

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Safer at Home Order Overview

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 (physical) distancing measures are necessary to slow the rate of new COVID-19 cases and protect both the public and the healthcare system.

The “Safer at Home” Health Officer Order (Order) was updated on April 10, 2020, and is now in effect until May 15, 2020. The Order has new social (physical) distancing requirements for individuals and businesses. The 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.

The Los Angeles County Safer at Home Order 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 the “Safer at Home” Order?

The “Safer at Home” Order is a legal order issued by the Los Angeles County Health Officer to help slow the spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and protect the most vulnerable members of our community. The Order requires all businesses in the Los Angeles County Health Jurisdiction to cease in-person operations and close to the public unless those businesses defined as an Essential Business by the Order. Essential Businesses are by 11:59 p.m. on April 15, 2020, required to post, provide employees with, and implement a Social (Physical) Distancing Protocol for each of its facilities that are frequented by the public or employees. The Order also continues to prohibit all indoor and outdoor public and private gatherings and events and extends the temporary closure of all public beaches, trails, and their points of access within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction. People can leave their homes to shop at Essential Businesses, so long as they practice social (physical) distancing and wear a cloth face covering while visiting Essential Businesses. People can also continue to engage in outdoor activities, such as jogging, walking, or biking.

2. 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. Some people with COVID-19 virus do not have symptoms or have mild symptoms, which means that they can spread it to others without knowing that they are infected. 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.

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People who are infected with COVID-19 can have mild to severe respiratory illness, with fever and cough that can develop into difficulty breathing. It can lead to serious illness and has caused over 200 deaths in Los Angeles County. 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.

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

If you are mildly sick with fever and cough, you need to stay home for a) at least 3 days (72 hours) after recovery, which means when your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications and there is improvement in your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND b) at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Call your doctor if you are concerned and/or you have new or worsening symptoms. Individuals who are elderly, have underlying health conditions, or are pregnant should consider contacting their providers earlier when they are sick. For more guidance, read [Home Care Instructions for People with Respiratory Symptoms](#).

If you are confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [Home Isolation Instructions for People with Coronavirus-2019 \(COVID-19\) Infections](#) AND tell all of your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Close contacts include all household members, any intimate contact, and all individuals who were within 6 feet of you for more than 10 minutes, within 48 hours before your symptoms began until your isolation period ends. In addition, anyone who had contact with your body fluids and/or secretions (such as were coughed on/sneezed on, shared utensils or saliva or provided care to you without wearing protective equipment) needs to be in quarantine. Give your close contacts the [Home Quarantine Guidance for Those Exposed to COVID-19](#).

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

The order was issued to slow the spread of COVID-19 so that the healthcare delivery system would not be overwhelmed by extremely ill people who need high levels of care in our hospitals. Based on scientific evidence and best practices, and in the absence of a specific vaccine for, or treatment to prevent COVID-19, limiting the chances for close contact between persons is the best and only way to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the public.

5. Why does the Order 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 making the need for social (physical) distancing even more important. Groups of people had been crowding the beaches and trails without practicing social (physical) distancing. Therefore, it was necessary to temporarily close to the public 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.

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

This Order is currently in effect through May 15, 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. The Governor issued a shelter in place order. Do I still need to comply with the Safer at Home Health Officer Order?

All County residents must comply with the County's Order, the Governor's Order and any applicable laws and regulations. While the two Orders are largely consistent, if there is a difference between the Orders, you must comply with the stricter Order.

10. What happens if I don't comply with this order?

Public Health trusts that residents will voluntarily follow the Order to protect loved ones, other residents, and our community. However, if you don't follow the Order, you can be fined, imprisoned, or both.

11. What are some ideas for activities I 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 physical 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.

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What does the Safer at Home Health Officer Order say?

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

Everyone must help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by practicing social (physical) 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, Healthcare Operation, or 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:

- Stay home (stay unexposed and do not expose others)
- Only go out for essential supplies or services or if they are an essential worker
- Stay six feet or more away from others
- Use a cloth face covering when they are a) in contact with other non-household members and b) when accessing essential businesses and services
- Not gather in groups

The April 10th Safer at Home Health Officer Order specifically:

- Prohibits 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 by the Order. It specifically requires the temporary closure of all indoor malls and shopping centers, all swap meets and flea markets, and all indoor and outdoor playgrounds.
- Requires Essential Businesses that are not required to close to the public to practice social (physical) distancing, to follow infection control precautions, and to implement and post a Social (physical) Distancing Protocol.
- The Social (physical) Distancing Protocol requires Essential Businesses to provide all employees whose duties require contact with other employees and/or the public with a cloth face covering for them to use while performing duties that involve contact with others and require members of the public who enter the facility to wear an appropriate face covering while in the facility.
- Requires all restaurants to only offer food via delivery service, via pick-up for takeout dining, or 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 within the County of Los Angeles Public Health Jurisdiction.

This Order doesn't prevent individuals or members of the same household or living unit from engaging in outdoor activities, such as walking, jogging, or biking, at sites that are not closed to the public as long as everyone practices social (physical) distancing.

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

13. 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, and which may remain open to meet the needs of residents as long as everyone practices social (physical) distancing to the extent possible and the business implements a Social (physical) Distancing Protocol. See the Safer at Home FAQs for Businesses on the Public Health website for details.

14. 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 ten (10) or fewer. "Stable" means the same ten (10) or fewer children are in the same group each day. Children cannot change from one group to another. (Note: This changed from 12 to ten (10) or fewer to comply with the Governor's Order.)
- If more than one group of children is cared for at one 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.

15. How can I get more information about the Safer at Home Order and the required social (physical) 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. 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.
- Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 website, at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus for a variety of resources that address infection control and social (physical) distancing guidance such as press releases, FAQs, cleaning recommendations; and guidance documents.
- Call 2-1-1 (LA County Information Line) if you have questions about the COVID-19 pandemic. 211 can provide information on nonprofit and social (physical) services such as food pantries, homeless shelters, rental assistance, mortgage assistance, and utility assistance.