



Alameda County FAQs for Shelter in Place Order Effective on March 31, 2020

This document was last updated on March 31, 2020 at 12 PM

Note: Updates to the FAQs may be issued periodically, with the most recent updates reflected in blue text.

To slow and decrease the spread of COVID-19, Alameda County joined Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties and the City of Berkeley in issuing a legal order directing their respective residents to shelter at home. The order limits activity, travel, and business functions to only the most essential needs. Governor Newsom issued a similar statewide order on March 19, 2020. Both Orders remain in effect in Alameda County, with the local order prevailing in areas where it is more restrictive than the order issued by the State.

General Questions

1. What do the State and Alameda County Orders do?

This Order requires that most people stay home unless they are engaged in certain “Essential Activities” which are discussed more below.

For most people, this means you and those you live with should remain at home. You may leave your home for specified reasons to make sure you have the necessities of life such as getting food and medical supplies.

You may go outside to take care of pets, go on a walk, and exercise outside, so long as you do not congregate in a group and maintain at least six feet of distance between you and other people.

If you are sick you should self-isolate, including, to the extent you can, from others you live with. Visit <http://www.acphd.org/> for information about COVID-19 symptoms and to learn how to protect yourself.

2. What does the Order released on March 31, 2020 do?

The Order released on March 31, 2020 extends the Alameda County Order and the shelter in place requirements until Sunday, May 3, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. It also adds some



clarifying language around essential business and activities, as well as some new directives:

- Limiting activities at parks and other outdoor activities to comply with social distancing requirements
- Closure of playgrounds
- Requires businesses to develop a Social Distancing Protocol
- Limitations on the number of people allowed in a store at one time and provides guidance on how to control shopping lines
- Requires stores to provide hand sanitizer
- Construction clarification regarding essential construction activities
- Delivery of goods allowed but not services
- Funerals limited to no more than 10 people attending

Please read the [Order](#) for more information.

3. Have the FAQs been updated to reflect the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order extension?

Yes.

4. Who issued the State and Alameda County Orders?

This State Order was issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, while the Alameda County Health Officer issued our local order in a joint effort with Health Officers of Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Solano, Sonoma, Napa, and the City of Berkeley. Those county health professionals have the authority under state law to issue Orders to protect the health and welfare of everyone in their respective jurisdictions.

5. How does the State Order interact with local orders to shelter in place? Does it supersede them?

The order issued by the Governor is a statewide order, and local orders may be more restrictive. [The State order and new stay-at-home order will](#) remain in effect in Alameda County, and our local order prevailing where it is more restrictive.

6. Does the Alameda County Order cover all cities and unincorporated areas of the County?

No. The Alameda County Order and FAQs applies to all cities and unincorporated areas in Alameda County except the City of Berkeley. The City of Berkeley has its own public health jurisdiction. Click [here](#) to view the City of Berkeley's Shelter in Place Order and FAQs.

7. Is this mandatory or is it just guidance?

Yes, it is mandatory. These Orders are a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply, and it is a crime (a misdemeanor with up to



\$1,000 in fines or six months imprisonment) not to follow the Orders (although the intent is not for anyone to get into trouble).

It is critical for everyone to follow the Orders 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 Orders.

8. Why are the Orders in place?

These Orders is in place to address the ongoing spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 throughout the State and in the Bay Area. At this point in the global pandemic, the virus has a foothold in all the jurisdictions that issued the Bay Area Order. 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 don't have symptoms or have mild symptoms, and they can easily spread the virus even if they don't feel very bad. The virus lasts a long time on many surfaces (from hours to days).

Unfortunately, this virus can cause severe symptoms in some people and can be fatal. Some who get the virus, especially those over 60 years old, those who are immunosuppressed (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 this Order, 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. And our health care workers and other first responders are also 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 have to 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.

9. Why now?

The Bay Area Order was issued because the infection rates in the nine counties of the Bay Area and the City of Berkeley have escalated exponentially, and the situation will



worsen quickly without rigorous intervention. This order is critical for helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 so our hospitals and health care systems do not become overwhelmed. The sooner these extreme measures are taken, the more effective they are because of how the virus spreads.

10. When does the State and new local Order go into effect?

The new Alameda County stay-at-home order will supersede the previous order and go into effect at 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31. It is a complement to the indefinite statewide stay-at-home order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 19, 2020. Like the previous local order, the new order requires people to stay at home except for doing essential activities, such as grocery shopping, in six counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara, as well as the City of Berkeley. Non-essential businesses will remain closed.

11. How long does the Alameda County Order last and why is it extended?

The Order has been extended to May 3, 2020 because the region needs more time to reduce rates of spread and prepare for an expected influx of people needing hospitalization. This public health emergency has substantially worsened since Alameda County issued the prior Order on March 16, 2020, with a significant escalation in number of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, and increasing strain on health care resources. Evidence suggests that the restrictions on mobility and social distancing requirements imposed by the prior Order are slowing the rate of increase in community transmission and confirmed cases. Additional restrictions are necessary to further mitigate the rate of transmission of COVID-19.

The duration may be either shortened or extended by the County Health Officer or the State Public Health Officer. 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 in order to determine whether adjustments make sense.

12. Am I allowed to leave my home while these Orders are in effect?

The intent of these Orders is to ensure that people remain in their residences and minimize social interactions outside of their immediate household unit. However, you may leave your residence for reasons specified in the Alameda County Order. These reasons include ensuring the health and safety of yourself and your family, engaging in outdoor activity that does not involve close contact with other people, obtaining services and supplies for yourself and your family, and to perform employment functions that are permissible under the Alameda County Order.



13. What happens if I don't comply with the Orders?

This is a legally enforceable order issued under California law. It is a crime to violate these Orders, and you may be punished by a fine or imprisonment for doing so.

14. For more information and updates:

Alameda County Public Health Department website:

<http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>

California COVID-19 Response website:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

California Department of Public Health COVID-19 website:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Alameda County New Shelter in Place Order:

<http://www.acphd.org/media/563688/health-officer-order-20-04-shelter-in-place-20200331.pdf>

California Shelter in Place Order:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/N-33-20.pdf>

Vulnerable Populations

1. Who are the most vulnerable to COVID-19?

People who are over the age of 60, and those with underlying health issues—such as diabetes, lung disease, cancer, and compromised immune systems—are susceptible to serious illness from COVID-19. We urge these individuals to isolate at home and avoid or minimize essential activities outside the home.

2. How is Alameda County helping people experiencing homelessness?

The Health Care Services Agency holds regular calls with the homelessness provider community, offers ongoing guidance for shelter and outreach providers, and supplements hygiene efforts in encampments. The County is also working with state and city partners to identify isolation and quarantine solutions for people who may become ill.



If you are homeless and have COVID-19 symptoms, call Alameda Health System 510-437-8500 for telephone screening and more information.

Homeless individuals who are tested positive for COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or been exposed to COVID-19 can be referred to temporary hotel rooms for isolation and recovery. Eligible individuals must be referred by approved referral agencies. To maintain the health and safety of on-site staff and clients no walk-ins will be accepted. Visit <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov/operation-comfort> for more information.

If you are looking for shelter, please call 211. Shelter availability is extremely limited. 211 can provide information about Alameda County's Coordinated Entry System (CES) as well as give daily updates on bed availability at a few shelters that are not part of CES.

Shelter in Place & Social Distancing

1. What does it mean to “shelter in place?”

The term “shelter in place” means to stay in your home and not leave unless necessary for one of the designated exceptions listed in these Orders. You may leave your home to get food, to get a prescription, to see a doctor, to go to work if your work is essential as defined in these Orders, to take your child(ren) to and from childcare that is authorized under these Orders, and to help people you care for get the things they need to live and be healthy and safe.

2. What are the social distancing guidelines I still need to follow?

The best way to reduce their risk of getting sick, as with seasonal colds or the flu, still applies to prevent COVID-19:

- i. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible.
- ii. Stay home if you are sick.
- iii. Avoid touching your face.
- iv. Covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands)
- v. Avoid groups (stay at least six feet away from others)
- vi. Reduce the time you are around others outside the home, even when at least six feet away.



3. When practicing social distancing, how far should I stay away from others if I must be away from my home?

At least six feet, which is appropriately two to three steps away, including if you are on the bus or train.

4. 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 maximize distance and 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.

5. What is the difference between "sheltering in place" and "social distancing"?

Sheltering in place is a more rigorous form of social distancing. There are some differences. Sheltering at home means:

- i. stay home
- ii. only go out for "essential activities," to work for an "essential business," or for "essential travel" as those terms are defined in the Order, and as discussed further below
- iii. stay 6 feet or more away from others
- iv. no gatherings

The other principles of social distancing and mitigative hygiene will continue to apply whenever feasible. These include washing hands, using hand sanitizer, disinfecting surfaces, not going out if sick, and staying at least six feet away from others.

Enforcement & Compliance

1. Who is enforcing the Order?

The Order has the force of law, and all persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply. Enforcement decisions and processes rest with local law enforcement entities to enforce as appropriate within their jurisdictions. In unincorporated areas of the County, the Sheriff's department enforces and in cities, it is police departments.

For enforcement questions, please contact COVID19compliance@acgov.org.



Health Care

1. 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, please 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 the COVID-19 virus. You should check <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for more information.

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

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

You can still get your health needs addressed. You should 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.

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

Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning, and elective procedures should be postponed if possible. If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.

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

4. 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.

5. 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 should 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.

6. 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:

- 24/7 Behavioral Health Services Department Call Center: (800) 491-9099
- Crisis Text Line: Text RENEW to 741741
- Crisis Support Services Suicide Prevention – (800) 309-2131
- Crisis Support Services Text Line – text "safe" to 20121 between 4:00p.m. and 11:00 p.m. 7 days a week
- Nationwide Hotline – (800) 273-TALK or (800) 273-8255

If you are experiencing an emergency please call 911 immediately.

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

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, dental cleanings, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. 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.

8. May I still go out to get my prescriptions?

Yes. You may leave your home to obtain prescriptions or get cannabis from a licensed cannabis retailer, so long as you practice social distancing.

9. 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.

10. 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.

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



No. The Order specifically exempts all healthcare related functions, including not just hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers, but also all of the companies that supply them with goods and services.

Groceries & Medicine/Prescriptions & Basic Necessities

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

2. Can I go to the store (grocery store, market, corner store, food bank, etc.) to buy food and other things?

Yes. This also includes medical supplies at a pharmacy, essential home maintenance supplies at a hardware store, or office supplies for your home business or work.

3. 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. You can also order food and other supplies, and have it delivered to your home.

4. 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, licensed cannabis retailers, and other medical supply stores are allowed to operate. When possible you should have the drug store deliver your prescription medicine to your home, especially if you are elderly or have underlying medical conditions.

5. How will I get food and medicines I need if I must "shelter in place" in my home?

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

6. 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.

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

Yes. You can shop for anything that is related to health care, office supplies, and hardware supplies, and other necessary items. But you should minimize unnecessary trips, and maintain social distancing in the store.

8. Can big box stores that sell groceries and essentials stay open?

Yes. Retail outlets that sell a significant proportion of essential goods like food, hygiene, and consumer household products may keep open to the public (and stock) the portions of their retail storefronts dedicated to non-essential products.

9. Can I go to the bank?

Yes, you can go to the bank; but you should minimize unnecessary trips.

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

Yes.

Restaurants & Meals

1. 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 goods or meals to students or other members of the public are encouraged to continue providing these services. However, food provided by these establishments to the public may not be eaten on the premises but must instead be delivered or taken away for consumption.

If you are in need of food, please call the Alameda County Community Food Bank's Emergency Food Helpline at 1-510-635-3663.

2. 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 in or eat or drink at the facility. Patrons will not be permitted to dine or congregate in restaurants, bars, and similar establishments.

3. Is my favorite restaurant, café, coffee or tea shop, ice cream shop, or other foodservice location open?



Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food to the public are encouraged to stay open, but only to provide delivery and carry out. Patrons will not be permitted to dine or congregate in restaurants, bars, and similar establishments.

4. I don't cook—how can I purchase meals

Restaurants, cafes, food trucks, and similar establishments may 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.

Transportation & Travel

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

Yes, but only for essential travel. These services can only be used for “essential activities,” to get to and from work to operate “essential businesses,” or to provide “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order. Also, being in close quarters in a vehicle that has been shared with many others should be avoided if possible. However, there may be circumstances when this mode of transportation is needed. In that instance do your best to take social distancing precautions, being sure to cover your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands before and after rides, etc.

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

Yes, but public transit can only be used to perform “essential activities,” to get to and from work to operate “essential businesses,” or to maintain “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order.

When using public transport, you should maintain at least six (6) feet distance from one another, which is appropriately two to three steps away, including if you are on the bus or on trains.

3. Can bike repair and supply shops/mobile bike repair continue to operate?

Yes. Bike repair and supply shops are considered an essential business.

4. Am I allowed to leave the areas covered by this Order in order to travel to/from a job outside the Bay Area? Does the Order allow me to leave the County?



Yes, but only to perform “essential activities,” operate “essential businesses,” or to maintain “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order. Otherwise, the answer is no because that puts you and others in the community at risk.

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

Yes, if you cannot perform your job duties from home. “Essential Infrastructure” includes airports, utilities (including water, sewer, gas, and electrical), oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste facilities (including collection, removal, disposal, 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). Essential businesses must maximize the number of employees who can work from home.

6. I work/volunteer in healthcare operations—can I leave home to go to work/volunteer?

Yes. “Healthcare operations” includes 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, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. “Healthcare Operations” also includes veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals, but does not include fitness, exercise gyms, and similar facilities.

Visiting or Returning to Alameda County

1. I am currently on vacation outside the County—Does the Order allow me to return home?

Yes.

2. I’m visiting and staying in a hotel, with family/friends, or in a short-term rental. What should I do? Can I go home?

Yes, you can leave the County for the purpose of returning home.

Caring for/Visiting Others



1. 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, you can provide necessary care for family member or pet in another household who has no other source of care. 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 6 feet of distance when possible, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue and then washing your hands. If you have early signs of a cold, please stay away from your older loved ones.

2. 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.

If you need to know more, please contact the facility you want to visit by phone before you visit to inquire about the status of visits. This is difficult, but it is necessary in order to protect hospital staff, your loved ones and other patients.

3. 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.

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

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

Schools & Childcare & Home-Based Care

1. Does this Order require that schools shut down?

This Order currently requires that all schools stop holding classes at physical locations within the County. In general, schools cannot be open for in-person instruction. In order to support distance or remote learning, and other school services, schools may allow their employees to come to work.

2. What if I work for a school?

Schools are subject to special requirements and restrictions, [so please review the Order for more details](#). Schools may allow their employees to come to work to support any



continuing free and/or reduced price-meals and other essential services. Please [check with your local school districts](#) about the availability of such programs.

3. What if I work for a childcare facility?

Childcare facilities are allowed to provide services that enable owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors for Essential Businesses or Essential Governmental Functions to work. Children of owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors who are not exempt under this Order may not attend childcare facilities.

To the extent possible, childcare facilities must operate under the following 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.

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

If you work for an Essential Business or provide Essential Governmental Functions, as described in the Order, you can and should continue to work. Certain employers, schools, and community organizations will be providing childcare/daycare for employees of essential businesses.

Essential workers searching for childcare can connect with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to find care. Visit [First 5 Alameda County](#) for more information.

5. Is home-based care for seniors and adults allowed?

Yes.

Home Repair, Housekeeping, Landscaping & Remodel

1. 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 under the Order, within specific parameters.



2. 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. This Order allows service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators to keep working and providing their services to the public. To obtain supplies for a DIY solution, you can also visit your hardware store, which is allowed to stay open under this Order.

3. Can my housekeeper continue to clean my home?

Yes. Remember to distance yourself at least six feet from your housekeeper. If you feel sick, do not ask your housekeeper to clean your home.

4. Can my landscaper/arborist/gardener continue to maintain my yard?

Landscaping/gardening/arborist services may continue only if they are necessary to maintain the habitability, sanitation, operation of businesses or residences, or the safety of residents, employees, or the public (such as fire safety or tree trimming to prevent a dangerous condition), and not for cosmetic or other purposes (such as upkeep).

5. I am midway through a remodel. Can my construction project continue?

Yes. Residential renovation projects of any kind that are currently underway may continue if necessary to a safe, sanitary, and functional home. Likewise, residential remodeling projects that are partly completed may continue if delaying completion would pose a safety, security, or sanitation risk to residents or impact the habitability of the residence.

6. I have a contractor scheduled to begin a remodel next week. Can I go ahead with this project?

You must defer your remodel or renovation project unless it is necessary to restore your home to a safe, sanitary, and habitable space.

Recreation, Entertainment, Social & Religious Activities

1. Can I leave home to go to my church, temple, 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. But places of worship can offer remote access to services, such as by emails, video streaming, or teleconference.

2. Can I leave home to exercise?



Yes, only if you will be both outdoors and not in close contact with other people.
Fitness and exercise gyms are not permitted to operate.

3. 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, and engage in other similar activities, but should maintain social distance (i.e. be more than six feet away from persons who are not part of your household) when on walks and in parks to avoid spread of the virus.

4. Are trails and parks allowed to stay open?

Yes, if physical distancing is maintained when on your walks and in parks to avoid spread of the virus. If non-compliance is noted in some trails or parks, they may be closed down or closed to vehicle access.

Each governmental entity can make a determination regarding the restrictions on public access to parks, beaches, and open spaces necessary to maintain social distancing.

5. Can I go to a bar/nightclub/theater?

No. Entertainment venues like these are not permitted to be open during this Order.

6. Can I go to the gym or health club?

No. Gyms and health clubs are not permitted to operate under this Order.

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

The Order allows you to engage in outdoor activities, provided that you maintain adequate social distancing. While we encourage use of parks, the high-touch equipment and surfaces such as playgrounds are closed.

8. Can I use the outdoor gym equipment, and picnic and barbecue areas?

No. All recreational areas with high-touch equipment and surfaces, or that encourage gathering must be closed, including but not limited to playgrounds, outdoor gym equipment, picnic areas, barbecue areas, and dog parks.

9. Can I play team sports?

Sports with shared equipment, like soccer or basketball, may only be played with members of your same household or living unit. No team sports are allowed.

10. Are outdoor activities requiring shared facilities allowed?

No. Outdoor activities that require using public or community shared facilities including, but not limited to, pools/spa, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, climbing walls, shooting and archery ranges, basketball courts, and golf courses are not permitted.



Mail & Package Deliveries

1. Can I still get my mail and deliveries?

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

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

Yes, the Order identifies businesses that deliver goods directly to residences as “essential businesses” that may continue to operate.

Pets

1. Can I walk my dog/pet?

Yes. Be sure that you distance yourself at least six feet from other persons.

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

Yes. 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.

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

3. Can I take my dog to the dog park?

No. Dog parks are closed.

Moving & Storage

1. Can I still move to my new residence during the Order?

Yes. You can move, but only if it is not possible to postpone the planned move, or if the move is necessary to preserve access to shelter.

When moving into or out of the Bay Area region, individuals are strongly urged to quarantine for 14 days. To quarantine, individuals should follow the guidance of the [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

2. 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.

Funeral Services & Operations

1. Can the funeral and cemetery industry continue to operate?

Yes, funeral home providers and mortuaries may continue operating to the extent necessary to the transport, preparation, processing of remains, or interment. 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.

2. Are funeral services/burials allowed?

Funeral services/burials may proceed with no more than 10 people. Funerals must be conducted in strict compliance with the social distancing requirements set forth in the Order.

Government & Non-Profit Organizations

1. 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.

2. Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue operating?

If they provide essential services as described in the Order, then yes they can and should continue providing those services. This would include non-profits operating food pantries, providing housing for homeless residents, and many, many other critical services.



Essential Workers & Businesses (General Information)

1. Will all business offices and stores be required to close? What are “Essential Businesses”?

No, “Essential Businesses” may stay open and their employees may leave home to go to work. The Order includes the following list of essential businesses (please see [Section 13 of the Order](#)):

- 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 of the types listed in this subparagraph below:
 1. Projects immediately necessary to the maintenance, operation or repair of Essential Infrastructure;
 2. Projects associated with Healthcare Operations, including creating or expanding Healthcare Operations, provided that such construction is directly related to the COVID-19 response;
 3. Affordable housing that is or will be income-restricted, including multi-unit or mixed-use developments containing at least 10% income-restricted units;
 4. Public works projects if specifically designated as an Essential Governmental Function by the lead governmental agency;
 5. Shelters and temporary housing, but not including hotels or motels;
 6. Projects immediately necessary to provide critical non-commercial services to individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly persons, persons who are economically disadvantaged, and persons with special needs;



7. Construction necessary to ensure that existing construction sites that must be shut down under this Order are left in a safe and secure manner, but only to the extent necessary to do so; and
 8. Construction or repair necessary to ensure that residences and buildings containing Essential Businesses are safe, sanitary, or habitable to the extent such construction or repair cannot reasonably be delayed;
- 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 (and not, by way of example, car sales or car washes). 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 residential 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 still residing 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 operation of residences and Essential Businesses, but not for cosmetic or other purposes;
 - xiii. Arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar service professionals, but only to the limited extent necessary to maintain the habitability, sanitation, operation of businesses or residences, or the safety of residents, employees, or the public (such as fire safety or tree trimming to prevent a dangerous condition), and not for cosmetic or other purposes (such as upkeep);
 - xiv. Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
 - xv. Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, provided that social distancing of six-foot per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible;
 - xvi. Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;
 - xvii. 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;
- xxviii. Funeral home providers, mortuaries, cemeteries, and crematoriums, to the extent necessary for the transport, preparation, or processing of bodies or remains;
 - xix. 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;
 - xx. 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;
 - xxi. 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;
 - xxii. Home-based care for seniors, adults, children, and pets;
 - xxiii. Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
 - xxiv. Professional services, such as legal, notary, or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with non-elective, legally required activities;
 - xxv. Services to assist individuals in finding employment with Essential Businesses;
 - xxvi. Moving services that facilitate residential or commercial moves that are allowed under this Order;
 - xxvii. Childcare facilities providing services that enable owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors for Essential Businesses or Essential Governmental Functions to work as permitted. Children of owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors who are not exempt under this Order may not attend childcare facilities. To the extent possible, childcare facilities must operate under the following 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.

2. Why is the County Public Health Officer issuing an Order that shuts down so many businesses in my community?

The Public Health Officers of the nine Bay Area counties and the City of Berkeley have been closely monitoring the rapidly accelerating situation with COVID-19 and it is clear that if we do not take very strong and aggressive action to slow down the spread of the disease, our hospitals and particularly our intensive care units will be overwhelmed with patients. We are taking this action to save the lives of people in our community, especially those who are particularly susceptible to severe illness from COVID-19, and are at heightened risk of severe illness or death if infected. The Order also protects everyone’s ability to seek emergency health care when needed by preventing health care facilities from becoming overwhelmed. Finally, during the 1918 influenza pandemic, cities that implemented more aggressive social distancing measures suffered less economically in the year after the pandemic than those that were not aggressive.

Essential Workers & Businesses (For Employers)

1. Essential Business Determinations:

Alameda County is not implementing a process to grant exemptions or make determinations on individual situations.

Each business or organization should make its own decision based on its interpretation of the Order, and should consult its own counsel about business decisions.

2. My business is considered an essential business, how do I prevent a COVID-19 outbreak at my business?

Essential businesses in Alameda County are required to create a tailored “Social Distancing Protocol” no later than 11:59 PM on April 2, 2020 explaining how the business will comply with social distancing requirements, post it at the public entrance in plain sight, and produce it when requested by a governmental agency, including law enforcement.

The Social Distancing Protocol must be completed and the form is attached to the [Order as Appendix A](#). View the Order for more details about this new requirement.

Social distancing requirements for businesses include:

- Limiting the number of people who can enter into the store as necessary to ensure that customers can easily maintain six-foot distance from one another



- Providing stations with hand sanitizer or similar disinfectant to the public at entrance and throughout the facility
- Marking six-foot increments in all queuing areas
- Placing signs at entrance advising customers to maintain six-foot distance from one another

No employee who can perform their customary employment duties remotely shall be required to report to the facility.

Visit The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#) for additional social distancing measures for businesses.

3. What if my business is not considered an Essential Business? Does this Order require that I shut down my business facility?

You, your employees, and contractors are allowed to perform “Minimum Basic Operations” on site at your work place, so long as employees maintain a distance of six feet from one another to the greatest extent feasible. Minimum Basic Operations include:

- 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.
- 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.

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

Follow the best practices for allowable food facility operations included in the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health’s [“COVID-19 Guidance Document for Food Facilities”](#). This information is available in multiple languages, visit the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health’s [website](#) for more information.

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

Yes.

6. Can I continue to operate my moving company?

Yes. Moving companies are considered an essential business and are encouraged to stay open to help people move into their new residence and/or help move essential businesses that are necessary to maintain health/safety/and sanitation.



7. Can I operate a business that can or does sell things that can be delivered to people's homes; can I continue doing that and shift more of my business to a delivery model?

Yes. Deliveries can continue to be sent to people's homes, and you may adjust your business model accordingly while this Order is in place.

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

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, dental cleanings, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. Preventive care should not be deferred. 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.

9. Can medicinal and/or recreational cannabis businesses continue to operate?

Yes. According to [California's cannabis regulatory agencies](#), cannabis is an essential medicine for many residents, and licensees may continue to operate at this time, as long as their operations comply with local rules and regulations. Any licensee that continues to operate must adopt social distancing and anti-congregating measures and must follow the [CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#) at all times.

10. Can landscaping services continue to operate?

Landscaping services may continue only if 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. Landscaping for cosmetic purposes may not continue. Landscapers performing services under contract with governmental agencies should consult the relevant agency to determine whether their services are deemed essential.

11. I run a construction company that builds affordable and market rate housing. Can we continue to build new units?

Only the construction of affordable housing that is or will be income restricted, including multi-unit or mixed-use developments containing at least 10% income-restricted units, and shelters and temporary housing (not including hotels/motels) are allowed.

View [Section 13 in the Order](#) for additional allowable construction types.



12. Can I complete the construction project that is already underway?

No. You can perform work on the site only to ensure it is safe and secure while it is shut down in compliance with this Order. This includes sending employees to the construction site to secure the site and ensure it does not sustain damage. You can continue construction on the project only if strictly necessary to prevent damage to the project, e.g. completing a roof or ensuring that there is proper drainage after grading has been completed.

13. Can my supply chain business continue to operate?

Only businesses supplying materials or transportation for “essential infrastructure,” “essential government,” “essential businesses,” and “healthcare operations” are permitted to operate.

14. Can recycling centers continue to operate?

Yes. Recycling centers are essential to helping maintain sanitation of residences.

15. Are janitorial/custodial and security staff essential workers?

Yes, depending on where these workers are employed, they may be essential to the workplace or to maintaining business operations. If the janitorial/custodial and security staff are working, please visit CDC’s [website](#) for more business guidance.

16. Can gun shops selling firearms and ammunition continue to keep their storefronts open?

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.

17. Can my pool maintenance company continue to operate?

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.

18. Can real estate agents show residences in person?

Real estate agents, escrow agents, notaries, and title companies that provide residential transactions (including rentals, leases, and home sales) should try to provide appointments and other residential viewings virtually. If a virtual viewing is not feasible, an appointment with no more than two visitors at a time residing within the same household or living unit and one individual showing the unit is allowed only when the home they are viewing is no longer occupied by the homeowner.



19. I run a painting company and am in the middle of projects at home and businesses.

Can I continue to work if I practice social distancing and hand washing?

No, unless delaying completion would pose a safety, security, or sanitation risk to residents and/or tenants or impact the habitability of the residence/building.

Essential Workers & Businesses (For Employees)

1. What do I do if my employer requires me to go to work?

Many businesses are not permitted to operate under this Order. Essential Businesses, as defined in the Order, are allowed (and encouraged) to continue operating. If your work is not an Essential Business, you are not permitted to go to work and your employer is not permitted to require you to attend except to complete Minimum Basic Operations, as that term is defined in the Order. You may work from home if your work permits.

2. 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. You may work from home for any business if your employer allows it.

3. 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 essential workers are.

4. 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. However, most employees of such companies will need to work from home. Anyone who must work onsite to maintain “Essential Infrastructure” for the community or to maintain “Minimum Necessary Operations” as described in the Order may continue to work in the workplace so long as they are maintaining social distancing.

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

Yes, if you cannot perform your job duties from home. “Essential Infrastructure” includes airports, utilities (including water, sewer, gas, and electrical), oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste facilities (including collection, removal, disposal, 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). Essential businesses must maximize the number of employees who can work from home.



6. I work/volunteer in healthcare operations—can I leave home to go to work/volunteer?

Yes. “Healthcare operations” includes 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, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. “Healthcare Operations” also includes veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals, but does not include fitness, exercise gyms, and similar facilities.

7. 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.