



# Stay Home Except For Essential Needs

Contra Costa with Health Officers from the Bay Area have announced a Public Health Order that requires residents to stay home except for essential needs. This starts on March 17.

*This document was last updated on March 17 at 12:50 p.m.*

## What to do

Contra Costa Health Services issued a Public Health Order requiring people to stay home except for essential needs. This order is in effect until April 7.

Vulnerable populations must stay home. Everyone should stay home except to get food, care for a relative or friend, get necessary health care, or go to an essential job.

It is OK to go outside for walks if you are not in a group.

It may be extended depending on recommendations from public health officials.

[Read the Full Text of the Order](#)

## Why are we doing this?

This is a critical intervention to reduce harm from the spread of the coronavirus in our community. This is a mandatory order.

All Bay Area Health Officers observed quickly mounting cases and serious illnesses across the region.

Now is the time to do everything we can to prevent the situation from getting much worse in a matter of days or weeks. Every hour counts. We need and appreciate the cooperation of everyone who lives and works in Contra Costa to act immediately. While this news may feel alarming, it is a necessary step to prevent a worsening situation. The patterns of the virus around the world, and in our own state, tell us that moving right now to maximize social distancing and restrict people gathering is the best way to fight the virus and save lives.

If everyone works together, we should be able to adjust to the new rules over the next few weeks.



We know that there will be a lot of questions and concerns at the beginning of this new regimen. This is a major change being taken to protect public health. Please be patient and kind to one another. Together, we will get through this, and our community's health will be protected.

## How long will we stay home?

This goes into effect on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. It is currently set to last for 3 weeks through Tuesday, April 7, 2020.

We want to be sure the Order is in place for only as long as necessary, and the Health Officer will be closely monitoring the situation every day in order to determine what adjustments make sense.

## What can I do? What's open?

These essential services will remain open:

- County government services: Police stations, fire stations, hospitals/clinics and healthcare operations, jails, courts, garbage/sanitation, transportation (including Muni), and utilities (water, power and gas) and some city offices (check with individual cities to see what offices are open)
- 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
- Most construction activities may continue, especially public works and housing construction

## What's closed?

- Dine-in restaurants (though carry out and delivery services may continue)
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios



## What can't I do?

- You cannot engage in group activities in person with others.
- You cannot have dinner parties. You cannot invite friends over to your home to hang out.
- You cannot go to bars or nightclubs.
- You cannot go to a nail salon or get your hair cut by a stylist or barber.
- You cannot go shopping for non-essential goods.
- You cannot take unnecessary trips on public transport or in your car or motorbike.

## Where does this apply?

This is in effect across the Bay Area, including in Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and Alameda Counties and the City of Berkeley.

## 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 misdemeanor crime not to follow the order (although the intent is not for anyone to get into trouble).

It is critical for everyone to follow the Order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect themselves, their loved ones, friends, neighbors and the whole community. All persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply if they do not fall within the exemptions that are specified in the Order.

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

You can still get your health needs addressed. Contact your health care provider to see if they are providing regular services. Some services, especially elective procedures, may 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 leave home to visit friends or family members if there is no urgent need?

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 deliveries from online stores? Can I order from online stores?

Yes. The mail and other delivery services to your home can continue to function, as can food delivery services.

Yes, you can place more orders from online stores. Businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences are essential businesses that may continue to operate.

## Can I use ride share or on-demand service or a taxi?

Yes, but only for essential travel.

Do your best to take social distancing precautions: cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze, use hand sanitizer, and wash your hands before and after rides, etc.

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

Yes, but only for essential travel.

Public transit will continue to operate on a limited basis. When using public transport, you should maintain at least 6 feet, two to three steps away, including if you are on the bus or on trains.

This is why it's important to only take public transportation for essential activities – you want to help everyone be able to practice social distancing.

## Can I get my prescriptions or other health care 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 to operate. When possible you should have the drug store deliver your prescription medicine to your home.

## How will I get food and medicines I need if I must stay in my home?

The Order specifically allows people to leave their home to buy food, purchase medicine, and purchase other necessary items. It also directs businesses selling those items to remain open, and allows employees of those businesses to keep working and to ensure those businesses are operating.

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



No. You will continue to be able to purchase these items whenever you need them, as stores selling necessary items like grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores will remain open.

Continue to buy normal quantities of these items on the same schedule you normally do. This will ensure that there is enough for everyone.

### 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 you 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.

### 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 years old or someone who is developmentally disabled and needs assistance.

If you need to know more, please contact the facility you want to visit by phone before you leave. This is difficult, but it is necessary in order to protect hospital staff and other patients.

### What should I do if I'm sick and need to go to the hospital or a medical provider? How can I protect others?

If possible, walk or drive yourself to the healthcare facility. You want to try to avoid exposing others to any germs you have, especially if you are seriously ill.

If you have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like a surgical mask or N-95 mask, you can wear that to prevent exposing others. If you don't have that, you could use a temporary method such as wrapping a clean scarf around your mouth and nose to try to reduce droplets when you cough and sneeze.

Although this is not an approved method, it is something you can do to avoid exposing others. Just do the best you can.

### 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 permitted to pick up any of your needs.

*For more information and update, please visit us at [cchealth.org/coronavirus](https://cchealth.org/coronavirus).*