



NEWS RELEASE

Public Health

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County clarifies March 17 Public Health Order



The County is offering the following clarifications to the County Health Officer order issued on Tuesday, March 17, which can be viewed [here](#).

The order requires the cancellation of public or private gatherings of people through April 6. The order defines "gathering" as "any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time."

The order applies to house parties, family reunions, church and religious events, funerals, weddings, quinceañeras, festivals, picnics, and other similar gatherings of people.

The order does not apply to:

- Members of a household or living unit
- Work/employment
- Public transportation
- Airport travel
- Grocery stores
- Charitable food distribution
- Certified farmers' markets
- Shopping at stores or malls
- Congregate living situations, including dormitories and homeless encampments

The order also does not apply to schools. However, all public schools in the county have chosen to close, as has the County Preschool Services Department, which operates Head Start preschools in the county.

The order requires the closing of all:

- Movie theaters
- Gyms
- Health clubs
- Businesses that serve alcohol but do not serve food

The order does not apply to any other places of business, including hair and nail salons and massage clinics. However, all businesses and other gatherings allowed under the order are strongly urged to follow current hygiene and social distancing standards.

As far as restaurants are concerned, the order requires them to follow guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health, which can be found here: www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-024.aspx. The heart of this guidance states, "Restaurants should be closed for in-restaurant seated dining and should be open only to drive-through or other pick-up/delivery options." This means that restaurants can stay open if they choose to do so. However, the state and county recommend that in the interests of public health

and safety, they should not offer seated dining. Many restaurants in the county have chosen to close voluntarily.

The order also strongly cautions that persons aged 65 years and older and persons of any age with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk should they contract COVID-19, and encourages them to self-quarantine.

The county has reported five cases of novel coronavirus infection and no fatalities.

On March 10, the County Public Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency to help ensure county government and the public are prepared for the possibility that COVID-19 will appear within the county.

Various appropriate County departments and agencies have been working together since Jan. 25 to prepare for the possible arrival of the virus within the county. The County Department of Public Health activated its Department Operations Center on Feb. 13.

County Public Health continues to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health to respond to reports of COVID-19.

As with any virus, especially during the cold and flu season, there are a number of steps you can take to protect your health and those around you:

- Practice social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least six feet between individuals.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- If someone does become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough, they should stay away from work, school or other people to avoid spreading illness and seek assistance from their healthcare provider if symptoms become severe.
- N95 masks are not recommended outside a healthcare setting. Surgical masks can be worn by sick individuals to reduce the likelihood of spreading germs to others.

For information about the coronavirus crisis, visit the County's coronavirus website at wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus, contact the coronavirus public information line from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at 909-387-3911, or email coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov. The public information line is not equipped to handle medical questions or requests for medical care. Medical questions or requests for medical care should be made to medical care providers only.