

What to do

Effective midnight, Wednesday, March 18, 2020, the Health Officer of Monterey County is requiring people to stay home except for essential needs. The intent of this order is to ensure the maximum number of people self-isolate in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible.

Vulnerable populations including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions must stay home. All community members should stay home except to perform essential duties for business continuity or government functions, to get food, care for a relative or friend, get necessary health care, or perform activities related to maintaining a healthy lifestyle during this time.

It is OK to go outside for walks if you are not in a group and practice proper social distancing

This order is in effect until Midnight, April 8, 2020.

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

Why are we doing this?

This is a critical intervention to reduce harm from the spread of the coronavirus in our community. This is a mandatory order enforceable by a fine or jail.

Now is the time to do everything we can to prevent the situation from getting much worse in a matter of days or weeks. Every hour counts. We need and appreciate the cooperation of everyone who lives and works in Monterey County to act immediately.

While this news may feel alarming, it is a necessary step to prevent a worsening situation. The patterns of the virus around the world, and in our own state, tell us that moving right now to maximize social distancing and restrict people gathering is the best way to fight the virus and save lives.

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

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

How long will we stay home?

This goes into effect on Midnight, Wednesday, March 18, 2020. It is currently set to last for 3 weeks through Midnight, Tuesday, April 8, 2020.

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

What can I do? What's open?

These essential services will remain open:

- City/County government services: Police/Sheriff stations, fire stations, hospitals/clinics and healthcare operations, jails, garbage/sanitation, transportation, utilities (water, power and gas) and most offices
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Food: Grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores/plumbers/ electricians and those who provide services necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences
- Banks
- Community benefit organizations on a case-by-case basis
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Cemeteries

What's closed?

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios

What can't I do?

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

Where does this apply?

This is in effect throughout all of Monterey County including all cities, towns and unincorporated areas.

Is this mandatory or is it just guidance?

It is mandatory. This Order is a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply, and it is a misdemeanor crime not to follow the order (although the intent is not for anyone to get into trouble).

It is critical for everyone to follow the Order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect themselves, their loved ones, friends, neighbors and the whole community.

All persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply if they do not fall within the exemptions that are specified in the Order.

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

You can still get your health needs addressed. Essential travel includes exemptions for medical appointments and services such as dialysis.

It is advisable to contact your health care provider to see if they are providing regular services. Some services, especially elective procedures, may be postponed or canceled.

If you are feeling sick, please first call your doctor, a nurse hotline, or an urgent care center.

Do not go to the emergency room of a hospital unless you are having an actual emergency.

Can I leave home to visit friends or family members if there is no urgent need?

No. For your safety as well as their safety, we need to help each other fight the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home.

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

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

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

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

Yes, but only for essential travel.

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

Can I take public transportation?

Yes, but only for essential travel.

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

You want to help everyone be able to practice social distancing. Therefore, it's important to only take public transportation for essential activities.

Can I get my prescriptions or other health care needs? Can I leave home to go to the pharmacy to get my prescription filled?

Yes. Drug stores and other medical supply stores can operate. When possible, you should have the drug store deliver your prescription medicine to your home.

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

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

and allows employees of those businesses to keep working and to ensure those businesses are operating.

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

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

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

Can I leave home to care for my elderly parents or friends who require assistance to care for themselves? Or a friend or family member who has disabilities?

Yes. Be sure that you protect them and you by following social distancing guidelines such as washing hands before and after, using hand sanitizer, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance when possible, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue.

Can I visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or other residential care facility?

Generally, no.

It is strongly recommended that you do not go to a hospital unless you are seeking emergency medical attention or accompanying a minor who is under 18 years old or someone who is developmentally disabled and needs assistance.

Please use alternative ways to communicate with loved ones at nursing homes and residential care facilities. Like facetime and texting. The residents at those locations are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

If you need to know more, please contact the facility you want to visit by phone before you leave.

This is difficult, but it is necessary in order to protect hospital staff and other patients.

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

If possible, walk or drive yourself to the healthcare. If someone else in your home is sick and can drop you off, that is another good option. You want to try to avoid exposing others to any germs you have, especially if you are seriously ill.

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

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

What if I can't get out of the home? How can I get supplies and food?

Please contact friends, family, or others you know who can provide support. They are permitted to pick up any of your needs. Please also contact 211 if you do not have family or friends who can drop off food and supplies, the operators can connect you with a local aide to assist.

What about childcare and preschool?

- Must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer each day
- No interchanging of groups of children
- If more than one group is at a facility, then each group must be in a separate room (no mixing of groups)
- Each provider must stay with only one group and not change

Who do I contact if I have questions?

- Please call 211, for all non-emergency and non-medical inquiries.

Can I go buy pet food or take my pet to the vet?

- Yes

I receive mental health treatment; can I still go to their office?

- Yes, but perform good hygiene practices and social distancing.

Can I go for a walk in my neighborhood?

- Yes, but perform social distancing

Do I have to perform social distancing at home with my family?

- No

What happens if I don't comply with this order?

- You can be fined or imprisoned

I am a fisherman; can I still go fish?

- Yes, if you are in the business of supplying fish to other establishments.

How will the agriculture industry be impacted by this Order?

- Farming, ranching and livestock businesses which provide food are exempt from the Order. Those whose jobs include food production such as planting, harvesting, processing, packing and transporting may go to work but as much as possible comply with social distancing practices.

I work in construction, how will this Order impact my job?

- This Order impacts new construction which is not allowed. On going construction is exempt and can continue

Can I still go to church, synagogue, or mosque?

- No. Places of worship have not been exempted as essential activities under the order. Places of worship can still provide services listed in the order as essential such as food banks and funerals.

What about if I need medical care?

- Hospitals, medical facilities are exempted from the Order. You are free to go there and get medical attention.

Can I pick up my prescriptions?

- Yes

I own a business, what am I supposed to do?

- If you don't fall within an exception, besides performing basic minimum functions, you need to close.

Is there relief for small business?

- There is effort on the federal level to grant relief to small businesses.
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6201/text>

I had tickets to an event, will I get my money back?

- You will have to work with the host of your event to see if the event is rescheduled or your money will be refunded.

How do I prove that I am allowed to be outside?

- The order contemplates that citizens will adhere to their civic duty and follow the order for the greater good of the community and comply with the order. At this time there is no requirement of proof that you are allowed to be outside your residence.

Do I have to report to jury duty?

- The courts are under the jurisdiction of the State of California. Please call the number on your jury service form for instructions as to whether you should appear. If required to appear, practice strong hygiene and social distancing.

I have a citizenship test; can I still go take my test?

- Essential government functions are determined by the government entity that has jurisdiction. In this case, the federal government will determine whether citizenship tests are going forward. Please contact the appropriate government agency administering the test to determine whether you should appear. If required to appear, practice strong hygiene and social distancing.

What if I work in a different county that is not implementing this type of order?

- Travel to and from Monterey County is allowed for purposes of performing essential life functions. If you work in a county that is not implementing similar restrictions and are required to go for work, please practice strong hygiene and social distancing while at work and comply with the order while in Monterey County.

I am an Uber/Lyft driver, can I still work?

- Yes, when providing rides for essential activities or providing rides to people performing essential government functions, essential infrastructure, or essential business

I operate a grocery store, I am worried about people hoarding, looting, and too many people in the store at once, what do you recommend?

- We recommend (not require) the following:

- Increase security;
- Limit the amount of people in the store at once;
- Implement an organized line system where people are spaced at least a few feet apart (ideally 6 feet);
- Implement purchase limits on toilet paper, soap, hand sanitizer
 - An example: 1 person/family can buy 1 package of toilet paper, one bar of soap, 1 sanitizer per shopping trip.
- Extend hours;
- Offer pick up or deliveries of grocery items; and
- Increase the frequency of cleaning.

My child is away at college, can I go pick them up and return home?

- Yes

My wedding is scheduled next week at my church, can it still go on?

- No

Will cemeteries remain open?

- Yes, they can continue to employ people and maintain operations. We consider cemeteries an essential infrastructure. However, please implement social distancing.

I operate a food bank that services dinner, can I still operate?

- Yes, but have the food to go and try implement good hygiene and use social distancing.

I don't have a washer/dryer in my home. Can I leave to do laundry?

- Yes, you can go to a laundromat mat and other laundry service providers.

I am homeless, how can I comply with the order?

- If you don't have a place of residence, it is strongly encouraged you find shelter.