



#ComeTogetherSMC

Newsletter | March/April 2021

This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date on all the changes due to COVID-19 and how this affects our community.

Table of Contents:

San Mateo County at Orange Tier 3 on State's Risk Level
PAGE 1

COVID-19 Vaccine Facts Flyer
PAGE 3

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
PAGE 4

SamTrans & Caltrain Providing Free Rides to Vaccination Sites in San Mateo County
PAGE 5

California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program
PAGE 5

Free Access to Mental and Emotional Health Tools via Headspace App
PAGE 6

Additional Resources
PAGE 6

Organization Spotlight: Vocational Rehabilitation Services
PAGE 7

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Stay informed about COVID-19 community resources and information: Sign up for our newsletter at cmo.smcgov.org/covid-19-resources.

San Mateo County at Orange Tier 3 on State's Risk Level

SAN MATEO COUNTY IS AT

Orange
RISK LEVEL

Allowed Indoors

- ▶ Malls & retail stores
- ▶ Personal care services, nail & hair salons
- ▶ Family entertainment centers at 25% capacity
- ▶ Museums, Zoos, Aquariums at 50% capacity
- ▶ Places of worship at 50% capacity
- ▶ Movie theaters at 50% capacity
- ▶ Gyms & fitness centers + indoor pools at 25% capacity
- ▶ Restaurants at 50% capacity
- ▶ Wineries at 25% capacity

Allowed Outdoors

- ▶ Bars, breweries & distilleries with modifications
- ▶ Playgrounds & outdoor recreational facilities

6ft

Counties can move to a less restrictive level as COVID transmission goes down and testing goes up.

Stay diligent & follow safety guidelines: keep your distance, wear your mask, self quarantine if you've been exposed & get tested.

For more information, visit smcgov.org

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

March 2021 marked the one-year anniversary of COVID-19's arrival in San Mateo County. We all know that much has changed. What hasn't changed is our community's commitment to helping friends, neighbors, co-workers and even strangers who have been hit hard by the pandemic. With restrictions being lifted and vaccines being distributed, it is important to maintain CDC and local guidelines to continue to prevent

the spread of COVID-19 and allow San Mateo County to Comeback Together.

San Mateo County has moved to the less restrictive Orange Tier 3 under California's four-tier, color-coded reopening plan. This means that the risk of infection by the coronavirus remains "moderate," allowing for the easing of certain restrictions and most indoor businesses to operate with modifications.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1 At the Orange level:

Shopping malls: Can open indoors with modifications

- Closed common areas
- Reduced capacity food courts

Places of worship: Can open indoors with modifications

- Open at 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is less

Dine-in restaurants: Can open indoors with modifications

- Capacity must be limited to 50% or 200 people, whichever is less

Offices (non-essential businesses): Can open indoors with modifications

- Encourage working remotely

Bars/Breweries (where no meal provided): Can open outdoors with modifications

Movie theaters: Can open indoors with modifications

Gyms & fitness centers, including indoor pools: Can open indoors with modifications

- Capacity must be limited to 25%
- Indoor pools can open
- Indoor hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms must close
- Climbing walls can open

Family entertainment centers:

- Can open indoors for naturally distanced activities, with modifications
- Capacity must be limited to 25%
- Bowling alleys and escape rooms allowed
- Can open outdoors with modifications for activities like kart racing, mini golf, batting cages

Amusement parks and theme parks: Smaller parks can open with modifications

- Capacity must be limited to 25% or 500 people, whichever is less
- Outdoor attractions only can open
- Reservations or advanced ticket sales required
- Local attendees only (from the same county as the park's location)
- Additional activities will be permitted starting April 1, 2021

Hotels, lodging and short-term lodging rentals: Can open with modifications

- Fitness centers can open to 25% capacity
- Indoor pools can open
- Indoor hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms must close

Museums, zoos and aquariums: Can open indoors with modifications

- Indoor activities limited to 50% capacity

Schools

- California has updated the guidance and framework for re-opening 12 schools for in-person learning for the 2020-21 school year. Learn more through the COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year. Individuals interested in the potential impact on local schools should contact local school districts.

Youth and adult recreational sports

- Follow guidance found at the California Department of Public Health website (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov>) for youth sports programs, including school-based, club and recreational programs, and adult recreational sports including limitations for competitions.

Also, remember the County of San Mateo continues to abide by the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy (<https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy>).





Know the COVID-19 Vaccine Facts

Fighting the pandemic has been hard, but now we have the vaccine to protect us.



The vaccine is safe

Doctors and researchers agree that the vaccine is safe and effective. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the vaccines for emergency use and found no serious safety concerns. Independent experts confirmed it met high safety and efficacy standards.



The vaccine is free for everyone

All people, regardless of health insurance, immigration status, documentation, or residency, can get the vaccine at no-cost when eligible and when vaccine supply allows.



The vaccine will be given to people at highest risk first

Following State guidelines, individuals with the highest risk of becoming infected and spreading COVID-19 will receive vaccines first. Later this year, when we have enough doses, everyone will have an opportunity to get vaccinated. More vaccine is being produced every day.



The vaccine may cause temporary side effects

Like other routine vaccines, you may get a sore arm, fever, headaches, or fatigue after getting vaccinated. These are signs the vaccine is working. After you get the vaccine, continue to wear your mask and stay six feet apart to keep those who haven't been vaccinated safe.



The vaccine is our best opportunity to overcome the pandemic

By getting vaccinated, you will help our kids return to in-person learning, keep our elders safe, allow businesses to open, and return all aspects of community and family life back to normal where we can gather and have celebrations again.

Remember, your actions continue to save lives. Wear a mask, keep your distance, self-quarantine if you have symptoms, get tested, and when you're eligible, get vaccinated.

Find out when you're eligible to get vaccinated: visit www.smchealth.org/covidvaccine.



**COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO**



**SAN MATEO
COUNTY HEALTH**
All together better.



COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 vaccine efforts are underway in San Mateo County, and we know you may have questions and/or concerns. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the vaccine:

Who should get vaccinated?

The vaccine is recommended for all adults. The Pfizer vaccine is for anyone age 16 and older. The Moderna vaccine is for anyone 18 and older. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine is recommended for people aged 18 years and older. Clinical trials are currently being conducted for children 16 and under, and more information will be available later.

Why should I get the vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are meant to significantly reduce the chances of your getting COVID-19, and if you do become infected, the impact will be mild.

Is the vaccine safe?

COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA have been shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials. Check out the CDC information on vaccine safety: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>

I've had COVID-19. Should I still get a vaccine?

Yes. At this time, we do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The CDC advises those who have had COVID-19 to be vaccinated.

Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain coronavirus and cannot give you COVID-19. More information from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

How many COVID-19 vaccine shots are needed?

The current guidelines are two doses for the Pfizer vaccine, 21 days apart and two doses for the Moderna

vaccine, 28 days apart. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine requires only one dose. You should get your second shot as close to the recommended three-week or one-month interval as possible. However, there is no maximum interval between the first and second doses for either vaccine. You should not get the second dose earlier than the recommended interval.

Do I need my doctor's permission or approval to get vaccinated?

You do not need your doctor's permission or approval. Our doctors encourage all adults to get vaccinated when they can, except those who have a reaction to the first dose or are allergic to polyethylene glycol. If you've received a different vaccine in the past 14 days, you need to wait to get vaccinated. Those with other health conditions like chronic diseases are encouraged to get vaccinated because they are at higher risk for serious COVID-19 disease if they get infected.

I don't have health insurance. What do I do?

Insurance is available, regardless of immigration status. Call our Health Coverage Unit at 650-616-2002 to speak to an enrollment counselor. For residents without health insurance but who do have a health care provider (including patients at San Mateo Medical Center), please contact your health care provider. Insurance is not required for you to receive the vaccine.

How much will the COVID-19 vaccine cost?

No cost to you. COVID-19 vaccines, including their administration, are free. If any person or organization tries to charge you for a vaccine, contact the District Attorney's Office at (650) 363-4636.

Will getting the vaccine affect my immigration status/Public Charge?

No. Getting the vaccine will not affect your immigration status or Public Charge.

Will we still need to wear a mask after we are vaccinated?

Yes. Wearing your mask, staying six feet away from others, and avoiding gatherings will prevent you from giving COVID-19 to someone who hasn't been vaccinated yet. Health experts will tell us when it's safe to stop wearing masks.

I've heard that some people have died after being vaccinated.

Investigations of these unfortunate deaths have not revealed any connection to the vaccine itself. However, we do know that someone living in the United States is dying every 33 minutes from COVID-19.

I've heard about a new strain of the virus. Does the vaccine protect against the new strain?

The vaccines available now do protect against the different strains of the virus that are carried around the world by people who are traveling. But as the virus continues to change, and if people wait too long to get the vaccine, there may be a problem with the present vaccines working in the future.

How can I get notified when I'm eligible/it's my turn?

While the COVID-19 vaccine supply remains limited, you can sign up for the County's notification tool to receive a notification when the state makes you eligible and information about how you may get an appointment. It takes less than 5 minutes to sign up: <http://smchealth.org/vaccinesignup>.

This notification system is meant as an interim strategy as the State of California launches a statewide COVID-19 vaccine notification system called MyTurn (myturn.ca.gov), which will offer online appointment scheduling, when you are eligible, for our area soon.

Have more questions? Check out: <https://www.smcgov.org/press-release/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions>

SamTrans Providing Free Rides to Vaccination Sites in San Mateo County

Since late February, SamTrans has been providing free bus rides on existing service routes to COVID-19 vaccination sites for people who live or work in San Mateo County. Passengers going to a vaccination site must let the bus operator know when they board the bus and show proof of the vaccine appointment or a vaccination card. Fare payment to vaccination sites will not be required until further notice.

Redi-Wheels and Redi-Coast paratransit services will also offer eligible participants free rides to and from vaccination sites. Riders need to indicate while booking their reservation that the trip is for the purpose of a COVID-19 vaccination. Staff will then alert the driver that the rider is not required to pay the fare. Learn more at samtrans.com.

Also, Caltrain is providing free train rides to and from COVID-19 vaccination sites for people living or working along the corridor within San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Passengers going to and coming from a vaccination site must notify a conductor as soon as they board the train and must show proof of the vaccine appointment or a vaccination card. Fare payment to vaccination sites will not be required until further notice.

Vaccine information is always changing — be sure to visit <https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination> for frequent updates.

Concerned about Rent? California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program

Governor Newsom has signed a bill extending the state eviction moratorium through June 30. This moratorium applies to residential properties and is similar to the last state moratorium, which expired Jan. 31. Under the extension, COVID-19-affected tenants now have until June 30 to pay 25% of back rent accrued since Sept. 1, 2020.

Renters who cannot pay their rent due to COVID-19 and eligible landlords can apply for financial relief through an online portal that opened on March 15. This program helps renters who fell behind on their rent payments due to a COVID-related loss of income or COVID-related increase in expenses. Up to 80% of unpaid rent will be repaid for low-income tenants who did not pay their full rent between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 (if landlords agree to forgive the remaining 20%). Partial rental assistance (up to 25%) also is available for tenants whose landlords decline to participate, and eligible tenants may be able to receive help with part of their future rent bills.

Learn more at https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/index.html or call the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Call Center at 833-430-2122.

Behind on Rent Due to COVID-19?

The California COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act helps you stay in your home.



DO NOT PANIC!

Avoid making big decisions like moving, taking a loan, or signing any repayment agreement until you are sure you know about your legal rights and available financial assistance.



DO provide a signed Declaration of COVID-19-Related Financial Distress to your landlord.

If your landlord serves a written demand for payment with a Declaration form, sign and return the form within 15 days. Keep a copy or take a photo. You do not have to wait for the landlord to demand the rent and serve the form to you. You may use the "Declaration of COVID Financial Distress" form found at www.legalaidsmc.org/covid19.



DO pay what you can safely afford toward your current rent, with the goal of paying at least 25% of the rent for September 2020 through June 2021 by June 30, 2021.



DO seek assistance if you cannot afford to pay 25% of the rent by June 30, 2021.

Find information at www.legalaidsmc.org/covid19 about state and local rental assistance funds available after March 15, 2021.



DO NOT ignore written notices or legal papers from your landlord.

The COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act has many provisions that prevent eviction and provide debt relief if you assert your right to those protections.

For legal assistance, call Legal Aid at (650) 517-8911 to schedule a free consultation.

LEGAL AID SOCIETY
OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

COVID-19 Resources

Free Access to Mental and Emotional Health Tools via Headspace App

So many of us are feeling the impacts of COVID-19, especially in our mental and emotional health. To address this, San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Headspace are working together to provide free tools, videos, guided exercises and more via the Headspace app to help residents manage stress, concerns or anxiety. This resource normally costs \$70 a year but is now available free of charge to anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in San Mateo County.

Sign up to access meditations, sleep sounds, and movement exercises designed to help you care for your mind — all free through August 2021 for new Headspace members. To start your free access, go to <https://www.headspace.com/smchealth> to sign up and create your new login. Visit the Apple App Store or Android App Store to download the Headspace App, then use your new login to access the full app features.

Whether near or far, we are all still connected.



Additional Resources

- Safe, easy and no-cost **COVID-19 testing** is still widely available at County-sponsored locations for everyone who works or lives in San Mateo County regardless of symptoms. Appointments at ALL TEST SITES are STRONGLY encouraged as there is no guarantee you will be seen without one. Remember to bring your photo ID and the reference ID from the confirmation email to your appointment. Visit <https://www.smcgov.org/testing> to find a location and schedule your appointment!
- The **San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund** provides financial support to immigrant families left out of the federal government's relief efforts: <https://missionassetfund.org/immigrant-families-grant-sm>
- The **Housing Industry Foundation's** Emergency Housing Fund provides emergency housing assistance: <https://www.hifinfo.org/hifstrong/>
- For a wide variety of resources and assistance, visit our **COVID-19 Resource Page for Residents & Small Businesses**: [cmo.smcgov.org/covid-19-resources](https://www.smcgov.org/covid-19-resources)
- **Second Harvest Food Bank** offers food at various locations throughout San Mateo County: <https://www.shfb.org/get-food/>. Also, food programs also are listed on the **County's Food Assistance page** at smcgov.org/food
- The **San Mateo County Economic Development Association** provides resources for assistance and guidance for businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19: <https://www.samceda.org/covid-19-general-resources>

Organization Spotlight: Vocational Rehabilitation Services

County Partnership Brings 60,000 Free Masks and Information to County Residents in Hard-Hit Neighborhoods



Wearing a face covering is one of the most effective ways of protecting yourself against COVID-19. Money, language and lack of information are barriers that make it hard for some County residents to get a mask. The Office of Community Affairs has teamed up with the County's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to package more than 3,000 masks a day that are being distributed free of charge, along with COVID-19 information and test-site flyers in the hardest-hit neighborhoods via the County's Mask Mobile, which some have likened to Scooby Doo's Mystery Machine.

"This is a win-win solution that helps both those who receive the free mask packets and the residents who assembled them at the VRS WorkCenter, and a great example of collaboration between county agencies," said Emma Gonzalez, Manager of the Office of Community Affairs. "We desperately needed a way to get masks and information to residents who could not afford to buy one, and who were not getting the message about the importance of face coverings. Teaming up with VRS allowed us to provide residents with a customized packet that includes a mask, a flyer in three languages, with COVID-19 prevention tips and information about local health services."

VRS is a County agency that serves County residents with disabilities and other barriers to employment. VRS offers paid training and transitional work experience, hands-on job training, job coaching and mentoring that helps thousands of residents get jobs. The mask packets are being assembled in the VRS WorkCenter production facility and helping individuals to gain skills to prepare for community employment.

After the masks and information packets have been assembled, they are being distributed in neighborhoods via the County's colorful Mask Mobile. Over 15,000

masks have been distributed since the beginning of August, and with production at the VRS WorkCenter ramping up, many more will be going out in the coming days.

"We monitor the COVID-19 infection rates in micro neighborhoods on a daily basis and send our Mask Mobile to those areas where the need is the greatest in any given week," explained Gonzalez. "We are thrilled we can use these funds to give back to the community in a way that increases the health and safety of our residents, while providing job training to residents."

For more information about when the Mask Mobile may be in your neighborhood, follow the Office of Community Affairs on Twitter and Instagram @smc_commaffairs or visit the County's Facebook @CountyofSanMateo.



ABOUT US

More than 764,000 people call San Mateo County home. It is where innovation thrives in industries including bioscience, computer software, green technology, hospitality, financial management, health care, education and transportation. The County prides itself on how that prosperity fosters its commitment to protecting and enhancing the health, safety, welfare and natural resources of the community.



Testing for COVID-19 is

- Available for Everyone Who Lives or Works in San Mateo County
- No Cost
- Confidential
- Safe & Easy



Las pruebas COVID-19 están

- Disponibles para todos los que vivan o trabajen en el Condado de San Mateo
- Sin costo
- Confidenciales
- Fácil y seguras

SOBRE NOSOTROS

Más de 764,000 personas llaman hogar al condado de San Mateo. Es donde prospera la innovación en industrias que incluyen biociencia, software, tecnología verde, hospitalidad, gestión financiera, atención médica, educación y transporte. El Condado se enorgullece de cómo esa prosperidad fomenta su compromiso de proteger y mejorar la salud, la seguridad, el bienestar y los recursos naturales de la comunidad.



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Boletín Informativo | Marzo/Abril 2021



ENGLISH
&
SPANISH