



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Seven Bay Area Jurisdictions Order Residents to Stay Home

COVID-19 spread reduces activity to only most essential needs.

Santa Clara, CA – Seven health officers within six Bay Area counties are taking a bold, unified step to slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and preserve critical health care capacity across the region.

On March 16, the Public health officers of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties announced, with the City of Berkeley, a legal order directing their respective residents to shelter at home for three weeks beginning March 17. The order limits activity, travel and business functions to only the most essential needs. The guidance comes after substantial input from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and best practices from other health officials around the world.

Scientific evidence shows social distancing is one of the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable disease. The shelter-at-home order follows new data of increasing local transmission of COVID-19, including 258 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 4 deaths shared by the seven jurisdictions, as of March 15. The Bay Area's collected confirmed cases is more than half of California's case count. This does not account for the rapidly increasing number of assumed cases of community transmission. As testing capacity increases, the number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases is expected to increase markedly.

"Temporarily changing our routine is absolutely necessary to slow the spread of this pandemic," said Dr. Sara Cody, Santa Clara County Public Health Officer. "The Health Officers from the largest jurisdictions in the San Francisco Bay Area are united and we are taking this step together to offer the best protection to our respective communities."

The order defines essential activities as necessary for the health and safety for individuals and their families. Essential businesses allowed to operate during the recommended action include health care operations; businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals; fresh and non-perishable food retailers (including convenience stores); pharmacies; child care facilities; gas stations; banks; laundry businesses and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of a residence. In addition, health care, law and safety, and essential government functions will continue under the recommended action. For the full list, please see section 10 of the order.



“While the goal is to limit groups congregating together in a way that could further spread the virus, it is not complete social shutdown,” said Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County’s Public Health Officer. “You can still complete your most essential outings or even engage in outdoor activity, so long as you avoid close contact.”

On January 30, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, and the United States followed the next day by declaring a federal public health emergency. On February 26, the federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) confirmed community transmission of COVID-19 in the San Francisco Bay Area, meaning the afflicted patient had no signs of associating with anyone who had been diagnosed with the virus. This collective legal order comes one day after Governor Gavin Newsom ordered older adults, age 65 and older, stay home.

“Limiting interpersonal interactions is a proven strategy to slow and reduce viral spread and protect the most vulnerable among us -- individuals who are 60 years of age and older, people with chronic and underlying medical conditions, and people experiencing homelessness.” Dr. Erica Pan said, “Our counties share borders and many people live in one county and work in another. It’s absolutely critical for us to be aligned on COVID-19 mitigation efforts.”

For more information about COVID-19 activities in these areas, visit the [Alameda](#), [Contra Costa](#), [Marin](#), [Santa Clara](#), [San Francisco](#), [San Mateo](#), or [Berkeley](#) COVID-19 websites.

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