



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

County of San Mateo Sues Pacifica Beach Yoga Over Repeated COVID-19 Health and Safety Violations

“Mask-free” indoor classes pose “grave risks to public health”

Judge grants request for immediate temporary restraining order

Redwood City – The County of San Mateo has [filed suit](#) to close Pacifica Beach Yoga for repeatedly refusing to comply with state public health orders.

Violations include holding indoor “mask-free” yoga classes when all indoor gyms, fitness centers and yoga studios are under state health orders to cease operations. The suit also asserts the studio has failed to require staff and patrons to wear face coverings.

The owner has refused repeated requests by County staff to voluntarily comply with public health orders.

“This business has left us no choice,” said San Mateo County Counsel John Beiers. “Our community rightly expects that when its state government imposes shelter in place laws, those laws will be enforced justly and equitably to ensure that everyone is playing by the same rules. Pacifica Beach Yoga has repeatedly, knowingly and flagrantly decided not to follow the rules that other businesses in this county are following. That is dangerous and cannot be allowed to continue.”

The suit filed in San Mateo County Superior Court seeks an order for the studio’s owner to comply with all COVID-19 public health orders and immediately halt all indoor operations until the County is no longer under the current level of state [COVID-19 restrictions](#), as well as to pay accrued fines imposed to encourage compliance.

The County’s [COVID Business Compliance Team](#) has received 26 online complaints since late October against Pacifica Beach Yoga alleging health order violations. The team

investigates complaints with the goal of encouraging voluntary compliance and, when necessary, issues written warnings and citations.

Following visits and warnings, a County compliance officer issued an initial \$250 citation on November 14. After subsequent citations, imposed fines now total \$3,750.

This afternoon, at a hearing, Judge Danny Chou [granted the County's request](#) for a temporary restraining order that Pacifica Beach Yoga immediately shut down. A hearing on the preliminary injunction is set for February 4, at which time the court will evaluate the continuing need for the injunction.

“We have a simple and clear message here in San Mateo County: Wear your damn mask,” said David J. Canepa, president of the Board of Supervisors. “It’s not about you. It’s about everyone around you, including your friends, your loved ones and the people you don’t even know who you come in contact with.”

The Board of Supervisors on Aug. 4, 2020, unanimously approved an urgency ordinance to allow enforcement officers designated by the County or cities to issue citations for violating health orders. Entities or individuals can [dispute the violation](#).

Pacifica Beach Yoga is the first business the County has sought court action against for failure to follow health orders.

Due to the pandemic and limited ICU capacity, San Mateo County remains under a [Regional Stay At Home Order](#) that requires most indoor businesses to shutter and for people to stay home except for essential needs and other limited exceptions.

As of Jan. 20, 2021, San Mateo County Health has recorded [33,207 confirmed cases](#) of COVID-19 and 309 deaths since the pandemic began.

The complaint and today’s ruling can be found here:

<https://cmo.smcgov.org/document/county-san-mateo-vs-pacifica-beach-yoga>

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