



County of Sacramento

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Question – Stay at Home or Place of Residence Updated March 19, 2020

Note that these FAQs will continue to be updated. Please check back for updates and clarifications.

When does this Health Order become effective?

This Order becomes effective at 11:59 pm on Thursday, March 19, 2020.

What areas does this Order apply to?

This Order is in effect in all of Sacramento County.

In addition, similar orders are in effect in Yolo County, Yuba County, Sutter County, Santa Clara County, Santa Cruz County, Sonoma County, Solano County, San Francisco City/County, San Mateo County, Contra Costa County, Alameda County, Monterey County, the City of Berkeley and more.

What kinds of businesses are considered essential, according to the Public Health Order?

The Public Health Order lists the following essential businesses:

1. Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure;
2. Grocery stores, certified farmers' markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other non-grocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences;
3. Agriculture, food, and beverage cultivation, processing, and distribution, including but not limited to, farming, ranching, fishing, dairies, creameries, wineries and breweries in order to preserve inventory and production (not for retail business);
4. Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals;

5. Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
6. Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities;
7. Banks and related financial institutions;
8. Hardware stores;
9. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses;
10. Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
11. Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, provided that social distancing of six-feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible;
12. Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;
13. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free food services to students or members of the public may continue to do so under this Order on the condition that the food is provided to students or members of the public on a pick-up and take-away basis only. Schools and other entities that provide food services under this exemption shall not permit the food to be eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site;
14. Businesses that supply products needed for people to work from home;
15. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with the support or supplies necessary to operate;
16. Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences;
17. Airlines, taxis, and other private transportation providers providing transportation services necessary for Essential Activities and other purposes expressly authorized in this Order;
18. Home-based care for seniors, adults, or children;
19. Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
20. Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities;
21. Childcare facilities providing services that enable employees exempted in this Order to work as permitted. To the extent possible, childcare facilities must operate under the following mandatory conditions:
 1. Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer (“stable” means that the same 12 or fewer children are in the same group each day).
 2. Children shall not change from one group to another.
 3. If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
 4. Childcare providers shall remain solely with one group of children.

What happens if I don’t comply with this Order?

This is a legally enforceable order issued under California law. It is a crime to violate this Order, and you may be punished by a fine or imprisonment for doing so.

Is this Health Order mandatory or is it just guidance?

This Order is mandatory, and all persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply if they do not fall within the exemptions that are specified in the Order.

Am I allowed to leave my home while this Order is in effect?

The intent of this Order is to ensure that people remain in their residences and minimize social interactions outside of their immediate family unit. However, you may leave your residence for reasons specified in the Order. These reasons include ensuring the health and safety of yourself and your family, engaging in outdoor activity that does not involve close contact with other people, obtaining services and supplies for yourself and your family, and to perform employment functions that are permissible under the Order.

I operate a food facility-- what practices should I follow to keep my patrons safe?

Follow the best practices for allowable food facility operations. The National Restaurant Association has a [great resource page](#). Consult the [Sacramento County Environmental Management Department's website](#) for additional up to date information.

How long will this Order be in effect?

The Order is effective until 11:59 pm on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. However, the public health situation is changing rapidly. As the situation develops, the Health Officer will extend or modify this Order as necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19 to the maximum extent possible.

What are the employment functions that are permissible under the Order?

The Order identifies an extensive list of "essential businesses." The employees of these businesses may continue to work outside of their residences so that the businesses may continue to offer their goods and services. Employees of non-essential businesses may report to work to maintain what the Order defines as "minimum basic operations," which are the operations necessary to maintain the value of the business's inventory and to provide for the business's security. Additionally, government employees who are designated as essential by their government employer may continue to work outside their residence. Any employees who work outside their residence should maintain social distancing of six feet from any other person whenever possible.

Does this Order require that I shut down my business facility?

The Order identifies an extensive list of "essential businesses" that may continue to serve the public in person during the term of this Order. The Order allows non-essential businesses to maintain what the Order defines as "minimum basic operations," which are the operations necessary to maintain the value of the business's inventory, to provide for the business's security, and to ensure that employees can effectively work from home.

Does the Order allow me to leave the County?

The Order allows travel out of the County only to perform “essential activities,” operate “essential businesses,” or to maintain “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order.

What happens if I leave Sacramento County to go on a planned vacation?

The Order requires that you shelter in your place of residence. If you leave Sacramento County for vacation or another reason, that is not an essential purpose exempt under the Order, then you may not be permitted to return to your residence. Traveling runs the risk of spreading the virus to other areas and exposing new populations.

Will this order prevent companies working on vaccines and testing for COVID-19 from continuing to do that work?

No. The Order specifically excludes all healthcare related functions, including not just hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers, but also all of the companies that supply them with goods and services.

Can I continue to use public transit?

Public transit will continue to operate on a limited basis. Public transit can only be used to perform “essential activities,” to get to and from work to operate “essential businesses,” or to maintain “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order. People riding public transit must comply with Social Distancing Requirements as defined in Section 10 of the Order.

Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue to operate?

If they provide essential services as described in the order, then yes they can and should continue providing those services. This would include non-profits operating food pantries, providing housing for homeless residents, and many, many other critical services.

Can I get my prescription drugs or other health care supplies?

Yes. Pharmacies, healthcare supply stores, and healthcare facilities are allowed to operate.

I work for the government - Can I continue to go to work?

Government employees can continue to go to work if they are designated as essential employees by their employer. Each government is responsible for determining which of its workers are essential.

I work for a company that provides products and services that the public needs to access critical services. Is my company being shut down?

No. Most employees will need to work from home, however anyone who must work on sight to maintain “Essential Infrastructure” for the community as described in the order, or maintain “Minimum Necessary Operations” may continue to work in the workplace, so long as they are maintaining social distancing.

What should I do if I’m feeling sick?

Unless you are experiencing a medical emergency, call your doctor, nurse hotline, or urgent care center first before going to the hospital. Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are experiencing a medical emergency.

Can I still order the things I need online and have them delivered to my residence?

Yes, the Order identifies businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences as “essential businesses” that may continue to operate.

Does this Order require that schools shut down?

This Order requires that all schools stop holding classes at physical locations within the County. However, schools may provide distance learning to their students. Employees of schools may go to work for the purpose of providing distance learning to their students. Schools can also continue to offer students free and reduced price lunches, which many schools are doing.

Will my daycare be shut down?

Childcare facilities may only operate if they enable employees exempt by this Order to continue working as permitted and only under certain conditions. Among these conditions, children must be cared for in groups of 12 or fewer, groups of children may not mix with each other, and providers may not circulate between groups.

Can grocery stores, farmers markets, and other food retailers remain open?

Yes. Grocery stores, certified farmers’ markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and similar food retail establishments are encouraged to remain open to provide food and pet supplies to the public. When visiting these establishments, please help retailers maintain six feet minimum distance between patrons, including by providing ample space while shopping and waiting in line.

I become anxious when cooped up in my house. Am I allowed to go to a park or on a hike?

Yes. Spending time outside improves mood and wellbeing, and is particularly beneficial to children. You can go for walks, go to the park, and engage in other similar activities, but should

maintain social distance (i.e. be more than 6 feet away from persons who are not part of your household) when on walks and in parks to avoid spread of the virus.

Should I stock up on food, necessities like toilet paper, and on medicines?

No. You will continue to be able to purchase these items whenever you need them, as stores selling necessary items like grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores will remain open. Please continue to buy normal quantities of these items on the same schedule you normally do.

Can I play team sports or go to the gym?

No. Instead, get exercise by taking a walk, going for a jog, or riding your bike. But, maintain a social distance of at least six feet from people who are not members of your household when doing so.

Why is the County Health Officer issuing an order that shuts down so many businesses in my community?

The Health Officer of Sacramento County has been closely monitoring the rapidly accelerating situation with COVID-19 and it is clear that if we do not take very strong and aggressive action to slow down the spread of the disease, our hospitals and particularly our intensive care units will be overwhelmed with patients. Sacramento County Public Health is taking this action to save the lives of the many higher-risk people in our community who are particularly susceptible to severe illness from COVID-19, and may die if we do not act now to slow the spread and make sure our hospitals do not get overwhelmed with a flood of patients over a short period of time.

How will I get food and medicines I need if I must “stay at home or at my place of residence”?

The Order specifically allows people to leave their home to buy food, purchase medicine, and purchase other necessary items. It also directs businesses selling those items to remain open, and allows employees of those businesses to keep working and to ensure those businesses are operating.

I don't cook - how can I purchase meals?

Restaurants, cafes, food trucks, and similar establishments may remain open to supply meals to the public via delivery and carryout. You can also purchase prepared foods at grocery stores, supermarkets, certified farmers' markets, convenience stores, and other such food retailers.

Can I dine out?

No. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food to the public are encouraged to stay open, but only to provide delivery and carry out. Patrons will not be permitted to dine or congregate in restaurants, bars, and similar establishments.

How can I access free or reduced price meals for myself or my family?

Schools, soup kitchens, food banks, and other entities that provide free or reduced priced food goods or meals to students or other members of the public are encouraged to continue providing these services. However, food provided by these establishments to the public may not be eaten on the premises but must instead be delivered or taken away for consumption.

What if my plumbing gets stopped up? How will I access those sorts of services?

Call your plumber. This Order allows service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators to keep working and providing their services to the public. To obtain supplies for a DIY solution, you can also visit your hardware store, which is allowed to stay open under this Order.