



PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 Administration Drive · Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone (707) 565-2431 · Fax (707) 565-3778

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 17, 2020

Contact: (707) 565-3040

publicaffairs@sonoma-county.org

Sonoma County Public Health Officer Orders County Residents to Shelter in Place

SANTA ROSA, CA -- The Sonoma County Health Officer has issued a Health Order directing residents to shelter in place effective at midnight (12:00am) on Wednesday March 18, 2020. This Health Order will be in place for three weeks until April 7, 2020. The Health Order limits activity, travel and business functions to only the most basic and essential needs.

This recent Order comes after the County received two additional cases of local transmission from coronavirus (COVID-19) yesterday, and two cases over the past weekend.

All individuals currently living within the County are ordered to shelter at their homes. To the extent individuals are using shared or outdoor spaces, they must at all times as reasonably possible maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person when they are outside their residence.

The guidance comes after substantial input from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and from international health experts.

Social distancing is scientifically-proven to be one of the most effective methods to slow the transmission of communicable disease, such as COVID-19.

“In light of the recent cases of local transmission of COVID-19 in the County, we are taking proactive action to curtail the spread of the virus,” said Dr. Sundari Mase, Sonoma County Interim Health Officer.

“We urge our residents not to panic, however, please take this Order seriously, as COVID-19 is a real threat to our community at this time. Please adhere to the social distancing of six feet from another person as well as continue to maintain good hygiene practices.”

Please Remember

- Keep a distance of at least six feet away from another person
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Refrain from touching your face
- Use hand sanitizer
- Covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands)
- Regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands

This Order was issued in response to the six cases of COVID-19 in the County, as well as at least 258 confirmed cases and at least three deaths in the seven Bay Area jurisdictions who also jointly issued similar health orders yesterday.

This also comes in response to the significant and increasing number of suspected cases of community transmission and likely further significant increases in transmission. The order defines essential activities as necessary for the health and safety for individuals and their families.

Essential businesses are those that provide food, shelter, social services and homeless services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals; fresh and non-perishable food retailers (including convenience stores); pharmacies; child care facilities; gas stations; banks; laundry businesses and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of a residence.

Health care operations are also essential businesses and include hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, dentists, pharmacies, licensed cannabis businesses, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, home health care services providers, mental health providers, or any related and/or ancillary health care services.

Health care operations also includes veterinary care and all health care services provided to animals. This does not include fitness and exercise gyms and similar facilities. Licensed cannabis retail facilities/dispensaries shall operate only for the purpose of providing medical cannabis, and only via curbside pickup or delivery.

Essential businesses also include: 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);

In addition, health care, law and safety, and essential government functions will continue under the recommended action.

Campgrounds, hotels and motels are considered shelters and therefore an essential service and will remain open.

The goal is to limit groups congregating together in a way that could further spread the coronavirus.

This Order comes days after Governor Gavin Newsom ordered adults, age 65 and older, to remain at home.

The violation of any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat to public health and will be enforced by law enforcement.

The Health Officer will continue to assess the quickly evolving situation and may modify or extend this Order, or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19.

For the latest information about the coronavirus in Sonoma County and advice from health experts on prevention and care, visit www.SoCoEmergency.org, call 2-1-1, or text your zip code to 898-211. Updates and videos are also on the County of Sonoma Facebook page and Twitter feed @countyofsonoma.

###