

COVID-19: BAY AREA ISSUES COORDINATED “SHELTER IN PLACE” PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER

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Six Bay Area counties have announced "shelter in place" policies that restrict residents' movements as a critical intervention to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") across the region. On Monday, March 16, 2020, officials from Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and Alameda Counties, as well as the City of Berkeley, jointly announced a Public Health Order ("Order") that requires everyone to stay inside their homes except for essential needs. The Order takes effect at midnight on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and will remain in effect until April 7, 2020. Officials may choose to extend the Order depending on public health officials' recommendations.

The Order's restrictions are some of the strictest measures seen in the United States so far toward combatting COVID-19. To begin, the Order requires vulnerable populations to stay home. In addition, the Order instructs all residents to stay home except for essential needs, which specifically include getting food, caring for a relative or friend, getting necessary health care, or going to an essential job. In addition, the Order bans non-essential gatherings of any size, along with non-essential travel on foot, bicycle, scooter, automobile, or public transit. Individuals will be able to go outside for walks as long as they keep six feet away from anyone with whom they do not already live. Airports, taxis, and public transit — including BART — will remain operational, but only for essential travel. People using these transportation services are expected to keep six feet apart when possible.

The following essential services will remain open during the Order:

- City/County government services - Police stations, fire stations, hospitals/clinics and healthcare operations, jails, courts, garbage/sanitation, transportation (including Muni), utilities (water, power and gas), and city offices
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food - Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores/plumbers
- Banks
- Community benefit organizations on a case-by-case basis
- Laundromats/laundry services

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The Order requires all affected individuals to either work from home or stop working, unless they work in one of the essential services listed above. The Order allows businesses that are not considered "essential" to perform "minimum basic operations," provided that the businesses' employees maintain a distance of six feet from one another to the greatest extent feasible to carry out (1) the minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the business's inventory, ensure security, or for related functions, and/or (2) the minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences. Businesses that remain open are encouraged to keep both employees and customers six feet apart, including while the customers are standing in line.

The Order is mandatory as a legal order issued under the authority of California law. Individuals are required to comply, and violations of the Order can be enforced as a misdemeanor.

More information regarding the Order can be found, among other places, on the County of San Francisco's website here.

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