

COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

1. What are the rules concerning travel into Los Angeles County?

As of December 29th, 2020, a new Health Officer Order (HOO) requires travelers coming into Los Angeles County from outside the Southern California Region to self-quarantine at home or at some other residence for 10 days after they get here. This means people arriving in the county must stay at home (or at a hotel or dorm room or other residence) without leaving. During that time, they must avoid all in-person contact with people who are not part of their household. It also requires that arriving travelers check themselves for any symptoms of COVID-19 illness for a full 14 days from arrival, to be sure that they are not sick and do not pose a risk of spreading COVID-19.

2. Who does the Order apply to?

The Order applies to most travelers:

- The Order **does** apply whether a traveler enters by car, train, bus, plane, or any other means of transportation.
- The Order **does** apply whether the traveler is a Los Angeles County resident coming home or a visitor from somewhere else in the US or from another country.
- The Order **does** apply whether or not the traveler has experienced any signs of illness or has any knowledge of being exposed to COVID-19 before or during their travels.

3. Who is exempt from the Order?

While the Order applies to most travelers, it does not apply to all:

- The Order **does not** apply to people coming to Los Angeles County from within the Southern California Region. The region includes Imperial, Inyo, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties, as well as Los Angeles County. People coming into LA County from any of these counties do not have to quarantine.
- The Order **does not** apply to people entering the County for the sole purpose of doing essential work. This includes:
 - Licensed healthcare professionals and people who work at acute care hospitals.
 - For example, a traveling nurse coming to Los Angeles to provide care at a local hospital would not have to quarantine.
 - People coming here to perform essential governmental functions.
 - For example, an education expert brought here to work with a school district could be defined as an essential worker by that school district.
 - For a complete list of who the state defines as an **essential worker**, go to: [Essential workforce - Coronavirus COVID-19 Response \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/essential-workforce-Coronavirus-COVID-19.aspx)
- The Order does not apply to people who are traveling through Los Angeles County and not staying overnight.
 - For example, someone landing at LAX who immediately rents a car to drive to Santa Barbara does not have to quarantine in Los Angeles County.

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- There are also people who **are not exempt** from the Order but can only leave their residence to go to work.
 - This could include people coming to LA to work for a private company that does essential, critical infrastructure work and has a critical staff shortage.
 - For example, a team brought here to fill in at a power plant that was short-staffed due to a COVID-19 outbreak, could be allowed to leave their hotel to travel to the plant, but would not be permitted to go anywhere else.

4. Is the quarantine period a recommendation or a requirement? Does it have the force of law?

This Order, like other Health Officer Orders, has the force of law. The 10-day quarantine period is NOT just a suggestion – it is a requirement.

5. Why are these new restrictions needed?

You need to understand two things to understand the new Order:

- First, Los Angeles County is currently experiencing its highest ever levels of new COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths. This has created a very dangerous situation in our hospitals, which must have enough beds for new COVID-19 patients and other sick people, and enough beds in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) to care for the sickest of patients. We have past the point at which hospitals can assure that there is an ICU bed for everyone who needs one. In fact, this applies to the whole Southern California Region, so Los Angeles hospitals can't send patients to Riverside or Orange or San Bernardino County when beds run short here.
- Second, travel involves risk.
 - It brings people in contact with people outside their household when they take a ride share or a cab to get to the airport or bus or train station, when they are at the airport or at a highway rest-stop, when they go to a car rental office, a bus station bathroom, or a train station ticket office. All of these contacts pose the risk of spreading the virus.
 - It may bring people here from places where rules about social gatherings are lax and where they may have been in crowded bars or clubs where the virus spread unchecked. If they have been visiting outside the US, they may have picked up new strains of the COVID-19 virus that pose new risks for us.

Travel is important to many Los Angeles residents, but under current conditions, a quarantine period is the only way to assure it doesn't bring deadly new risks to the County. In fact, the best way to get to a time when travel will be safe, is to stay home.

6. Where can I get more information about the HOO and what it requires?

- The text of the Health Officer's Order can be found at:
http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_SaferatHome_Surge_Response.pdf

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- State regulations, which generally match the HOO, can be found at: <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/#regional-stay-home-order>
- Details about quarantine can be found at: ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine
- A full list of symptoms of COVID-19 can be found at: ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare