employees,” Broome said via email. “We intend to comply with state directives to create a comfortable work and guest environment based on our enhanced health and safety protocols.”

Representatives for other casino operators could not be reached for comment late Tuesday.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority reiterated comments made by President and CEO Steve Hill on Friday, in which he said he believes the state, county, health leaders and resort partners “have taken every necessary step and precaution to ensure a safe and sustained opening. Employees and guests should feel confident, as evidenced by the many resort plans that have already been made public.”

## **‘A major milestone’**

Sisolak’s announcement marks a major milestone for both Las Vegas and the gaming industry, said Josh Swissman, founding partner of Las Vegas gaming and hospitality consulting firm The Strategy Organization.

He expects casino management across the valley will spend the next several days putting last-minute touches on their new operating procedures, many of which include restructured casino floors, staff training and the implementation of thermal cameras.

“Once their doors re-open on the 4th, operators are going to learn so much from those critical first few hours and days,” Swissman said via email. “There will undoubtedly be tweaks and fine-tuning made to their re-opening procedures as a result of what they will see. Marketers should be watching visitation volume

and guest behavior closely, and should look to pivot quickly if changes to their marketing plans need to be made.”

Toni Repetti, an associate professor at UNLV’s college of hospitality, said she thinks the announcement means Las Vegas can “start to come back toward normalcy.”

“I believe it will take some time to fully get there, but it’s a starting point,” she said. “This allows people to get back to work and tax revenues to start coming back into Nevada’s economy. The properties have great plans in place, and I believe will be (cautious) and very responsive as changes need to be made.”

## **Test out what’s working**

Repetti also believes the slow reopening — in which operators only reopen select properties and amenities at first — allows operators to “test out what is and is not working.”

Brendan Bussmann, director of government affairs for Las Vegas-based Global Market Advisors, said the announcement finally gives Nevada gaming a date it can move forward, but still leaves questions unanswered.

All eyes now turn to the Nevada Gaming Control Board’s Wednesday meeting. Sisolak said the board will issue an industry notice that lays out the requirements for operators who want to resume operations. This comes after the board had an informal workshop on Tuesday, where it received testimony from the state’s COVID-19 Response Director, public health experts, and emergency response department leaders.

“The biggest question that still remains is what the order from the Gaming Control Board will say,” Bussmann said. “Operators may have to change plans based on what they heard today. But there’s no doubt that gaming will make sure their employees as well as their guests are in the safest environment possible.”

With the notice set to come out Wednesday, that gives casino operators just over one week to prepare to reopen by June 4.

“It’s cutting it very close, but hopefully that will (be enough time to) give clarity on any changes that need to be made by operators,” Bussmann said.