

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Safer at Home Order Frequently Asked Questions

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is calling on the public to help slow the spread of the disease caused by the novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19). Public Health and its partners are taking aggressive steps to try to slow the spread of COVID-19, but despite these efforts, there continues to be community transmission within Los Angeles County. Without a vaccine or treatment, additional social distancing measures are necessary to slow the rate of new COVID-19 cases and protect both the public and the healthcare system.

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, the County of Los Angeles Health Officer issued a Revised Health Officer Order on March 21, 2020, that supersedes (replaces) the prior Health Officer Orders. This Revised Health Officer Order, the “Safer at Home Order”, is aligned with the Governor of California’s March 19, 2020 Order: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.19.20-attested-EO-N-33-20-COVID-19-HEALTH-ORDER.pdf>, which requires Californians to stay at home unless performing essential activities. On March 27, 2020, the County of Los Angeles Health Officer issued a follow-up Order amending the “Safer at Home Order” to also include the closure of all public beaches, piers, public trails and trailheads within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction.

The Los Angeles County Safer at Home Orders and additional guidance documents can be found on the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 webpage: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>.

## General Information about the Safer at Home Health Officer Orders

### 1. What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that is caused by the novel coronavirus. It spreads between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also spread when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus from the infected person on it and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes before washing their hands.

People who are infected with COVID-19 can have mild to severe respiratory illness, with fever and cough that can develop into difficulty breathing. Everyone is at risk for becoming ill with COVID-19, but some people are more vulnerable to serious illness due to their age, physical state, and/or health status.

### 2. Why did the Los Angeles County Health Officer issue the Safer at Home Health Officer Order?

California law gives the Health Officer the authority to take protective measures that are necessary to protect against the spread of disease. In the absence of a specific vaccine or a specific treatment for COVID-19 and with increasing cases, limiting the chances for close contact between persons is the best and only way to interrupt the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public.

Orders are based on scientific evidence and best practices. Public health experts recommend social distancing (increasing the space between people) to stop or slow down the spread of contagious diseases, such as COVID-19.

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### 3. Why was the Order amended to include temporary closure of some outdoor public sites?

Public beaches and public trails initially remained open to the public for recreation and exercise. However, the number of COVID-19 cases *and deaths* in Los Angeles County has increased significantly over the past week, making the need for social distancing even more important. In recent days, groups of people have been crowding the beaches and trails without practicing social distancing, therefore it is necessary to initiate this temporary closure to protect the public.

The Los Angeles County Health Officer has therefore taken an additional step to limit crowds at public sites and as of March 27, 2020, ordered the temporary closure to the public of all:

- Public hiking trails and trailheads within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction.
- Public beaches, piers, public beach parking lots, beach bike paths on the sanded portion of the beach, and beach access points within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction.

### 4. How long will the Safer at Home Order be in effect?

This Order is in effect through April 19, 2020. Public Health will continue to monitor the rate of COVID-19 disease spread, the severity of the resulting illnesses and deaths, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, and the need for additional measures. If needed, the Health Officer may extend, expand, or modify the Order to protect the public's health.

### 5. Does the Safer at Home Order apply to everyone in Los Angeles County?

No. This Order applies to areas in the Los Angeles County Public Health Jurisdiction, which includes all parts of the County except the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena. The cities of Long Beach and Pasadena have their own city public health departments and have issued Health Officer Orders very similar to the Safer at Home Health Officer Order. Businesses and organizations in these cities should check with their own public health departments for guidance.

### 6. Does the Safer at Home Order still apply if a city has also issued requirements?

All those under the Los Angeles County Health Jurisdiction (unincorporated areas and cities other than Long Beach and Pasadena) must comply with the Los Angeles County Safer at Home Order. However, the Order does not override any stricter restrictions put into place by a local jurisdiction such as a City.

## What does the Safer at Home Health Officer Order say?

### 7. What does the Safer at Home Order require the public to do?

The public and private sectors must help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by practicing social distancing and taking common-sense infection control precautions. Due to the continued rapid spread of COVID-19 and the need to protect the most vulnerable members of our community, Public Health has called upon everyone to stay at home or in their place of residence, except when they need to work at an Essential Business or Healthcare Operation, provide Essential Infrastructure, shop at an Essential Business, or engage in an Essential Activity. For members of the public, what this means is that they should:

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- Stay home (stay unexposed and do not expose others)
- Only go out for essential services or if they are an essential worker
- Stay six feet or more away from others
- Not gather in groups

The Order and the March 27, 2020 amendment, which are in effect until April 19, 2020, specifically:

- Prohibit all indoor and outdoor public and private gatherings and events among persons not in the same household in Los Angeles County.
- Requires all businesses to stop in-person operations and close to the public, unless the business is defined as an Essential Business. It specifically requires all indoor malls and shopping centers, all swap meets and flea markets, all indoor and outdoor playgrounds, and all non-essential businesses to close.
- Requires Essential Businesses that are not required to close to the public to practice social distancing to the extent possible and infection control precautions listed in the Order.
- Requires all restaurants to only prepare and offer food that is provided to customers via delivery service, via pick-up for takeout dining, and via drive-thru. Restaurants may not provide indoor or outdoor table service.
- Requires the temporary closure to the public of public hiking trails and trailheads, public beaches, piers, public beach parking lots, bike paths that are on the sanded portion of the beach, and access points to beaches and within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction.

This Order doesn't prevent individuals or families from participating in outdoor activities, such as walking, jogging, or biking, at sites that are not closed to the public as long as everyone practices social distancing.

Because the Order may be updated or extended, all residents should consult Public Health's website ([www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)) daily until the Order is ended, and follow any updated requirements.

### 8. What types of businesses are required to temporarily close to the public?

The Safer at Home Order requires the immediate temporary closure to the public of all businesses that are not considered Essential Businesses. Essential Businesses are businesses that perform services that are essential to the well-being of the State's residents.

Some examples of non-essential businesses that are required to close include:

- Bars and Nightclubs.
- Movie theaters, drive-in theaters, live performance venues, concert halls, arenas, and stadiums.
- Bowling alleys and arcades.
- Gyms and fitness centers.
- Wineries, Breweries, and Tap Rooms (portion that offers public beverage consumption).
- Personal grooming centers such as nail or hair salons.
- Golf Courses, Tennis, Volleyball and Basketball Courts.
- Smoke and Tobacco Shops.

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- Clothing stores.
- Car Wash businesses.
- Indoor malls and shopping centers (with the exception of Essential Businesses that can be accessed from the exterior of the indoor mall).
- Indoor and outdoor children's playgrounds (except for those located within childcare centers).
- Flea Markets and Swap Meets.

### 9. What types of businesses are not required to close temporarily to the public?

Only Essential Businesses are not required to temporarily close to the public. There are many types of businesses and services that are considered essential, which may remain open to meet the needs of residents as long as everyone practices social distancing to the extent possible. Examples include:

- Stores that sell groceries and other products that are necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.
- Organizations and businesses that provide shelter, social services, and other necessities of life.
- Banks, Credit Unions, financial institutions, and insurance companies.
- Gas stations and convenience stores.
- Hardware stores, building supply stores, auto repair shops, and bicycle repair shops.
- Plumbers, electricians, property managers, gardeners/landscapers, security personnel, and funeral homes/mortuaries.
- Laundromats, dry cleaners, businesses that provide mailing and shipping services.
- Hotels, motels, and shared rental units.
- Airlines, ride-share services, taxis, and other private transportation services.
- Businesses that ship, truck or provide logistical support for the delivery of groceries, food, goods or services directly to residents, Essential Businesses, Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure.
- Hospitals, clinics, public health centers, and other licensed health care providers.
- Construction services and activities for public, commercial, and residential property.
- Professional services, such as payroll, accounting, and legal, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities.
- Businesses that assist with the inspection, recording, and transfer of residential and commercial property.
- Educational institutions (if facilitating distance learning).
- Businesses that support transportation needs.
- Childcare centers.
- Home-based care providers for some groups.
- Entities that perform work essential for national security.
- Healthcare Operations. See the Order for a list of what are considered to be Healthcare operations.
- Essential Infrastructure providers. See the Order for a list of what are considered to be Essential Infrastructure providers.

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For the full list of Essential Businesses, see section 13 of the Order. For a list of what are considered to be Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure, see Section 15 of the Order. The Order can be found at [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/COVID-19\\_March%2021-HOOrder-7\\_00\\_FINAL2.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/COVID-19_March%202021-HOOrder-7_00_FINAL2.pdf).

### 10. Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue operating?

Only those that provide essential services as described in the Safer At Home Order can remain open. This would include non-profits operating food pantries, providing housing and services for homeless residents, and many other critical services.

### 11. Childcare facilities are allowed to remain open. Are there any specific requirements for them?

Childcare facilities must follow these requirements:

- Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of twelve (12) or fewer. "Stable" means the same twelve (12) or fewer children are in the same group each day. Children cannot change from one group to another.
- If more than one group of children is cared for at once site/facility, each group must be in a separate room and these groups cannot mix with each other.
- Each childcare provider must be solely with one group of children.
- Playgrounds within a childcare facility may be used by the children being cared for at that facility.

### 12. What infection control practices are Essential Businesses required to follow?

All Essential Businesses that are not required to close to the public, including government agencies, are required to practice the following infection control precautions:

- Practice social distancing by requiring patrons, visitors, and employees to be separated by six (6) feet, to the extent feasible.
- Provide access to handwashing facilities with soap and water or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Post a sign in a conspicuous place at the public entry to the venue instructing members of the public to not enter if they are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness, including fever or cough.
- Adhere to communicable disease control recommendations provided by Public Health.

## What does the Safer at Home Health Officer Order Mean for Me?

### 13. Can I leave my home?

Yes. The public can leave home to access essential services (i.e., those that meet basic human needs) like buying groceries; getting necessary supplies at a hardware store; helping someone else get necessary supplies; going to the doctor; picking up a prescription; taking children to daycare; getting pet supplies or taking a pet to a veterinarian; going to a bank or credit union; or accessing court, social and administrative services. However, you should minimize the number of trips, stay at least 6 feet from others whenever

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possible, and stay at home if you have fever or respiratory symptoms.

Employees who work for an essential business (i.e., government workers and private-sector workers employed by Essential Businesses or Essential Infrastructure) are also allowed to leave the home to go to work.

Individuals and families can also participate in outdoor activities such as walking, jogging, or biking at sites that are not closed to the public, as long as they can stay at least 6 feet from others while doing so.

### **14. Can I leave my home to take my children, dependents, older family members or those with disabilities to necessary appointments like healthcare or social service visits?**

Yes, as long as you use social distancing as much as possible, you can leave your home to care for these individuals, including taking them to necessary appointments.

### **15. I was issued a court order. Can I leave my home in order to comply with this?**

Yes. Travel outside the home in order to comply with court or enforcement orders are allowed.

### **16. Can I go to work?**

Government employees and private-sector workers employed by Essential Businesses, Healthcare Operations or Essential Infrastructure are allowed to and should go to work. A list of workers determined by the State Health Officer to be critical infrastructure workers, who can continue to go to work, can be found at <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>.

If you are able to go to work, check with your employer about social distancing, alternative work schedules, or any other practices that they may have put into place to help protect you and the people that you serve.

### **17. Can educational institutions remain open?**

Yes, for purposes of facilitating distance learning, providing meals for pick-up, or performing essential functions while following social distancing.

### **18. Can individuals continue to stay in dorms, shelters or other congregate settings?**

Yes, as long as they maintain social distancing and follow the institution's measures to reduce the spread of disease.

### **19. Is it OK to take public transit, ride-sharing services (e.g. Lyft or Uber) or wait at bus stops or metro stations for transit?**

You should limit travel outside of the home to those activities that are considered essential but you can take public transportation or use ride-sharing services as long as you maintain at least 6 feet of space from others.

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### 20. Can I take my child to the park?

Yes, as long as you try to maintain social distancing from others at the park. However, both indoor and outdoor playgrounds and other park amenities are not allowed to stay open.

### 21. Can I call a plumber to fix a leaky pipe or clogged toilet?

Yes. You are allowed to continue to get services that are needed to maintain the safety and sanitation of your home.

### 22. Am I allowed to care for a family member or pet at someone else's home?

Yes. You are allowed to provide care and services for vulnerable and dependent people or animals. However, you should take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as ensuring you don't have a fever or symptoms of illness before leaving to provide care, keeping at least 6 feet from others whenever possible, and frequently washing your hands, including immediately after entering their home or using hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

### 23. Can I still leave the home to donate blood?

Yes. You can continue to give blood at Red Cross centers and at blood donation sites.

Blood drives are not prohibited by the Safer at Home or other Los Angeles County Orders, as long as social distancing practices are implemented to the maximum extent possible. Like a hospital, grocery store, or pharmacy, a blood drive is essential to ensuring the health of the community. Red Cross will continue to hold blood drives to help meet patient needs and has implemented new measures that ensure that blood drives and donation centers are even safer for donors and staff. Practicing social distancing and donating blood are not mutually exclusive, but they both will help to keep community members healthy by slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus and by ensuring that patients across the country receive lifesaving blood.

## Additional Information

### 24. Is there guidance available for retail food facilities, such as restaurants?

Yes. A tailored guidance document for retail food facilities is available from Public Health at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/GuidanceFoodFacilities.pdf](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/GuidanceFoodFacilities.pdf). It describes the requirements of the Order, identifies which facilities are exempted, and describes recommended prevention practices.

### 25. How can I get more information about the Safer at Home Order and the required social distancing and infection control precautions?

- Download the Order from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health website at [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/COVID-19\\_March%2021-HOOrder-7\\_00\\_FINAL2.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/COVID-19_March%2021-HOOrder-7_00_FINAL2.pdf). You can also view the Order at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration or request a copy by calling the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at (323) 914-7801, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, or by leaving a message after-hours at (323) 914-9358.

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- Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 website, at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/) for a variety of resources that address infection control and social distancing guidance such as press releases, FAQs, cleaning recommendations; and guidance documents that are tailored to businesses, schools, colleges and universities, and food facilities.
- Call 2-1-1 (LA County Information Line).

### 26. What are some ideas for activities you can still participate in while the Order is in effect?

Various Los Angeles County Departments offer activities that you can take advantage of while maintaining a safe social distance. These include virtual workouts, e-books, and virtual story hours for kids through the library, virtual museum tours by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and services from the Department of Mental Health for those who may be feeling stressed, depressed, or anxious during this difficult time.

### 27. What should you do if you have respiratory symptoms or fever?

If you are mildly sick with fever and cough, stay home for at least seven days AND until 72 hours after being fever free and symptoms have improved. Call your doctor if you are concerned and/or your symptoms worsen. Individuals who are elderly, have underlying health conditions, or are pregnant should consider contacting their providers earlier when they are sick. If you must leave home while you are sick to seek medical care, do not use public transportation. Try to always stay at least six feet from others in your home, wear a facemask if you are around others, and wash your hands thoroughly and often. Also, clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces, like doorknobs and counters daily. For more guidance, read: [“Home Care Instructions for People with Respiratory Symptoms.”](#)

If you have COVID-19, follow the [“Home Isolation Instructions for People with Coronavirus-2019 \(COVID-19\) Infections.”](#)

People in your household, your intimate partners, and caregivers as well as people who were within 6 feet of you for more than 10 minutes while you had symptoms, are considered to be your “close contacts.” Because these close contacts have been exposed, it is possible that they will get COVID-19. All of your close contacts should self-quarantine even if they feel well because it can take 2– 14 days for them to show symptoms. See the [“Home Quarantine Guidance for Those Exposed to COVID-19.”](#)

### 28. What else can you do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?

As we face the increased spread of COVID-19, Public Health is calling on every person and every organization to do their part to help slow its spread. In addition to the social distancing measures required in the Safer at Home Order, Public Health continues to recommend that everyone in the county adopt the following protective measures, to protect themselves, their families, and the people who are most vulnerable to infection.

- Avoid non-essential travel.



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- If you are mildly sick, stay home for at least seven days and until 72 hours after being fever-free. Call your doctor if you are concerned and/or your symptoms worsen. Individuals who are elderly, have underlying health conditions or pregnant should consider contacting their providers earlier when they are sick.
- Exclude employees and visitors with any fever and/or respiratory infection symptoms and from all schools, businesses, and work-related activities.
- Follow all social distancing recommendations issued by Public Health.

Additional recommendations, including tailored recommendations for different organizations, are posted at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/).

