

Shelter in Place Order Extended Through May 31

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 4/29/20

Shelter in Place Explained

What does the May 4 Order do?

This new Order replaces the March 31 Shelter-in-Place Order as of May 4, 2020. This updated Order requires that most people continue sheltering in their place of residence through May 31, 2020. It allows some businesses to open that could not operate under the March 31 Order and some low-risk activities to resume.

You are still allowed to participate in “essential activities” or to work for an “essential business” if it is not possible for you to work from home. This means that you are allowed to leave your home for specified reasons—like to make sure you have the necessities of life (discussed more below) such as getting food and medical supplies, or to perform work for an essential business that you cannot complete from your home. You are also allowed to go outside to take care of a pet or for exercise so long as you don’t congregate in a group and maintain at least six feet of distance between you and other people who aren’t part of your family or living unit. The new Order also allows “outdoor businesses” to open their facilities to the public.

When does this Order take effect? When does it end?

As of 11:59 pm on May 3, 2020, everyone in the County must strictly follow this new Order. This new Order will be in effect until May 31, 2020, but that date could be changed by the County Health Officer.

Why aren’t more businesses allowed to open?

Thanks to the collective effort and sacrifice of the 7 million residents across the Bay Area, we have made progress in slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus, ensuring our hospitals are not overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases and saving lives. This progress allows us to ease some restrictions to allow lower-risk outdoor businesses and outdoor activities to resume, so long as they strictly comply with social distancing requirements and other protections in the Order.

The Order also adds certain business activities to the essential business list, including construction and commercial real estate transactions—that have become critical as we gradually head into a period of

expanded economic activity in which more space to accommodate increased social distancing will be necessary.

However, at this stage of the pandemic, we need to maintain most of the restrictions of shelter-in-place so that we do not lose the progress we have achieved. Lifting too many restrictions too soon could easily lead to a large surge in cases and result in avoidable hospitalizations and deaths, and it may also lead to longer-term economic harms.

Is this mandatory or is it just guidance?

It is mandatory. This Order is a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply, and it is a crime (a misdemeanor) not to follow the Order.

I work for an Essential Business, as defined by the new Order. Do I need to have a letter from my employer or other documentation to travel?

No. You do not need to carry official documentation (and the County does not issue any) demonstrating that you are exempt under the new Order. But be prepared to explain if requested by law enforcement why your travel is allowable under the Order.

What does it mean to “shelter in place?”

The term “shelter in place” means to stay in your home and not leave except for one of the exceptions listed in the Order (discussed more below).

I heard that there is a statewide shelter-in-place order. Do I still need to comply with Contra Costa County’s Order?

Yes. In addition to the statewide order, the County Health Officer’s Order remains in effect. All residents must comply with the restrictions in both the County and State Orders. If the restrictions in the two orders are different, you must comply with the stricter of the two orders.

What is the difference between “sheltering in place” and “social distancing”?

Sheltering in place is a more rigorous form of social distancing.

Sheltering in place means you:

- Must stay at home
- Can only leave your home for “essential activities” or “outdoor activities,” to work for an “essential business” or “outdoor business,” to provide or access “essential governmental functions,” to perform “minimum basic operations” for your employer, or for “essential travel,” as those terms are defined in the new Order (you can also see the FAQs for details)
- Cannot host or attend any gatherings

In addition, you should also maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other people who are not in your household; wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds each time (or use hand sanitizer); cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve (not into your hands); wear a face covering when out in public, as recommended in the Health Officer’s April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not

recommended for you (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and stay home if you are sick.

Daily Activities

Can I leave home to visit friends or family members in another household or living unit if there is no urgent need or I am not performing an essential activity?

No. For your safety as well as their safety, you are not allowed to visit friends or family members outside your own household. We need to help each other fight the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home.

Can common recreational spaces in apartment buildings (like gyms and roof decks) stay open?

No. For apartment dwellers, the Order's shelter-in-place requirements for the "household or living unit" means their own apartment unit, not the building or complex as a whole. Common recreational spaces shared with others in the apartment building or complex, like apartment gyms, barbecue areas, and roof decks, must be closed like any other public recreational space that contains high-touch equipment or encourages gathering.

What about common areas in apartments, like shared laundry rooms, that residents need to access for sanitation needs?

Apartment residents should be allowed to access facilities that are required for household cleaning and sanitation needs. Owners of apartment buildings must enhance cleaning of high-touch surfaces in these areas, and residents must observe all social distancing requirements in the Order, including: maintaining at least 6 feet of separation from other people who are not part of their own household; washing their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds each time (or using hand sanitizer); coughing or sneezing into a tissue or sleeve (not their hands); wearing a face covering when out in public, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not recommended (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding using the shared facility if they are sick.

Can I still get my mail and deliveries?

Yes. Mail and delivery services may continue to operate under the Order.

Can I still order the things I need online from businesses and have them delivered to my home?

Yes. The Order allows you to go online, purchase items, and have them delivered to your home.

Can I go out to do laundry or to have my laundry done?

Yes.

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

No. You will continue to be able to purchase these items. Stores selling necessary items like grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores will stay open. Please continue to buy normal quantities of

these items on the same schedule you normally follow. This will ensure that there is enough for everyone.

What if I can't get out of the home? How can I get supplies and food?

Please contact friends, family, or others you know who can provide support. They are allowed to pick up the items you need. You can also order food and other supplies and have them delivered to your home. If you think you might be eligible for meals on wheels, call 925-313-6310 for more information.

Can I leave home to go to my church, synagogue, or mosque?

No. For your safety as well as the safety of your fellow worshippers, we need to help each other fight the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home. Places of worship may offer remote access to services, such as by email, video streaming, or teleconference.

How can I buy non-essential products if stores are closed?

Most items can be ordered online and delivered to your home, and many other non-essential items may be available from retailers who primarily sell essential items.

Can I go to a bar, nightclub, or theater?

No. Entertainment venues are not allowed to operate.

Can I go to a restaurant, café, coffee or tea shop, ice cream shop, or other foodservice location?

Yes, but only to pick up food. You cannot dine, eat, or drink in or around the facility. These facilities can also deliver.

Can I walk my dog?

Yes, but you cannot use dog parks. Be sure that you distance yourself at least six feet from others who are not part of your household. Also note that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidance advising that you should treat pets as you would your human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside your household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.

Can I take my dog to the dog park?

No. Dog parks are areas that encourage people to gather together, and are required to close.

Can I go to a vet or pet hospital if my pet is sick?

Yes. Please call first to determine if the vet has any restrictions in place.

Can I take my dog to a groomer?

Veterinary clinics and similar animal healthcare facilities may provide grooming services, and you may use these services as necessary to maintain the health of your animals. Other grooming services are not allowed to operate.

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

Restaurants, cafes, food trucks, and similar establishments are encouraged to 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.

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 or meals to the public are encouraged to continue providing these services. You must pick up and take away the food or have it brought to you. Do not eat on the premises.

Can I carry out a court-ordered visit with my kids?

Yes. The Order exempts travel by court order or law enforcement.

Can I still access necessary items in my self-storage unit?

Self-storage facilities are not essential businesses but that they can maintain minimum business operations and allow people to access their units to the extent they are accessing them for medical or other essential needs.

I need to take out a loan or send cash – what kinds of financial institutions are allowed to be open?

In addition to banks and credit unions, money remittance services, financing services at pawn shops, check cashing services, money lenders, and similar financial institutions can operate. For businesses that mix a financial service component with a retail or other component, only the financial service can be open.

Healthcare Operations

What should I do if I'm sick? If I or a family member need immediate medical attention, can I leave home to go to the doctor or hospital?

If you are feeling sick, first call your doctor, a nurse hotline, or an urgent care center before going to the hospital. If you are having a medical emergency, please call 911 or go to your closest emergency room. Do not go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an actual emergency. You can and should seek medical advice if you or a family member is sick. If it is not an emergency, please contact your primary care provider to determine next steps. Also, you can check online resources to help you assess symptoms if you are worried about whether you or a loved one has COVID-19. You should check www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/ for more information.

Can I get my prescriptions or other healthcare needs? Can I leave home to go to the pharmacy to get my prescription filled?

Yes. Drug stores and other medical supply stores are allowed and encouraged to operate. When possible, you should have prescription medicines and healthcare supplies delivered to your home.

I'm a medical provider – am I allowed to remain open for preventive and non-urgent care?

Yes, if you are a medical provider your office is encouraged to remain open. Under the Order, all medical services, including routine and preventive care, are considered essential. This includes, but is not limited to, mental health services, immunizations, well-woman exams, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. With the exception of dental services, preventive and non-urgent care should generally not be deferred (please see the following FAQ regarding dental services). Many visits involve exams or procedures that must be done in person, but practitioners are encouraged to conduct appointments remotely via phone or telemedicine when it is appropriate and feasible to do so.

I run a dental facility – should I continue to provide cleanings and non-urgent dental services to patients?

No. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dental facilities should postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits, and prioritize urgent and emergency visits. If you are a patient, you should contact your dentist to inquire about whether a dental service is urgent or should be deferred. Dentists should refer to guidance that is available on the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html.

Can I continue to use reflexology, massage therapy, chiropractic, or similar services?

You may continue to use these services if your healthcare provider has determined that they are medically necessary for you.

Can I still go to my mental health appointments?

Yes, mental health appointments can continue. Patients should consult with their practitioners to determine whether it is appropriate and feasible to conduct individual mental health appointments remotely.

Can I still go to my substance abuse treatment groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous) or other group counseling sessions?

All participants in group counseling services must attend meetings remotely if they are equipped to do so. Groups should make accommodations for remote support to the maximum extent feasible. If remote participation is not feasible or advisable under the circumstances, participation may occur in person provided that there is compliance with the social distancing requirements set forth in the Order, including maintaining at least 6 foot distance between individuals and capping group size to reduce in-person interactions.

What mental health resources are available for people experiencing distress?

Visit the [Contra Costa Health Services Coronavirus Page](#) for mental health and behavioral health resources.

Can and should I donate blood if I am healthy?

Yes, blood banks, blood donation centers, and blood drives are exempt healthcare operations. If you are healthy and do not have COVID-19 symptoms, you are encouraged to donate. The need for adequate blood donations from healthy people is critical.

Should cafeterias in hospitals be closed?

No. Hospital cafeterias fall within the exemption for healthcare facilities and may remain open. Hospital cafeterias must be structured to ensure six-foot minimum distancing between non-related individuals picking up food from or eating in the facility. Hospital cafeterias should increase cleaning and sanitization to minimize risk of exposure and follow other Social Distancing Requirements specified in the Order to the maximum extent feasible. Cafeterias in all other facilities must follow the requirements in the Order – specifically, food can be carried out or delivered, but cannot be eaten in the cafeteria.

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

No. The Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care, including companies working on vaccines and testing for COVID-19.

I work in a hospital or medical clinic, but I'm not sure I'm essential. Should I continue to work? What if I'm over 60?

Yes. All employees of hospitals, clinics, and other organizations that provide healthcare, provide services to healthcare organizations, provide needed supplies to healthcare organizations, or otherwise maintain healthcare operations of all kinds may continue working.

The Health Order does not advise or encourage health care workers over 60 to stop reporting to work.

Caretaking and Education

Can I visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or other residential care facility?

You may visit a hospital or other healthcare facility only for the purpose of obtaining health care services and supplies. Non-essential visitations are barred. Do not visit a nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or residential care facility other than for the purpose of securing care. People over 60 years of age are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Can I leave home to care for my elderly parents or friends who require assistance to care for themselves? Or a friend or family member who has disabilities?

Yes. Be extremely cautious when providing care to vulnerable people and ensure that you protect them and yourself by following social distancing guidelines such as washing hands before and after, using hand sanitizer, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance when possible, coughing or sneezing into a tissue, wearing a face covering, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not recommended (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance).

What do I do about my kids? I have to work.

The Order allows childcare establishments, summer camps, and schools or recreational institutions to provide childcare or supervision to enable you to work for an essential business or outdoor businesses,

perform minimum basic operations for your business, or work as an essential governmental employee. You may also employ a nanny or babysitter to provide home-based care for your kids.

Does this Order require that schools shut down?

This Order requires that schools generally stop holding classes at physical locations within the County. However, schools are encouraged to provide distance learning to their students and to provide free and reduced-price lunches for takeaway or by delivery. The Order also allows schools to provide care or supervision of children to enable personnel to work for businesses allowed to operate under this Order or work as essential governmental employees, provided that: (1) children are in stable groups of 12 or fewer; (2) children do not change from one group to another; (3) multiple groups in a facility stay in separate rooms; and (4) providers or educators remain solely with one group.

Are daycare facilities allowed to operate?

Yes, childcare establishments (as well as summer camps and other educational or recreational institutions) may open to provide care or supervision to children of all ages to enable people to work at businesses allowed to operate under this Order or work as essential governmental employees. Childcare facilities must comply with the following mandatory conditions in the Order to the extent possible:

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.

I am a nanny. Will I get in trouble if I go to work?

You won’t get in trouble if you go to work. The Order allows nannies and childcare providers caring for a child in the child’s own home to continue working.

Businesses

What are “Essential Businesses”?

The following excerpt from the Order lists the “Essential Businesses”:

- i. Healthcare Operations and businesses that operate, maintain, or repair Essential Infrastructure;
- ii. Grocery stores, certified farmers’ markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of unprepared food, canned food, dry goods, non-alcoholic beverages, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, as well as hygienic products and household consumer products necessary for personal hygiene or the habitability, sanitation, or operation of residences. The businesses included in this subparagraph (ii) include establishments that sell multiple categories

- of products provided that they sell a significant amount of essential products identified in this subparagraph, such as liquor stores that also sell a significant amount of food.
- iii. Food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing;
 - iv. Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals;
 - v. Construction, but only as permitted under the State Shelter Order and only pursuant to the Construction Safety Protocols listed in Appendices B1 and B2 and incorporated into the Order by reference. Public works projects shall also be subject to Appendices B1 and B2, except if other protocols are specified by the Health Officer;
 - vi. Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
 - vii. Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair (including, but not limited to, for cars, trucks, motorcycles and motorized scooters), and automotive dealerships, but only for the purpose of providing auto-supply and auto-repair services. This subparagraph (vii) does not restrict the on-line purchase of automobiles if they are delivered to a residence or Essential Business;
 - viii. Bicycle repair and supply shops;
 - ix. Banks and related financial institutions;
 - x. Service providers that enable real estate transactions (including rentals, leases, and home sales), including, but not limited to, real estate agents, escrow agents, notaries, and title companies, provided that appointments and other residential viewings must only occur virtually or, if a virtual viewing is not feasible, by appointment with no more than two visitors at a time residing within the same household or living unit and one individual showing the unit (except that in person visits are not allowed when the occupant is present in the residence);
 - xi. Hardware stores;
 - xii. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the habitability, sanitation, and/or operation of residences and Essential Businesses;
 - xiii. Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
 - xiv. Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, or as allowed under subparagraph xxvi, provided that social distancing of six feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible;
 - xv. Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;
 - xvi. 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;
 - xvii. Funeral home providers, mortuaries, cemeteries, and crematoriums, to the extent necessary for the transport, preparation, or processing of bodies or remains;
 - xviii. Businesses that supply other Essential Businesses with the support or supplies necessary to operate, but only to the extent that they support or supply these Essential Businesses. This exemption shall not be used as a basis for engaging in sales to the general public from retail storefronts;

- xix. Businesses that have the primary function of shipping or delivering groceries, food, or other goods directly to residences or businesses. This exemption shall not be used to allow for manufacturing or assembly of non-essential products or for other functions besides those necessary to the delivery operation;
- xx. Airlines, taxis, rental car companies, rideshare services (including shared bicycles and scooters), and other private transportation providers providing transportation services necessary for Essential Activities and other purposes expressly authorized in this Order;
- xxi. Home-based care for seniors, adults, children, and pets;
- xxii. Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
- xxiii. Professional services, such as legal, notary, or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with non-elective, legally required activities or in relation to death or incapacity;
- xxiv. Services to assist individuals in finding employment with Essential Businesses;
- xxv. Moving services that facilitate residential or commercial moves that are allowed under this Order; and
- xxvi. Childcare establishments, summer camps, and other educational or recreational institutions or programs providing care or supervision for children of all ages that enable owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors for Essential Businesses, Essential Governmental Functions, Outdoor Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations to work as allowed under this Order. To the extent possible, these operations must comply with the following conditions:
 1. They must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer children (“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 at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
 4. Providers or educators shall remain solely with one group of children.
 5. The Health Officer will carefully monitor the changing public health situation as well as any changes to the State Shelter Order. In the event that the State relaxes restrictions on childcare and related institutions and programs, the Health Officer will consider whether to similarly relax the restrictions imposed by this Order.

Will all business offices and stores be required to close?

No. “Essential businesses” and “outdoor businesses” may keep their facilities open and continue providing their services and products to the public. Employees may leave home to go to these jobs. But all businesses, including essential and outdoor ones, are required to maximize the number of employees working from home and bring in only those employees who can’t carry out their job duties from home. Businesses that are not “essential businesses” or “outdoor businesses,” as those terms are defined in the Order, must cease all activities at their facilities within the County, except to provide minimum basic operations, such as maintaining the value of a business’s inventory, keeping the business site safe and secure, ensuring that employees are able to work remotely, or providing for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses. Minimum basic operations does not include providing curbside pickup. Employees may otherwise work from home.

What if my business is not considered an essential business or outdoor business? Does this Order require that I shut down my business facility?

Yes, it does, except for the following “Minimum Basic Operations,” which are defined in the following excerpt from section 16.g of the Order:

- i. The minimum necessary activities to maintain and protect the value of the business’s inventory and facilities; ensure security, safety, and sanitation; process payroll and employee benefits; provide for the delivery of existing inventory directly to residences or businesses; and related functions. For clarity, this section does not permit businesses to provide curbside pickup to customers.
- ii. The minimum necessary activities to facilitate owners, employees, and contractors of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences, and to ensure that the business can deliver its service remotely.

Other than to maintain minimum basic operations, your employees can only work remotely from their residences. Any employees who are onsite must strictly follow the Order’s social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another (unless incompatible with the job duty), frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as recommended in the Health Officer’s April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

You must also prepare, post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the Order) for any facility where you are carrying out minimum basic operations, and you must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee.

I work for Apple, Google, or another large technology company that provides products and services that the public needs to access critical services. Is my company being completely shut down?

No. But most employees of these companies need to work from home. The only employees of these companies who can go to work are: (i) employees who are needed to maintain the minimum basic operations described in the Order; or (ii) employees who are needed to work onsite to operate, maintain, or repair Essential Infrastructure (i.e., essential global, national, and local infrastructure for internet, computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services for the community) and who cannot perform their work duties from home.

Any employees who are onsite must strictly follow the Order’s social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another (unless incompatible with the job duty), frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as recommended in the Health Officer’s April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>). Any business that is carrying out minimum basic operations at a facility in the County must also prepare,

post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the Order) and must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee.

Does the Order require that businesses stop work that is necessary to our healthcare system?

No. The Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care, including hospitals, clinics, COVID-19 testing locations, dentists, pharmacies, blood banks and blood drives, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, home healthcare services providers, mental health providers, and veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals.

Can my company tend to its labs under this Order?

It depends. Your lab may operate only if it performs work that is exempted in the Order. Otherwise, you and your employees are allowed to perform only minimum basic operations onsite at your workplace, and must strictly comply with the Order's social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

You must also prepare, post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the Order) for any facility where you are carrying out minimum basic operations, and you must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee. Other than that, employees cannot be onsite at your lab locations.

Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue operating?

Yes, if they are an essential business or outdoor business, as described in the Order, or if they contract with a governmental entity and provide an essential governmental function. Non-profits that are allowed to continue operating include, for instance, food pantries, organizations providing housing for homeless residents, and organizations providing other critical services. Other non-profit organizations cannot continue operating their facilities, except to provide minimum basic operations, such as maintaining the value of inventory, keeping the site safe and secure, providing for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses, or ensuring that employees are able to work remotely. All employees may also work remotely from their residences.

Unless closer contact is necessary for their work, all employees must strictly comply with the Order's social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](#), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social

interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

What if some of the work my business does at its facility is essential and some is non-essential?

Businesses that include an Essential Business component at their facilities alongside non-essential components must “scale down” their in-person operations to the Essential Business component only. For instance, if 20% of manufacturing capacity in your business is devoted to essential products, and 80% of capacity is devoted to non-essential products, you can only operate at 20% capacity. The exception to this rule is that retail storefronts that are allowed to stay open under the Order do not need to scale down and can keep their entire retail storefronts open.

What if part, but not all, of my retail business is an "essential business" as that term is defined in the Order?

For retail businesses that fall within section 16.f.ii of the Order (stores that sell food, hygienic items, and certain household consumer products), if at least 25% of the total floor area your store regularly uses for product sales is currently occupied by the products identified in section 16.f.ii, then the store may remain open to the public. For stores that fall within the other categories of essential businesses, if more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales is currently occupied by products associated with that essential business category, then the store may remain open to the public. The section of the Order stating that businesses with both essential and non-essential components must "scale down their operations to the Essential Business component only" does not apply to retail stores.

I operate a “big box store” that sells some clothing in addition to groceries and personal hygiene products. Can I keep open the part of my store that sells clothing?

Yes. If your store sells a significant amount of groceries and hygiene products, you can keep your entire store open.

Can I operate my liquor store?

You may keep your liquor store open if it also sells a significant amount of products like food, and household cleaning and personal hygiene items. Specifically, at least 25% of the total floor area your store regularly uses for product sales must be occupied by products identified in section 16.f.ii of the order, like food and personal hygiene items.

I operate a store that mainly sells non-essential goods, but also sells a small amount of essential goods like food and hygiene products. Can I continue to sell products to customers at my storefront?

No. If you do not sell a significant amount of goods like food, hygiene, or cleaning products, you cannot keep your storefront open. Your store can deliver items directly to customers’ residences. Other than that, you can only maintain minimum basic operations, such as store security and safeguarding your inventory.

What should I do if my employer makes me to go to work?

Many businesses are not allowed to operate under this Order. Essential businesses, as defined in the Order, are allowed (and encouraged) to continue operating. Outdoor businesses, as defined in the Order, are also allowed to operate. If your work is not an essential or outdoor business, you are not allowed to go to work and your employer cannot make you go except for limited minimum basic operations such as maintaining the value of a business's inventory, keeping the business site safe and secure, or ensuring that employees are able to work remotely. The Order does not prohibit anyone from working from home. Your employer can require you to work from home – and you can do so – if your work allows it.

Can bike repair shops continue to operate?

Yes, bike repair shops are treated as an essential business (the same as auto repair shops) because they are necessary to facilitate essential travel.

Can my company continue to provide janitorial services to businesses?

Yes, janitorial services are allowed because they are necessary for health and sanitation.

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 other food retail establishments selling food items and non-alcoholic drinks are encouraged to stay open to provide food items and pet supplies to the public. Section 6 of the Order requires all businesses allowed to operate under the Order to follow any industry-specific requirements issued by the Health Officer related to COVID-19. The Health Officer's requirements for essential retail and grocery stores, essential workers, and food facilities can be found here. When visiting these places, you must help the retailer maintain Social Distancing Requirements, including while you are shopping and standing in line.

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

If you serve food, you must do so by takeaway or delivery only. You must also post, implement, and distribute a Social Distancing Protocol, which has been updated to require that face coverings are worn by all employees and patrons in your facility (except those for whom face coverings are not recommended, like very young children).

For more information, visit Contra Costa's COVID-19 [Resources for Businesses](#) page.

What if I have a cafeteria at my worksite. Can it continue to operate to serve workers who are doing work exempted in the Order?

The cafeteria can operate like other food facilities. It can serve food to the remaining employees, so long as the employees take the food away and do not eat it in the cafeteria. The cafeteria must strictly follow the social distancing requirements in the Order.

I am in the business of manufacturing food that I supply to grocery stores and other food retailers. Am I required to shut down?

No. Businesses that supply food goods and prepared meals to grocery stores and other food retailers are essential and may continue operating.

Can warehouses and distribution centers that supply essential businesses stay open?

Yes, but only to the extent they support or supply those essential businesses. Warehouses and distribution centers should minimize the number of employees onsite and strictly comply with all social distancing requirements in the Order.

I operate a large retail store selling largely non-essential items, but we also sell some goods that essential businesses need to operate. Can I keep my retail store open as an essential business that supplies other essential businesses?

No. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with the support or supplies they need to operate can remain open only for the purpose of supplying those essential businesses. They cannot stay open to keep making sales to the general public from retail storefronts.

What if I want to go to work at a physical location in the County and I'm not sick?

Unless your work is exempted in the Order, you cannot go to work at a physical location in the County even if you want to. You can work from home for any business if your employer allows it and your work can be done from home.

I operate a business that is required to close—can my business deliver things to people's homes?

Yes, non-essential businesses may maintain minimum basic operations. This includes making deliveries of existing inventory to people's homes.

My business provides critical services and products for the federal government that we are required to provide on a time-certain basis--can we continue to manufacture these products or perform these services?

Employees and contractors of any governmental entity may continue to provide the services and products if the governmental entity determines that they are necessary to carry out an essential governmental function.

Can gardening and landscaping services continue?

Yes. Arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar service professionals can operate as outdoor businesses, as that term is defined in the Order, but they must strictly comply with social distancing requirements.

Can home service workers continue to provide their services?

Home service workers can keep providing services in homes if they are essential to health, safety, sanitation, or the necessary operation of the home. This includes plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other services needed to maintain a safe and sanitary home. Home construction and repair work is also allowed, as is home-based care for children, adults, seniors, and pets.

What if I have a service or equipment emergency at my home, such as with plumbing or electricity?

Service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators can keep working and providing services to the public that are necessary to maintain a livable, sanitary, and functional household. You can call your building manager or one of these service providers, or you can also visit your hardware store to assist with making your own repairs.

Can my pool maintenance company come to my house or business?

Yes, so long as the service is necessary to maintain safety and sanitation. Allowable operations include routine maintenance work like cleaning, chemical balancing and adjustments, and filtration (necessary to, for instance, prevent pool algae from blooming) and safety-oriented repairs.

Can real estate agents show residences or commercial properties in person?

Generally, no. Real estate agents, escrow agents, and other service providers that facilitate real estate transactions like home sales, apartment rentals, and sale of commercial properties are essential workers, but all appointments and viewings must happen virtually (via video or livestream). If a virtual viewing is not possible, then a single photographer or videographer is permitted to visit the property once to take photographs and/or video. This should be done at a time when the occupant is not present in the residence. Only if these options are not possible, then in-person showings can occur by appointment with no more than two visitors at a time from the same household, and only one agent showing the property. In-person showings or walk-throughs are not allowed when the occupant is present in the residence. Commercial viewings should be limited to the minimum number of persons possible.

Can notaries public continue to operate?

Yes.

Can title insurance companies continue to operate?

Yes.

Are cannabis dispensaries and growers allowed to operate?

Medical dispensaries can dispense under healthcare industry exemptions. Suppliers to medical dispensaries and licensed medical growers can operate as well. Non-medical cultivation, supply, and dispensing of cannabis are prohibited, with the exception of deliveries directly to residences.

Dispensaries with a mixed clientele of both medical and non-medical customers can do in-person business only with medical customers.

Can recreational cannabis be purchased on a “take-out” basis?

No.

Can I have cannabis delivered to my home?

Yes. The Order allows businesses to deliver products to people’s residences.

What is an outdoor business? What requirements apply to them?

An outdoor business is a business that was primarily operating outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. For retail businesses, this means that more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales was outdoors prior to March 16, 2020. The Order provides some examples of common outdoor businesses, such as plant nurseries, agricultural operations, and landscaping and gardening services. Outdoor businesses, including outdoor retail businesses, must conduct *all* business and transactions involving members of the public in outdoor spaces. This means that if an outdoor business includes an indoor facility or indoor portion of its retail space that typically serves the public, that indoor facility or indoor portion of retail space must be closed to the public and all sales must take place outdoors. Employees may continue to use the indoor space as necessary and may bring products outdoors for the public. Outdoor businesses must comply with the Order's social distancing requirements and post a social distancing protocol.

Are auto dealerships now allowed to serve customers from their facilities under this new Order?

Only auto dealerships that qualify as "outdoor business," as that term is defined in the Order, may serve retail customers from their facilities. (All auto dealerships may provide supply and repair services).

Can auto dealerships that are not "outdoor businesses" sell cars online and deliver them to people's homes?

Yes, but they cannot sell or lease cars in person.

Can gun shops selling firearms and ammunition open their storefronts?

No. Gun shops are not essential businesses under the Order. The Order allows delivery of inventory directly to customers at their residences in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, but gun shops may not make sales from their storefronts.

I work in a cemetery—can I go to work?

Yes, cemeteries are essential infrastructure.

Are funeral home providers and mortuaries allowed to continue operating?

Yes, funeral home providers and mortuaries may continue operating to the extent necessary to the transport, preparation, or processing of remains. This means that any employee necessary for the transport, preparation and/or processing of a body may continue to report to these facilities to conduct their work.

Can my business keep manufacturing and selling beauty products?

No. Businesses engaged in the retail sale of hygienic products and household consumer products necessary for personal hygiene, as well as businesses that supply those retailers, are essential businesses. Beauty products do not fall within the exemption. A business that makes and sells beauty products can arrange for shipping or delivery of its existing inventory directly to residences or businesses as part of allowable minimum basic operations, but it cannot continue manufacturing these products within the County.

My business manufactures, supplies, or repairs cell phones. Can it stay open?

Yes. If your business is primarily engaged in supply or repair of cell phones or other telecommunications devices, then it is essential and may continue to operate under the Order for that purpose.

Can plant nurseries stay open?

Plant nurseries that qualify as outdoor businesses under the Order may open. An outdoor business is a business that was primarily operating outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. For retail businesses, this means that more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales was outdoors prior to March 16, 2020. Outdoor businesses, including plant nurseries, must conduct *all* business and transactions involving members of the public outdoors. This means that if a nursery includes an indoor facility or indoor portion of its retail space that typically serves the public, that indoor facility or indoor portion of retail space must be closed to the public, although employees may bring products outdoors.

The Order states that convenience stores, liquor stores, and other similar types of establishments can stay open if a “significant” portion of the inventory they offer to the public consists of food, hygienic products, or household products necessary for the sanitation, habitability, and operation of a residence. What is a “significant” portion?

These storefronts may stay open if at least 25% of the total floor area used regularly for product sales is currently being used for food, hygienic products, and/or household consumer products necessary for personal hygiene or the habitability, sanitation, or operation of residences.

Are car washes allowed to continue operating under the Order? What if they are no-touch car washes?

Car washes that qualify as outdoor businesses under the Order may open. An outdoor business is a business that operated primarily outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. Outdoor businesses must conduct *all* business and transactions involving members of the public outdoors. This means that if a car wash includes an indoor facility that typically serves the public, that indoor facility must be closed to the public.

Construction and Essential Infrastructure

Are commercial and residential construction projects allowed?

The Order allows all construction projects that are permitted under the March 19, 2020 Order of the California State Public Health Officer (the “State Shelter Order”), as long as the projects comply with the Construction Safety Protocols listed in Appendices B1 and B2 of the Order. Once they comply with the Construction Safety Protocols, construction sites do not *also* need to post a Social Distancing Protocol.

I work for an essential infrastructure organization—can I leave home to go to work?

Yes, if the project you are working on is immediately necessary to the maintenance, operation, or repair of Essential Infrastructure. Essential Infrastructure means airports, utilities (including water, sewer, gas,

and electrical), oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste facilities (including collection, removal, disposal, recycling, and processing facilities), cemeteries, mortuaries, crematoriums, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for internet, computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services).

What recycling businesses are allowed to operate under the Order?

All recycling facilities may operate, including but not limited to those providing for recycling of beverage containers, scrap metal, used oil, construction and demolition debris, and any other materials that can be, or are required to be, recycled by the State of California.

Can composting facilities operate?

Yes. Composting facilities may operate and composting activities may take place.

Can quarries continue to operate under the Order?

Yes. All quarries must complete, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol and provide all employees with a copy of the Protocol. They must also strictly comply with Social Distancing Requirements set forth in the Order.

My business installs distributed solar, storage, and/or electric vehicle charging systems – can it continue to operate?

Yes, this is permissible construction activity and must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendix B of the Order. Businesses may also operate to manufacture distributed energy resource components, like solar panels.

I have County Ordinance Code violations on my property and have been ordered by the County (or have agreed with the County) to correct the violation. Can the abatement work be done while the Shelter in Place Order is in effect? Will I be penalized if the work isn't done?

Yes. This work must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendices B1 and B2 of the Order or the Social Distancing Protocols in Appendix A, as applicable.

Can I conduct site assessment, remediation, or mitigation work that I have been directed to perform by the County Department of Environmental Health under a remedial action agreement?

Yes. This work must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendices B1 and B2 of the Order or the Social Distancing Protocols in Appendix A, as applicable.

Does the Order allow for state-mandated testing, operator inspections, and repairs of underground storage tanks?

Yes. State-mandated tests and operator inspections of underground storage tanks are essential activities and should continue under the Order. Repairs necessary to maintain the safety of underground storage tank systems and activities to respond to alarms and address unauthorized releases are also essential and should continue. All such work must be conducted in accordance with the Order, including adhering to social distancing requirements.

Government Operations

Do government agencies providing essential governmental functions need to complete and implement Social Distancing Protocols?

Governmental entities are strongly encouraged to complete Social Distancing Protocols for each of their facilities that remain open for any essential governmental functions, though the Order does not require them to do so. Just as with private businesses, Social Distancing Protocols assist governments in implementing risk reduction measures identified by the Health Officer, ensure that government agency staff and community members accessing government services are protected, and inform government employees and members of the public visiting the facilities about their respective responsibilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Each department or agency continuing to perform essential governmental functions at the workplace is encouraged to complete and implement a Social Distancing Protocol for its facilities, post the protocol where it is publicly visible, and distribute the protocol to its employees.

Is the local government shutting down?

No. Essential government functions will continue, including first responders, emergency management personnel, emergency dispatchers, and law enforcement. Other government functions or offices may be subject to reduced schedules or may be closed as part of the effort to fight the spread of COVID-19. Each government agency identifies the services that qualify as essential governmental functions and designates the personnel who will continue providing those functions. Information about availability of County services is regularly updated at contracosta.ca.gov.

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

As a government employee, you can continue to go to work if your employer designates you as an essential employee. Each government agency is responsible for determining which of its workers are essential workers.

Can I get a building permit or building inspection from the Planning Department for my construction project, or make sure my business gets the Fire Department’s fire safety and hazmat inspection that I need to keep operating?

Contact the relevant city or county agency to determine if it is still providing the service you need as an essential governmental function.

Travel and Recreation

I don’t have a car. Can I ride the bus or train, or can I get a ride in my favorite ride-share/on-demand car service or a taxi?

Yes, but public transit, ride-share services, or any other way of traveling can only be used for Essential Travel, which means:

- i. Travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Businesses, Minimum Basic Operations, Outdoor Activities, and Outdoor Businesses.
- ii. Travel to care for any elderly, minors, dependents, or persons with disabilities.
- iii. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
- iv. Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the County.
- v. Travel required by law enforcement or court order.
- vi. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the County. Individuals are strongly encouraged to verify that their transportation out of the County remains available and functional prior to commencing such travel.
- vii. Travel to manage after-death arrangements and burial.
- viii. Travel to arrange for shelter or avoid homelessness.
- ix. Travel to avoid domestic violence or child abuse.
- x. Travel for parental custody arrangements.
- xi. Travel to a place to temporarily reside in a residence or other facility to avoid potentially exposing others to COVID-19, such as a hotel or other facility provided by a governmental authority for such purposes.

When you are on public transit, you must follow the Order's social distancing requirements to the greatest extent feasible, including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household or living unit; frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer; covering coughs and sneezes; wearing a face covering when out in public, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 guidance, except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for you (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

When you use ride-share services for essential travel, keep in mind that you should avoid as much as possible being in close quarters in a vehicle that has been used by lots of other people.

Can I use a bike from a bike-share service?

Yes, you can use shared bikes and scooters for essential travel, such as commuting to work as an essential employee. But keep in mind that shared bikes and scooters are not routinely sanitized. Take precautions, including bringing sanitization wipes, not touching your face while on the bike or scooter, and washing your hands for at least 20 seconds immediately after.

Am I allowed to commute into or out of the County for work or daily activities?

Yes, but only to perform essential activities or outdoor activities, to maintain essential government functions, to operate an essential business or outdoor business, or to perform minimum basic operations at a non-essential business, as those terms are defined in the Order. You can also leave to go back home or engage in other essential travel. Otherwise, the answer is no because that puts you and others in the community at risk. Keep in mind that Health Officers in neighboring counties have issued the same or similar shelter-in-place orders.

If I'm outside the county travelling for vacation or business, am I allowed to come home?

Yes, the Order allows you to come home.

I'm staying overnight in County but live elsewhere. Can I go home?

Yes, you can leave the County to return home.

I rent out a room using an online platform (like Airbnb or VRBO) that facilitates short-term rentals. Can I continue renting out my room?

The Order allows you to continue offering your room for rent. However, be advised that the Order strictly limits people's travel and activities to "essential travel" and "essential activities," as those terms are defined in the Order. People are not allowed, for instance, to travel into the County to visit friends or sightsee.

The Order prohibits non-essential travel on foot or bike—can I still go on a walk or take a bike ride?

Yes. The Order allows you to go outside for exercise activities like walking and running, as long as you strictly follow social distancing requirements including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes wearing a face covering when out in public, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for you (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

I get anxious when I'm cooped up inside. Am I allowed to go on a hike? Can I go to a County park or open space?

Yes. Spending time outside improves mood and well-being, and is particularly beneficial to children. You can go for walks, go to the park, and enjoy other outdoor activities. But operators of parks, beaches, and other open spaces may restrict entry, close certain areas, or close the whole facility altogether if the Health Officer orders those measures to reduce crowding and limit risk of COVID-19 exposure.

While you're on a hike or enjoying an open space area, you must strictly follow social distancing requirements including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household or living unit, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering when out in public, as recommended in the Health Officer's April 17, 2020 [guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html), except if a face covering is not necessarily recommended for you (e.g., for children 6 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

Can I leave home to work out?

If you will be outdoors and not in close contact with other people or using equipment that other people outside your household have touched, yes. Otherwise, no. Fitness centers, gyms, fitness equipment at parks, climbing walls, swimming pools, and other recreational and fitness facilities with equipment that lots of people touch or areas where people gather close together are closed.

Can I take my kids to the playground?

No. Recreational areas with equipment that lots of people touch or areas where people gather close together, like playgrounds, picnic areas, barbecue areas, and dog parks, must be closed and you cannot use them while the Order is in effect. You can take your kids to the park or other areas to run around in open spaces, or bring your own sports equipment to an open space as long as it is used only by members of your own household and not shared with other people.

Can golf courses reopen under the new Order?

Outdoor recreation facilities that are not expressly prohibited by the Order, such as golf courses, skate parks, and athletic fields, are permitted to open only if they comply with any restrictions on access and use that are established by the Health Officer, another government agency, or other entity that manages such area to reduce crowding and risk of transmission of COVID-19. **At this time, the California State Public Health Officer is not permitting golf courses to be open.**

Note: These FAQs will continue to be updated. Please check back for updates and clarifications. For more information and update, please visit us at cchealth.org/coronavirus.