

COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions Concerning State and Local Orders

On March 19, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-33-20, **ordering all individuals living in the State of California to stay home or at their place of residence**, except as needed to maintain continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors. Additionally, County of Riverside Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser has issued multiple orders affecting the community, including the school closure Orders of March 13, 2020 and March 17, 2020, and the Order prohibiting gatherings in excess of 10 persons of March 16, 2020.

Below please find information from the State and the County of Riverside in response to frequently asked questions about the recent Orders related to COVID-19:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>

When does the stay at home order go into effect and how long will we stay home? What areas of the state are covered?

The Governor's Executive Order went into effect on Thursday, March 19, 2020. The order is in place until further notice. It covers the whole state of California, and it exempts activity as needed to maintain continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors, critical government services, schools, childcare, and construction, including housing construction.

What can I do? What's open?

Essential services will remain open, such as:

- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food: Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Banks
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Essential state and local government functions will also remain open, including law enforcement and offices that provide government programs and services.

What's closed?

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios
- Public events and gatherings
- Convention Centers
- Hair and nail salons

Can the Order be changed?

Yes. The State Public Health Officer may issue orders as needed – for example if more information emerges about the public health situation – and issue new orders and directives as conditions warrant.

How does this order interact with local orders to shelter in place? Does it supersede them?

This is a statewide order.

Business and taxes

What businesses and organizations are exempt?

Businesses and organizations that provide critical infrastructure for the state are exempted, including health care and public health, public safety, food and agriculture and media. See the full list of exempt sectors here: <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

I run/work at an exempted business or organization, as defined by the Order. Do I need to get an official letter of authorization from the state to operate?

No. If your business or organization is in the list of exempt sectors, it may still operate. You do not need to obtain any specific authorization from the state to do so.

Do I need to pay my taxes?

Yes, state and federal deadlines have been extended. All state taxes are now due on July 15.

Schools and childcare

My school is providing free grab-and-go meals and childcare. Are those still open?

Yes. It is essential to keep children fed and educated. School employees should report to work and focus on distance learning, school meals, and childcare/supervision.

Are daycares still open? Can my babysitter still come to the house?

Yes. Daycares are still open, but only for children of parents working in essential sectors. Daycare centers that remain open must employ heightened cleaning and distancing requirements. Babysitters may also come to the house to care for minors of parents working in essential sectors.

Health care and helping sick relatives

What if I need to visit a health care provider?

If you are feeling sick with flu-like symptoms, please first call your doctor, a nurse hotline, or an urgent care center.

If you need to go to the hospital, call ahead so they can prepare for your arrival. If you need to call 911, tell the 911 operator the exact symptoms you are experiencing so the ambulance provider can prepare to treat you safely.

What about routine, elective or non-urgent medical appointments?

Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning, and elective procedures must/should be cancelled or rescheduled. If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.

Contact your health care provider to see what services they are providing.

May I still go out to get my prescriptions?

Yes. You may leave their homes to obtain prescriptions or get medical cannabis from a licensed cannabis retailer.

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 sure that you protect them and yourself by following social distancing guidelines such as washing hands before and after, using hand sanitizer, maintaining at least six feet of distance when possible, and coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue and then washing your hands. If you have early signs of a cold, please stay away from your older loved ones.

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

Generally, no. There are limited exceptions, such as if you are going to the hospital with a minor who is under 18 or someone who is developmentally disabled and needs assistance. For most other situations, the order prohibits non-necessary visitation to these kinds of facilities except at the end-of-life. This is difficult, but necessary to protect hospital staff and other patients.

Outdoor recreation

Can I still exercise? Take my kids to the park for fresh air? Take a walk around the block? Walk my dog?

Yes. So long as you are maintaining a safe social distance of six feet from people who aren't part of your household, it is ok to go outside for exercise, a walk or fresh air. Gyms are closed.

Does this order affect hiking? State Parks?

No, you may still go outside so long as you practice social distancing of six feet. California State Parks have closed indoor facilities and campgrounds, but depending on the park, some trails and outdoor spaces are still open. Spending time outdoors can lead to several overall health and wellness benefits like lessening anxiety, boosting creativity and getting your vitamin D. If you decide to make a trip, remember to keep social distance.

For information on National Parks, please visit their website:

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/public-health-update.htm>

Pets

Can I walk my dog? Take my pet to the vet?

You can walk your dog. You can go to the vet or pet hospital if your pet is sick. Remember to distance yourself at least six feet from other pets and owners.

I work for an Essential Business, as defined by the State's list of "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers". Do I need to have a letter from my employer or other documentation verifying this?

No. You do not need to carry official documentation demonstrating that you are exempt.

What is the difference between the "stay at home order" and "social distancing"?

"Stay at home" is a more rigorous form of social distancing. It involves staying in your home unless you need to leave for "essential activities" or to work for an "essential business," or for "essential travel". Under the "stay at home" Executive Order you cannot host or attend any gatherings. You should also practice "social distancing" by maintaining a 6 foot distance from other people as much as possible, washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds each time (or use hand sanitizer), frequently disinfecting high-touch surfaces, and staying home if you are sick.

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

No. For your safety as well as their safety, we need to help each other fight the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home.

Can I still get my mail and deliveries?

Yes. You will still be able to get mail and other deliveries at your home.

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

Yes. Businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences are "essential businesses" that may continue to operate.

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

Yes. But we encourage you to practice the California Department of Public Health and Riverside University Health System's tips for social distancing while doing these activities.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/cdph-guidance-gatherings-covid19-transmission-prevention-03-16-2020.pdf>

<https://vimeo.com/398932609>

I'm a medical provider – am I allowed to remain open for non-essential services?

Healthcare providers are considered “essential workers” by the State and can remain open.

<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

However, non-essential medical care like teeth cleaning, cosmetic, or elective procedures should be cancelled or rescheduled. If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.

What if I need to get healthcare from my medical provider?

You can still get your health needs addressed. Contact your health care provider by phone to see if they are providing regular services. Some services, especially elective and cosmetic procedures, should be postponed or canceled. If you are feeling sick, please first call your doctor, a nurse hotline, or an urgent care center. Do not go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an actual emergency.

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. Non-essential services should be cancelled or rescheduled.

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. If in-person visits are necessary, we always encourage you to practice social distancing.

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

Substance abuse treatment groups and group counseling services are considered “essential” and may remain open. However, if it possible to attend these groups remotely, we encourage that method to the maximum extent feasible. If remote participation is not feasible or advisable under the circumstances, participation may occur in person if there is compliance with the social distancing requirements and the Health Officer's Order limiting gatherings to 10 or fewer persons.

What mental health resources are available for people experiencing distress?

The following resources are available to help people who may be experiencing distress or heightened anxiety right now:

Review the Riverside University Health System's reference for maintaining mental health and well-being: "Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks"

<https://www.rcdmh.org/Portals/0/PDF/Coronavirus%20Help%20Sheet.pdf?ver=2020-03-09-074707-173>

Call 2-1-1 referrals for health and social services

Behavioral Health CARES Line: (800) 706-7500

Substance Use CARES Line: (800) 499-3008

24/7 Mental Health Urgent Care:

- Riverside (951) 509-2499
- Palm Springs (442) 268-7000
- Perris (951) 349-4195

Riverside University Health System - Public Health

www.rivcoph.org/ or call 2-1-1 for more information

If you are experiencing an emergency, please call 911 immediately.

Should cafeterias in hospitals be closed?

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

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 remain 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 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. Do not go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an actual emergency. But 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 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for more information.

Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are experiencing a medical emergency.

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, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue. Do not provide care if you yourself are ill, even with a mask.

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. Do not visit if you are ill, even with a mask.

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 can pick up any of your needs. 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 (951) 683-7151 to start the eligibility intake process.

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. Faith based services should be provided through streaming or other technology.

I become anxious when cooped up in my house. Am I allowed to go to a park or on a hike? Can I travel 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, hike public trails, and engage in other similar activities, but you should maintain social distance (more than six feet away from persons who are not part of your household) to avoid spread of the virus.

Can I take my kids to the park and can we use playgrounds?

Yes. Both the Executive Order and the Health Officer's Orders allow you to engage in outdoor activities, provided that you maintain adequate social distancing. While we encourage use of parks, we discourage the use of playgrounds because they include high-touch surfaces, and because it is typically not possible to maintain social distancing at playgrounds.

Can I leave home to exercise?

If you will be outdoors and not in close contact with other people, yes. Fitness centers, exercise gyms, recreational centers, tennis clubs, golf courses, and public/private shared pools are not allowed to operate.

I am a personal trainer. Can I continue to see my clients?

Not in person. You can continue offering services to your clients remotely.

Can I participate in or hold an exercise class outside if we stay in a group of less than 10 and will practice social distancing?

No. Public events and gatherings are not permitted under the Governor's Order.

Can I participate in recreational sports like basketball games or tennis matches?

Recreational sports, like basketball or tennis, being played on a court attached to a single-family home which is not shared by persons outside the residence may be used by the inhabitants of the home only. Public Events and gatherings, like recreational sports occurring in a public park or on a shared court as part of a hotel/apartment/housing community, are not permitted under the Governor's Order.

Can golf courses remain open?

No. Both public and private golf courses must be closed under the Governor's Order. However, golf course maintenance and landscaping are considered "essential" public works and can continue so that golf courses will be able to resume operations once the state and local orders are lifted.

Can private pools, like those in a gated housing development or apartment building, remain open?

No. Both public and privately-owned shared pools must be closed, including apartment pools, hotel pools and neighborhood pools. Pools attached to a single-family home and not shared by persons outside the residence are permitted to be used by the inhabitants of the home only.

Can I go shopping for things other than food/groceries?

Yes. Commercial retail stores that supply “essential sectors” including convenience stores, pet supply stores, auto supplies and repair, hardware and home improvement, and home appliance retailers are permitted. We recommend minimizing unnecessary trips and practicing social distancing at all time.

Can I go to a bar/nightclub/theater?

No. Entertainment venues, bars, and nightclubs must be closed pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order.

Can I go get my hair or nails done?

Hair and nail salons must be closed under the Governor’s Executive Order.

Are short-term rentals, vacation rentals, timeshares, hotels, motels and other short-term lodgings allowed to continue operating?

Yes, but only under very limited circumstances. The following uses are permitted:

1. Short-term lodging facilities (including short-term rentals, vacation rentals, timeshares, hotels, motels, and other short-term lodgings) which are used for COVID-19 mitigation and containment measures:
 - A. Lodging to protect the homeless population
 - B. Lodging for persons who have been displaced and cannot return to their residence because there is a person residing at the residence that must isolate or quarantine or is at a higher risk of severe illness
 - C. Lodging for persons who need to isolate or quarantine
2. Short-term lodging facilities (including short-term rentals, vacation rentals, timeshares, hotels, motels, and other short-term lodgings) which are used to house essential workers.

On March 30, 2020, the County of Riverside’s Health Officer and the Emergency Services Director issued an Amended Order concerning Short-Term Lodging Facilities. The Amended Order identifies that the Short-Term Lodging restrictions shall be in place effective immediately and will remain in effect until April 30, 2020, pending further Order of the Public Health Officer. A copy of this Order is available here:

https://rivcoph.org/Portals/0/Images/coronavirus/Riv-EOC_20200330_141451.pdf?ver=2020-03-30-152256-993×tamp=1585606981985

I run a short-term rental/hotel/motel and I have a guest already on the property. Do I have to send them home?

Guests who are already in the rental may stay until the original booking end date, but the booking may not be extended beyond the original date ending their stay unless they are: (1) homeless; (2) persons who have been displaced and cannot return to their residence because there is a person residing at the residence that must isolate or quarantine or is at a higher risk of severe illness; (3) persons who need to isolate or quarantine; or (4) essential workers.

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.

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. You may not eat on the premises.

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

Yes.

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 health people is critical.

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

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

QUESTIONS ABOUT BUSINESSES, EMPLOYMENT, AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Will all business offices and stores be required to close?

No. “Essential businesses” may keep their facilities open (and are encouraged to keep them open) to continue providing essential services and products to the public. Employees may leave home to go to these jobs.

Non-essential businesses may keep facilities open only to maintain minimum basic operations, such as maintaining the value of an inventory, keeping the site secure, or ensuring that employees are able to work remotely.

What are “Essential Businesses”?

The State Public Health Officer has designated a list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help state, local, tribal, and industry partners as they work to protect communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The full list can be found here:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

What if my business is not considered an Essential Business? Do I have to shut down my business facility?

You and your employees can perform “Minimum Basic Operations” at your workplace, so long as employees maintain six feet from one another to the greatest extent feasible. Minimum Basic Operations include maintaining the value of inventory, ensuring security, and ensuring that employees can work remotely. Other than to maintain “Minimum Basic Operations,” employees can only work remotely from their residences.

Are schools required to be shut down?

Yes. Under the Health Officer’s Order of March 17, 2020, all schools within the jurisdiction of the Public Health Officer of the County of Riverside including, but not limited to, all preschools, K-12 public, private and charter schools, community colleges, public, private, nonprofit, and for-profit colleges and universities are closed beginning March 16, 2020 and shall remain closed through April 30, 2020.

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 for takeaway or delivery or provide care and supervision of minors to support essential workforce.

Can my business expand a data center to ensure that we are able to maintain existing service levels during a period of increased demand?

Yes, this is permissible as construction to maintain the operation of essential infrastructure.

Will companies working on vaccines and testing for COVID-19 be permitted to continue to do that work?

Yes. The Executive Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care.

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. All suppliers of essential businesses are allowed (and encouraged) to continue operating. This includes businesses that supply food goods and prepared meals to grocery stores and other food retailers.

Does the Executive Order require that businesses stop work that is necessary to our health care system?

No. The Executive Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care.

Can my company continue construction on a health care facility?

Yes, any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care is considered “essential”.

My business principally manufactures, supplies, repairs or sells cell phones. Can it operate?

Yes. If your business is primarily engaged in supply, repair, or sale of cell phones or other telecommunications devices, then it is “essential” and may continue to operate.

Can landscaping services continue?

Yes. Landscaping services are “essential” public works as they are necessary to protect the safety, sanitation, or operation of essential businesses, such as weed abatement and other fire prevention, tree trimming to prevent a dangerous condition, or clearance of irrigation infrastructure.

Can I continue to have my pool serviced/repaired/cleaned?

Yes. Pool cleaning is considered an “essential” public work as it is necessary to protect safety and sanitation.

Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue operating?

If they provide “essential services” as outlined by the State’s guidance, then yes, they can and should continue providing those services. This would include non-profits operating food pantries, providing housing for homeless residents, daycare/childcare, and providing other critical services.

Can legal services allowed to continue operating, including lawyer referral services?

Yes. Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, are permitted as “essential” when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities and critical sector services. This includes businesses which directly support those professional services.

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

Your business can continue to operate its facility to carry out its essential business functions. You must maximize remote work and comply with social distancing requirements at the facility. The facility should not continue to carry out non-essential business functions.

I operate a “big box store” that sells some clothing in addition to groceries, electronics, and hardware. Do I need to shut down the part of my store that sells non-essential supplies?

No. You may keep your entire store open if it primarily sells essential goods and supplies like food and telecommunication supplies.

What if I have a cafeteria at my worksite? Can it continue to operate?

The cafeteria can operate like other food facilities. It can serve food to workers supporting an essential business, so long as the employees take the food away and do not eat it in the cafeteria. The cafeteria should follow the social distancing practices.

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.

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 entity is responsible for determining which of its workers are essential workers.

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?

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 Governor’s Order does allow essential workers over 60 to continue working, even though others in that age group may be directed to stay home.

What do I do about my kids? I must work.

If you work for an Essential Business, you can and should continue to work. Certain employers, schools, and community organizations will be providing daycare/childcare for employees of essential businesses. You may also employ a nanny or babysitter to provide home-based care for your kids.

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?

Yes, janitorial services are allowed as necessary to health and sanitation.

Are RV sales allowed to continue?

Yes. To the extent that RV sales are needed to provide a housing option during this COVID-19 crisis, RV sales should be considered “essential” and RV dealerships are encouraged to remain open and operational. Shopping for RV’s for a purely recreational use, however, is “non-essential” and should be postponed. Of course, we always continue to encourage both RV dealerships and their customers to practice social distancing.

Are RV parks considered an essential business?

Yes. RV Parks provide valuable and necessary housing options and are considered an “essential” business operation.

I am interested in making homemade cloth face coverings. Is this considered an “essential” business that I am allowed to operate? Will craft stores be considered “essential”?

Yes, cloth face coverings are recommended as one way to reduce exposure and transmission of COVID-19. Surgical and N-95 masks are needed to support the health care industry and First Responders but cloth face coverings may be utilized by the public. To the extent that they are selling supplies which are necessary for the creation of homemade cloth face coverings, stores selling fabric and/or craft supplies are also considered “essential”. Shopping for craft supplies or fabric for other NON-COVID-19-related purposes, however, is “non-essential” and should be postponed. Of course, we always continue to encourage both store employees and their customers to practice social distancing.

Can recycling centers remain open?

No.

What do I do if I have a complaint about price gouging on goods/services/supplies/repair services/hotels/housing or I’m being evicted?

Under Penal Code section 396, price gouging of goods or lodging or evictions under certain circumstances is illegal. If you have concerns or complaints about price gouging, you may contact your local law enforcement agency or to the County of Riverside Office of the District Attorney. More information about price gouging can be found on the Office of the District Attorney's website here: <https://rivcoda.org/community-info/news-media-archives/da-hestrin-issues-warning-to-price-gougers-during-the-current-state-of-emergency>

A violation of Penal Code section 396 is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for a period not exceeding one year, or by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment.

Are farm workers and agricultural related businesses considered “essential” under the Governor’s Order and allowed to keep working?

Yes. Farm workers are considered “essential” and are permitted to continue working. This includes all: farmers; ranchers; farm management companies associated with the planting, growing, harvesting and processing of crops; food and beverage processing; equipment dealerships serving farmers and ranchers; fuel companies; fuel delivery services; mobile and fixed mechanics; seed and nursery companies; companies that sell fertilizer and crop production products; livestock feed companies; and all related transportation companies that service the industries previously listed in this paragraph.

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 at least six feet minimum distance between patrons, including by providing ample space while shopping and waiting in line.

I operate a food truck/food cart/food stand in the County. Can I keep doing this?

Quick serve food operations, like food trucks/food carts/food stands are considered “essential” and allowed to continue to operate, subject to proper licensing of course. Staff and patrons should practice “social distancing” by maintaining a 6 foot distance from other people in line, washing hands regularly, and frequently disinfecting surfaces. Lines/crowds of more than 10 persons are not permitted and NO DINING IS PERMITTED at the site of the food truck/food cart/food stand.

If my child’s school is providing food or meals, can I leave home to go to the school to pick up the food or meals?

Yes.

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

Follow the Department of Environmental Health's "Coronavirus Prevention Guidelines for Food Facilities"

<https://www.rivcoeh.org/Portals/0/PDF/Foods/Coronavirus%20in%20Food%20Facilities%20IFB%20-%20FINAL.pdf?ver=2020-03-17-100722-260>

Also follow the Department of Environment Health's "Message to Restaurants Regarding Occupancy" <https://www.rivcoeh.org/Portals/0/PDF/Message-to-Food-Facilities-Regarding-Occupancy-2.pdf?ver=2020-03-23-091234-437>

Can warehouses and distribution centers that supply businesses that ship and deliver stay open?

Yes. Distribution centers are considered "essential" under the Governor's Executive Order.

Is a construction project permitted to begin or continue under the Executive Order?

Yes. Construction is considered an "essential function" under the Executive Order. Similarly, industries supporting the construction business, like those manufacturing windows or doors, are exempt.

I work for a solar company; can I keep doing installations?

Yes. Construction is considered an "essential function" under the Executive Order. Similarly, industries supporting the construction business, like solar companies, are exempt.

Can I operate a business that sells things that can be delivered to people's homes? Can I shift more of my business to a delivery model?

Deliveries can continue to be sent to people's homes, and you may adjust your business model accordingly.

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.

I work in a mortuary, funeral home, crematorium, or cemetery - can I go to work?

Yes.

Are daycare/childcare facilities allowed to operate?

Daycare/childcare facilities may operate, but only if they comply with the mandatory conditions set forth below and only to provide daycare to the children of essential employees. This includes employees of essential businesses, employees who are providing for minimum basic operations

of non-essential businesses, and governmental employees providing essential governmental functions.

To operate, daycare facilities must comply with 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.

Can home service workers continue to provide their services?

Home service workers may provide services to residences if essential to health, safety, sanitation, or the necessary operation of the residence. Generally, this will mean that plumbing, maintenance (to, for example, fix an interior or exterior water leak), pest control, or similar services necessary to maintain a safe and sanitary household are permissible. Purely cosmetic and other non-essential home services should be deferred to minimize risk of transmission. Home based childcare is also allowed.

I operate a mobile dog grooming business. Can I continue to serve my clients?

Yes. Mobile dog grooming is permitted under the Governor's Order as a business providing routine care to animals. Routine dog cleaning contributes to infection control. Of course, you are encouraged to practice social distancing when bringing your pets into your mobile dog groomer or to any other animal care service provider.

I operate a store that primarily sells non-essential goods, but that also sells a small fraction of essential goods like food, or products that allow people to work from home. Can I continue to sell products to customers at my storefront?

No. Your store may deliver items directly to customers' residences. Other than that, you may only maintain minimum basic operations, such as security and safeguarding of your inventory.

I operate a store that sold non-essential goods as of March 19, 2020. Can I now begin to sell essential goods, like food or toiletries, so that my store can stay open?

No.

Can notaries public continue to operate?

Yes.

Can title insurance companies continue to operate?

Yes.

Can home inspections continue?

Yes. Home inspectors are “essential workers” under the financial services sector of the State’s “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” guidelines.

Are cannabis dispensers and growers allowed to operate?

Yes. Cannabis retailers and growers are considered “essential” under health care and agriculture sectors of the State’s “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” guidelines.

Can pawn shops remain open as an “essential” business?

No.

Can auto dealerships sell cars online and deliver them to people’s homes?

Yes. Businesses are permitted to conduct online sales and to deliver products to people’s residences. In-person sales are not permitted except to essential businesses or essential workers that need vehicles to perform essential functions and services. For example, fleet operations are permitted to provide government with vehicles necessary to the COVID-19 emergency response. Auto dealers may, however, provide auto repair and maintenance services.

My retail shop is not exempt -- can we deliver existing stock to people’s homes?

Yes. Businesses are permitted to deliver products to people’s residences.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TRAVEL

Can I get a ride in my favorite ride share/on demand service or a taxi?

Yes. The Governor’s Order permits ride share services or taxis as “essential” components of the transportation sector of the State’s “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” guidelines. Keep in mind that being in close quarters in a vehicle that has been shared with many others should be avoided if possible.

Can I take public transport (bus, subway, train)?

Yes. The Governor’s Order permits mass transit as “essential” components of the transportation sector. When using public transportation, you should maintain at least 6 feet distance from one another (2 or 3 steps away), including if you are on the bus or on trains.

I am currently on vacation outside the County—am I allowed to return home?

Yes.

Was the deadline to get my REAL-ID extended?

Yes. The October 1, 2020 deadline for drivers to get a REAL ID has been extended to October 1, 2021.

OTHER QUESTIONS**Do I need to pay my property taxes?**

Yes. Unless and until notified otherwise, you must continue to pay your property tax by no later than April 10, 2020.

Can I still get my taxes done?

Yes. Tax preparation is an “essential” business since it is necessary to assist in compliance with the legally required activity of paying your taxes. Whenever possible, tax preparation services are encouraged to be conducted remotely. If in-person visits are necessary, we always encourage you to practice social distancing.

I can't pay my rent because of COVID-19. Am I going to be evicted?

On March 27, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order banning the enforcement of eviction orders for renters affected by COVID-19 through May 31, 2020. The order prohibits landlords from evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent and prohibits enforcement of evictions by law enforcement or courts. It also requires tenants to declare in writing, no more than seven days after the rent comes due, that the tenant cannot pay all or part of their rent due to COVID-19. The tenant would be required to retain documentation but not required to submit it to the landlord in advance. And the tenant would remain obligated to repay full rent in a timely manner and could still face eviction after the enforcement moratorium is lifted. The order takes effect immediately, and provides immediate relief to tenants for whom rent is due on April 1st.

A copy of this Executive Order can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.27.20-EO-N-37-20.pdf>

What if I'm in a line and there isn't six feet between me and others?

You should still try to maintain at least six feet between you and others. When that isn't possible for short periods, do your best to keep the duration short. And be sure when in line you don't sneeze or cough onto people. If needed, cough or sneeze into your shirt or into an elbow with clothing on, not into your hand.

What if my plumbing gets stopped up or there is another problem with necessary equipment at my home? How will I access those sorts of services?

Call your plumber or building manager. Service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators are considered “essential”. To obtain supplies for a DIY solution, you can also visit your hardware or home improvement store, which is also allowed to stay open under the Executive Order.

What do I do about my loved one who needs care from me?

You can provide care or to help with getting supplies for loved ones, even if they do not live in your household. But do not provide care or pick up supplies if you are sick and someone else can help them. If you are sick, please try to self-isolate or take other steps not to expose anyone else to your illness.

Are funerals allowed?

Funerals may proceed with the minimum number of attendees present. Not more than 10 people may attend a funeral. Funerals must be conducted in strict compliance with social distancing requirements.

Can residents of group living facilities like senior living facilities and shelters eat their meals in dining halls or cafeterias?

If facilities include separate units or rooms that allow for residents to eat their meals in those units or rooms, then food must be served on a take-away basis. If food consumption in individual units or rooms is not feasible or advisable, then residents may eat their meals in dining halls or cafeterias. Facilities should adhere to the social distancing requirements to the maximum extent feasible, including when residents are waiting in line for their food.

What happens if I don't comply with the Executive Order or the Orders of the Health Officer?

These Orders are legally enforceable under California law. It is a crime to violate the Orders, and you may be punished by a fine or imprisonment for doing so.

Why are these Orders in place?

The Orders have been put in place to address the ongoing spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. There is substantial community transmission of the virus, which is easily spread between people. One big challenge in controlling the transmission of the virus is that many people who have it may have mild or even no symptoms, and under favorable conditions the virus can last for at least several hours on certain surfaces.

Unfortunately, this virus can cause severe symptoms in some people and can also be fatal. Some who get the virus, especially those over 60 years old, those who have weak immune systems, and those with various medical conditions can end up with serious complications that include fever, pneumonia, and even in some instances death. There is no approved treatment or cure for COVID-19. That means that people who get very sick need medical intervention such as oxygen or help breathing.

Because the virus spreads so easily, without dramatic intervention like these Orders, it would result in so many people needing medical attention in a hospital setting that our hospitals will be overwhelmed. We may not have enough beds or equipment to adequately care for the most seriously ill. Our health care workers and other first responders are also being put at risk, and if they get sick there are fewer people to provide health care and first response services. For those reasons, it is critical that we now do everything in our power to slow down the spread of the

virus. Doing so will help to “flatten the curve” to slow down the spread of the virus and help our health care system not be overwhelmed. If this succeeds, it means that there will be health care available for those who get sick with COVID-19 or who need emergency medical care for accidents, heart attacks, strokes, and other serious medical conditions.

We all must do our part now to protect everyone in the community. The best way to do that is to “socially isolate” yourself at home to avoid further spread of the virus and minimize physical contact with others to the extent we can.

Where can I go for the most up-to-date information about California’s response to COVID-19/coronavirus?

For updated statewide information, please visit California’s Official Response Page at www.covid19.ca.gov or the California Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 webpage at: [CA Department of Public Health, Corona Virus Updates](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Coronavirus-Updates.aspx)

For Local updates, please visit: <https://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus>

Or follow Dr. Cameron Kaiser on Twitter: @RivCoDoc