



# Alameda County FAQs for Shelter in Place Order

## Effective on May 4, 2020

**This document was last updated on April 29, 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.

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### *General Questions*

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#### **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 May 4 Order do?**

This new Order replaces the March 31 Shelter in Place Order as of 11:59 p.m. on May 3, 2020. This updated Order requires that most people continue sheltering in their place of



residence through 11:59 p.m. on May 31, 2020. It allows some businesses to open that could not operate under the March 31 Order and some low-risk activities to resume.

You are still allowed to participate in “essential activities” or to work for an “essential business” if it is not possible for you to work from home. This means that you are allowed to leave your home for specified reasons—like to make sure you have the necessities of life (discussed more below) such as getting food and medical supplies, or to perform work for an essential business that you cannot complete from your home. You are also allowed to go outside to take care of a pet or for exercise so long as you don’t congregate in a group and maintain at least six feet of distance between you and other people who aren’t part of your family or living unit. The new Order also allows “outdoor businesses” to open their facilities to the public.

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

**3. When does this Order take effect? When does it end?**

As of 11:59 pm on May 3, 2020, everyone in the County must strictly follow this new Order. This new Order will be in effect until May 31, 2020, but that date could be changed by the County Health Officer.

**4. Have the FAQs been updated to reflect the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order extension effective May 4, 2020?**

Yes.

**5. 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 [the counties of Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara](#), 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.

**6. 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. [Where a conflict exists between this Order and any state public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic](#), the most restrictive provision controls.

**7. 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.

**8. 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.

**9. Why is this Order in place?**

This Order is issued based on evidence of continued significant community transmission of COVID-19 within the County and throughout the Bay Area; continued uncertainty regarding the degree of undetected asymptomatic transmission; scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically; evidence that the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of the County places it at risk for serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19; and further evidence that others, including younger and otherwise healthy people, are also at risk for serious outcomes.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease in the general public, which is now a pandemic according to the World Health Organization, there is a public health emergency throughout the County. Making the problem worse, some individuals who contract the virus causing the COVID-19 disease have no symptoms or have mild symptoms, which means they may not be aware they carry the virus and are transmitting it to others. Further, evidence shows that the virus can survive for hours to days on surfaces and be indirectly transmitted between individuals. Because even people without symptoms can transmit the infection, and because evidence shows the infection is easily spread, gatherings and other direct or indirect interpersonal interactions can result in preventable transmission of the virus.

**10. 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.

### **11. Why aren't more businesses allowed to open?**

Thanks to the collective effort and sacrifice of the 7 million residents across the Bay Area, we have made progress in slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus, ensuring our hospitals are not overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases and saving lives. This progress allows us to ease some restrictions to allow lower-risk outdoor businesses and outdoor activities to resume, so long as they strictly comply with social distancing requirements and other protections in the Order.

The Order also adds certain business activities to the essential business list, including construction and commercial real estate transactions—that have become critical as we gradually head into a period of expanded economic activity in which more space to accommodate increased social distancing will be necessary.

However, at this stage of the pandemic, we need to maintain most of the restrictions of shelter-in-place so that we do not lose the progress we have achieved. Lifting too many restrictions too soon could easily lead to a large surge in cases and result in avoidable hospitalizations and deaths, and it may also lead to longer-term economic harms.

### **12. Does this revised Shelter in Place Order mean that I no longer need to comply with the face covering requirement when conducting essential business and when around others outside of their immediate household?**

No, you must continue to comply with the Face Covering Order. Click [here](#) for more information about the face covering requirement.

### **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 effective May 4, 2020:*

<http://www.acphd.org/media/572718/health-officer-order-20-10-shelter-in-place-20200429.pdf>

*California Shelter in Place Order:*

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

*Alameda County Face Covering Order:*

<http://www.acphd.org/media/569455/health-officer-order-20-08-face-coverings-2020.04.17.pdf>

*Alameda County Face Covering Order FAQs:*

<https://covid-19.acgov.org/face-covering-faqs.page>

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## ***Vulnerable Populations***

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### **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.

California has launched multiple initiatives to support older Californians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Restaurants Deliver: Home Meals for Seniors**  
This program will enlist community restaurants to prepare meals that will be delivered to older Californians who are isolating at home and who are ineligible for other nutrition programs during California's stay at home order. Click [here](#) for updated information about participating localities.
- **Friendship Line California: 1-888-670-1360**  
This program will support lonely and isolated older Californians across the state. Friendship Line California is toll-free and available to provide emotional support to older Californians facing loneliness, isolation and anxiety.



## 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/isolation-housing.aspx> 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.

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### ***Shelter in Place & Social Distancing***

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#### 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 or to perform minimum basic operations 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:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands)



- Avoid groups (stay at least six feet away from others)
- Reduce the time you are around others outside the home, even when at least six feet away.
- Wear a face covering when out in public, as required by the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for you (e.g., for children 12 years of age and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance).

**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 you:

- Must stay home.
- Can only leave your home for: "essential activities" or "outdoor activities,"; to work for an "essential business" or "outdoor business,"; to provide or access "essential governmental functions,"; to perform "minimum basic operations" for your employer; or for "essential travel," as those terms are defined in the new Order (you can also see the FAQs for details).
- Cannot host or attend any gatherings, except as specified in the Order or these FAQs.

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.

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## ***Enforcement & Compliance***

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**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](mailto:COVID19compliance@acgov.org).

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## ***Health Care***

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### **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 healthcare provider to see if they are providing regular services. 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 preventive and non-urgent care?**

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, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. With the exception of dental services, preventive and non-urgent care should generally not be deferred (please see the following FAQ regarding dental services). 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, capping group size to reduce in-person interactions, and wearing face coverings.

**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, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. With the exception of dental services, preventive and non-urgent care should generally not be deferred (please see the following FAQ regarding dental services). 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. I run a dental facility – should I continue to provide cleanings and non-urgent dental services to patients?**

No. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dental facilities should postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits,



and prioritize urgent and emergency visits. Dentists should refer to guidance that is available on the CDC website at: [www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html) and on the California Department of Public Health website at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/GuidanceforDentistry.aspx>

If you are a patient, you should contact your dentist to inquire about whether a dental service is urgent or should be deferred.

**9. Can I get my prescriptions or other healthcare 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 and encouraged to operate. When possible, you should have prescription medicines and healthcare supplies delivered to your home.

**10. 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.

**11. 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 healthy people is critical.

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

No. The Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care, including companies working on vaccines and testing for COVID-19.

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***Groceries & Medicine/Prescriptions & Basic Necessities***

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**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 have cannabis delivered to my home?**

Yes. The Order allows licensed cannabis businesses to deliver products to people's residences as long as your local jurisdiction allows it.

**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 other food retail establishments selling food items and non-alcoholic drinks are encouraged to stay open to provide food items and pet supplies to the public. Section 6 of the Order requires all businesses allowed to operate under the Order to follow any industry-specific requirements issued by the Health Officer related to COVID-19. The Health Officer's requirements for essential retail and grocery stores, essential workers, and food facilities can be found [here](#).

When visiting these places, you must help the retailer maintain Social Distancing Requirements, including while you are shopping and standing 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, wear a face covering, and maintain social distancing in the store.

**8. How can I buy non-essential products if stores are closed?**

Most items can be ordered online and delivered to your home, and many other non-essential items may be available from retailers who primarily sell essential items.

**9. Can I go to the bank?**

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



**10. I need to take out a loan or send cash – what kinds of financial institutions are allowed to be open?**

In addition to banks and credit unions, money remittance services, financing services at pawn shops, check cashing services, money lenders, and similar financial institutions can operate. For businesses that mix a financial service component with a retail or other component, only the financial service can be open.

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

Yes.

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***Restaurants & Meals***

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**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.



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## ***Transportation & Travel***

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### **1. I don't have a car. Can I ride the bus or train, or can I get a ride in my favorite ride-share/on-demand car service or a taxi?**

Yes, but public transit, ride-share services, or any other way of traveling can only be used for Essential Travel, which means (see section 16.i):

- i. Travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Businesses, Minimum Basic Operations, Outdoor Activities, and Outdoor Businesses.
- ii. Travel to care for any elderly, minors, dependents, or persons with disabilities.
- iii. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
- iv. Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the County.
- v. Travel required by law enforcement or court order.
- vi. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the County. Individuals are strongly encouraged to verify that their transportation out of the County remains available and functional prior to commencing such travel.
- vii. Travel to manage after-death arrangements and burial.
- viii. Travel to arrange for shelter or avoid homelessness.
- ix. Travel to avoid domestic violence or child abuse.
- x. Travel for parental custody arrangements.
- xi. Travel to a place to temporarily reside in a residence or other facility to avoid potentially exposing others to COVID-19, such as a hotel or other facility provided by a governmental authority for such purposes.

When you are on public transit, you must follow the Order's social distancing requirements to the greatest extent feasible, including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household or living unit; frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer; covering coughs and sneezes; wearing a face covering when out in public, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for you (e.g., for children ages 12 and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms ([see https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)).



When you use ride-share services for essential travel, keep in mind that you should avoid as much as possible being in close quarters in a vehicle that has been used by lots of other people.

**2. Can I use a bike from a bike-share service?**

Yes, you can use shared bikes and scooters for essential travel, such as commuting to work as an essential employee. But keep in mind that shared bikes and scooters are not routinely sanitized. Take precautions, including bringing sanitization wipes, not touching your face while on the bike or scooter, and washing your hands for at least 20 seconds immediately after.

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

Yes. Bike repair and supply shops are treated as an essential business (the same as auto repair shops) because they are necessary to facilitate essential travel.

**4. I work for an Essential Business, as defined by the new Order. Do I need to have a letter from my employer or other documentation to travel?**

No. You do not need to carry official documentation (and the County does not issue any) demonstrating that you are exempt under the new Order. But be prepared to explain if requested by law enforcement why your travel is allowable under the Order.

**5. Am I allowed to commute into or out of the County for work or daily activities?**

Yes, but only to perform essential activities or outdoor activities, to maintain essential government functions, to operate an essential business or outdoor business, or to perform minimum basic operations at a non-essential business, as those terms are defined in the Order. You can also leave to go back home or engage in other essential travel. Otherwise, the answer is no because that puts you and others in the community at risk. Keep in mind that Health Officers in neighboring counties have issued the same or similar shelter in place orders, which you will be subject to while in that jurisdiction. That means that the neighboring county can enforce violations against you.

**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.



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## ***Visiting or Returning to Alameda County***

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- 1. If I'm outside the county travelling for vacation or business, am I allowed to return home?**  
Yes, the Order allows you to come home.
- 2. I'm staying overnight in County but live elsewhere. Can I go home?**  
Yes, you can leave the County to return home.

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## ***Caring for/Visiting Others***

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- 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, coughing or sneezing into a tissue and then washing your hands, **and wearing a face covering**. 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?**  
You may visit a hospital or other healthcare facility only for the purpose of obtaining health care services and supplies. Non-essential visitations are barred. Do not visit a nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or residential care facility other than for the purpose of securing care. People over 60 years of age are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

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 in another household or living unit if there is no urgent need or I am not performing an essential activity?**  
No. For your safety as well as their safety, you are not allowed to visit friends or family members outside your own household. 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.

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***Schools & Childcare & Home-Based Care***

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**1. Does this Order require that schools shut down?**

This Order requires that schools generally stop holding classes at physical locations within the County. However, schools are encouraged to provide distance learning to their students and to provide [free and reduced-price lunches for takeaway or by delivery](#). The Order also allows schools to provide care or supervision of children to enable personnel to work for businesses allowed to operate under this Order or work as essential governmental employees, provided that: (1) children are in stable groups of 10 or fewer; (2) children do not change from one group to another; (3) multiple groups in a facility stay in separate rooms; and (4) providers or educators remain solely with one group.

**2. What if I work for a school?**

Schools are subject to special requirements and restrictions, please visit the California Department of Education website for more information at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>

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, summer camp, and other educational or recreational institution or programs providing care for children?**

Childcare establishments, summer camps, and other educational or recreational institutions or programs providing care or supervision for children of all ages that enable owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors for Essential Businesses, Essential Governmental Functions, Outdoor Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations to work as allowed under this Order. To the extent possible, these operations must comply with the following conditions:

1. They must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer children (“stable” means that the same 12 or fewer children are in the same group each day).  
\* Note: The Alameda County Shelter in Place Order specifies a group size of 12. However, if a childcare establishment is licensed by the California Community Care Licensing Division (CCCL), they recommend a group size of 10. The Alameda County Public Health Department is also recommending the smaller (more restrictive) group size for CCCL licensed facilities.
2. Children shall not change from one group to another.





3. If more than one group of children is at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
4. Providers or educators shall remain solely with one group of children.

For additional guidance around childcare facilities such as infection control, visit <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov/resources/childcare-schools-colleges.aspx>

**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

**6. I am a nanny. Will I get in trouble if I go to work?**

The Order allows nannies and childcare providers caring for a child in the child's own home to continue working.

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***Home Repair, Housekeeping & Landscaping***

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**1. Can home service workers continue to provide their services?**

Home service workers can keep providing services in homes if they are essential to health, safety, sanitation, or the necessary operation of the home. This includes plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other services needed to maintain a safe and sanitary home. Home construction and repair work is also allowed, as is home-based care for children, adults, seniors, and pets.

**2. What if I have a service or equipment emergency at my home, such as with plumbing or electricity?**

Service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators can keep working and providing services to the public that are necessary to maintain a livable, sanitary, and functional household. You can call your building manager or one of these service providers, or you can also visit your hardware store to assist with making your own repairs.



**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?**

Yes. Arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar service professionals can operate as outdoor businesses, as that term is defined in the Order, but they must strictly comply with social distancing requirements.

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***Recreation, Entertainment, Weddings,  
Social & Religious Activities***

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**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 work out?**

If you will be outdoors and not in close contact with other people or using equipment that other people outside your household have touched, yes. Otherwise, no. Fitness centers, gyms, fitness equipment at parks, climbing walls, swimming pools, and other recreational and fitness facilities with equipment that lots of people touch or areas where people gather close together are closed.

**3. The Order prohibits non-essential travel on foot or bike—can I still go on a walk or take a bike ride?**

Yes. The Order allows you to go outside for exercise activities like walking and running, as long as you strictly follow social distancing requirements including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes wearing a face covering when out in public, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for you (e.g., for children 12 years of age and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).



**4. 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 enjoy other outdoor activities. But operators of parks, beaches, and other open spaces may restrict entry, close certain areas, or close the whole facility altogether if the Health Officer orders those measures to reduce crowding and limit risk of COVID-19 exposure.

While you're on a hike or enjoying an open space area, you must strictly follow social distancing requirements including maintaining a distance of six feet from everyone outside your household or living unit, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering when out in public, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for you (e.g., for children 12 years of age and younger, or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

**5. 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.

**6. Can I go to a bar, nightclub, or theater?**

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

**7. Can I go to the gym or health club?**

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

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

You can take your kids to the park or other areas to run around in open spaces, or bring your own sports equipment to an open space as long as it is used only by members of your own household and not shared with other people. Recreational areas with equipment that lots of people touch or areas where people gather close together, like playgrounds, picnic areas, barbecue areas, and dog parks, must be closed and you cannot use them while the Order is in effect.



**9. 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, swimming pools, spas, and dog parks.

**10. Can I play team sports?**

Sports with shared equipment or physical contact, like soccer, basketball, baseballs, softball, and tennis, may only be played with members of your same household or living unit.

**11. Can golf courses reopen under the new Order?**

Outdoor recreation facilities that are not expressly prohibited by the Order, such as golf courses, skate parks, and athletic fields, are permitted to open only if they comply with any restrictions on access and use that are established by the Health Officer, another government agency, or other entity that manages such area to reduce crowding and risk of transmission of COVID-19. **At this time, the California State Public Health Officer is not permitting golf courses to be open.**

The Health Officer will carefully monitor any changes to the State Shelter Order about golf courses. In the event that the State relaxes restriction on golf courses, golf courses will be allowed in the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order (section 16.a.iii.4), so long as there is social distancing.

**12. Can common recreational spaces in apartment buildings (like gyms and roof decks) stay open?**

No. For apartment dwellers, the Order's shelter in place requirements for the "household or living unit" means their own apartment unit, not the building or complex as a whole. Common recreational spaces shared with others in the apartment building or complex, like apartment gyms, barbecue areas, and roof decks, must be closed like any other public recreational space that contains high-touch equipment or encourages gathering.

**13. What about common areas in apartments, like shared laundry rooms, that residents need to access for sanitation needs?**

Apartment residents should be allowed to access facilities that are required for household cleaning and sanitation needs. Owners of apartment buildings must enhance cleaning of high-touch surfaces in these areas, and residents must observe all social distancing requirements in the Order, including: maintaining at least 6 feet of separation from other people who are not part of their own household; washing their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds each time (or using hand sanitizer); coughing or sneezing into a tissue or sleeve (not their hands); wearing a face covering when out in public, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required (e.g., for children 12 years of age and younger, or anyone who has



trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding using the shared facility if they are sick.

**14. Are last rites permitted?**

Last rites are permitted for non-COVID-19 and non-suspect COVID-19 people. For COVID-19 and COVID-19 suspected cases, last rites must be performed virtually or by phone. A priest can arrange with the health care provider to take the holy oil/water from the priest and administer it to the patient’s forehead. However, it is up to the health care provider to determine if it is feasible to administer the holy oil/water.

**15. Are marriages/weddings allowed with social distancing and with how many people maximum?**

Yes. You can have a marriage/wedding ceremony, but only if it is not possible to postpone it. A maximum of five individuals can participate in the ceremony, which includes one officiant, two witnesses, and two individuals who are getting married.

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***Mail & Package Deliveries***

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**1. Can I still get my mail and deliveries?**

Yes. Mail and delivery services may continue to operate under the Order.

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

Yes. The Order allows you to go online, purchase items, and have them delivered to your home.

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***Pets***

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**1. Can I walk my dog/pet?**

Yes, but you cannot use dog parks. Be sure that you distance yourself at least six feet from others who are not part of your household. Also note that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released [guidance](#) advising that you should treat pets as you would your human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside your household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.

**2. Can I take my dog to the dog park?**

No. Dog parks are areas that encourage people to gather together, and are required to close. Also as noted above, CDC has advised that pets should not interact with other pets or people outside the household.



**3. 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 [and wear a face covering](#).

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

**4. Can I take my dog to a groomer?**

Veterinary clinics and similar animal healthcare facilities may provide grooming services, and you may use these services as necessary to maintain the health of your animals. Other grooming services are not allowed to operate.

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### ***Moving, Storage & Short-Term Rentals***

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**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 [other essential needs](#).

**3. Are short-term rentals such as AirBnBs allowed?**

Yes with conditions. Under the County's Order, short-term rentals can likely still operate to a limited extent, but renters should only use short-term rentals when necessary to essential activities. For example, if a person had to travel to the County to help build a hospital, the person could stay in a short-term rental. Another example of an allowed rental would be if a person needed to leave their home for their safety, e.g., domestic violence. Hosts should make clear to potential guests that vacations and leisure travel are not allowed under the County's Order. Hosts should take all reasonable measures to avoid renting to individuals displaying signs of illness and should also deep-clean/disinfect between rentals.



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## ***Funeral Services & Operations***

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**1. Are funeral home providers and mortuaries allowed to continue operating?**

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

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## ***Government & Non-Profit Organizations***

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**1. Do government agencies providing essential governmental functions need to complete and implement Social Distancing Protocols?**

Governmental entities are strongly encouraged to complete Social Distancing Protocols for each of their facilities that remain open for any essential governmental functions, though the Order does not require them to do so. Just as with private businesses, Social Distancing Protocols assist governments in implementing risk reduction measures identified by the Health Officer, ensure that government agency staff and community members accessing government services are protected, and inform government employees and members of the public visiting the facilities about their respective responsibilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Each department or agency continuing to perform essential governmental functions at the workplace is encouraged to complete and implement a Social Distancing Protocol for its facilities, post the protocol where it is publicly visible, and distribute the protocol to its employees.

**2. 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. Each government agency identifies the services that qualify as essential governmental functions, and designates the personnel who will continue providing those functions.



**3. I work for the government—Can I continue to go to work?**

As a government employee, you can continue to go to work if your employer designates you as an essential employee. Each government agency is responsible for determining which of its workers are essential workers.

**4. Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue operating?**

Yes, if they are an essential business or outdoor business, as described in the Order, or if they contract with a governmental entity and provide an essential governmental function. Non-profits that are allowed to continue operating include, for instance, food pantries, organizations providing housing for homeless residents, and organizations providing other critical services. Other non-profit organizations cannot continue operating their facilities, except to provide minimum basic operations, such as maintaining the value of inventory, keeping the site safe and secure, providing for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses, or ensuring that employees are able to work remotely. All employees may also work remotely from their residences.

Unless closer contact is necessary for their work, all employees must strictly comply with the Order’s social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another, frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as required in the Health Officer’s [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

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***Essential Workers & Businesses (General Information)***

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**1. What are “Essential Businesses”?**

The following excerpt from the Order lists the “Essential Businesses” ([see section 16.f 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 as permitted under the State Shelter Order and only pursuant to the Construction Safety Protocols listed in Appendices B1 and B2 and incorporated into the Order by reference. Public works projects shall also be subject to Appendices B1 and B2, except if other protocols are specified by the Health Officer;
- 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. 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 real estate 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 present 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/or operation of residences and Essential Businesses;
- xiii. Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
- xiv. Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, or as allowed under subparagraph xxvi, provided that social distancing of six feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible;
- xv. Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;
- xvi. 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;
- xvii. Funeral home providers, mortuaries, cemeteries, and crematoriums, to the extent necessary for the transport, preparation, or processing of bodies or remains;
  - xviii. 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;
  - xix. 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;
  - xx. 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;
  - xxi. Home-based care for seniors, adults, children, and pets;
  - xxii. Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
  - xxiii. Professional services, such as legal, notary, or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with non-elective, legally required activities or in relation to death or incapacity;
  - xxiv. Services to assist individuals in finding employment with Essential Businesses;
  - xxv. Moving services that facilitate residential or commercial moves that are allowed under this Order; and
  - xxvi. Childcare establishments, summer camps, and other educational or recreational institutions or programs providing care or supervision for children of all ages that enable owners, employees, volunteers, and contractors for Essential Businesses, Essential Governmental Functions, Outdoor Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations to work as allowed under this Order. To the extent possible, these operations must comply with the following conditions:
    - 1. They must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer children (“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 at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
    - 4. Providers or educators shall remain solely with one group of children.



The Health Officer will carefully monitor the changing public health situation as well as any changes to the State Shelter Order. In the event that the State relaxes restrictions on childcare and related institutions and programs, the Health Officer will consider whether to similarly relax the restrictions imposed by this Order.

**2. Will all business offices and stores be required to close?**

No. “Essential businesses” and “outdoor businesses” may keep their facilities open and continue providing their services and products to the public. Employees may leave home to go to these jobs. But all businesses, including essential and outdoor ones, are required to maximize the number of employees working from home and bring in only those employees who can’t carry out their job duties from home. Businesses that are not “essential businesses” or “outdoor businesses,” as those terms are defined in the Order, must cease all activities at their facilities within the County, except to provide minimum basic operations, such as maintaining the value of a business’s inventory, keeping the business site safe and secure, ensuring that employees are able to work remotely, or providing for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses. Minimum basic operations does not include providing curbside pickup. Employees may otherwise work from home.

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***Essential Workers & Businesses (For Employers)***

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**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” 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 updated from prior versions to address new requirements listed in this Order or in related guidance or directives from the Health Officer. The form is attached to the [Order as Appendix A](#). View the Order for more details about this 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 [and to wear face coverings](#).

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?**

Yes, it does, except for the following “Minimum Basic Operations,” which are defined in the following excerpt from section 16.g of the Order:

- 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. For clarity, this section does not permit businesses to provide curbside pickup to customers.
- 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.

Other than to maintain minimum basic operations, your employees can only work remotely from their residences. Any employees who are onsite must strictly follow the Order’s social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another (unless incompatible with the job duty), frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as required in the Health Officer’s [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).

You must also prepare, post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the [Order](#)) for any facility where you are carrying out minimum basic operations, and you must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee.



**4. What is an outdoor business? What requirements apply to them?**

An outdoor business is a business that was primarily operating outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. For retail businesses, this means that more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales was outdoors prior to March 16, 2020. The Order provides some examples of common outdoor businesses, such as plant nurseries, agricultural operations, and landscaping and gardening services. Outdoor businesses, including outdoor retail businesses, must conduct all business and transactions involving members of the public in outdoor spaces. This means that if an outdoor business includes an indoor facility or indoor portion of its retail space that typically serves the public, that indoor facility or indoor portion of retail space must be closed to the public and all sales must take place outdoors. Employees may continue to use the indoor space as necessary and may bring products outdoors for the public. Outdoor businesses must comply with the Order’s social distancing requirements and post a social distancing protocol.

**5. Are auto dealerships now allowed to serve customers from their facilities under this new Order?**

Only auto dealerships that qualify as “outdoor business,” as that term is defined in the Order, may serve retail customers from their facilities. (All auto dealerships may provide supply and repair services).

**6. Can auto dealerships that are not “outdoor businesses” sell cars online and deliver them to people’s homes?**

Yes, but they cannot sell or lease cars in person.

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

If you serve food, you must do so by takeaway or delivery only. You must also post, implement, and distribute a Social Distancing Protocol, which has been updated to require that face coverings are worn by all employees and patrons in your facility (except those for whom face coverings are not required, like very young children).

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.

**8. What if I have a cafeteria at my worksite? Can it continue to operate to serve workers who are doing work exempted in the Order?**

The cafeteria can operate like other food facilities. It can serve food to the remaining employees, so long as the employees take the food away and do not eat it in the cafeteria. The cafeteria must strictly follow the social distancing requirements in the Order.



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

Yes, but only to the extent they support or supply those essential businesses.

Warehouses and distribution centers should minimize the number of employees onsite and strictly comply with all social distancing requirements in the Order.

**10. 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.

**11. 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.

**12. 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, allergy shots, eye exams, physical therapy, and surgeries. With the exception of dental services, preventive and non-urgent care should generally not be deferred (please see the following FAQ regarding dental services). 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.

**13. I run a dental facility – should I continue to provide cleanings and non-urgent dental services to patients?**

No. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dental facilities should postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits, and prioritize urgent and emergency visits. If you are a patient, you should contact your dentist to inquire about whether a dental service is urgent or should be deferred.

Dentists should refer to guidance that is available on the CDC website at:

[www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html) and on the California Department of Public Health website at:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/GuidanceforDentistry.aspx>



**14. Can medicinal and/or recreational cannabis businesses and growers 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. [Suppliers to and licensed growers can operate as well](#). 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.

**15. Can gardening and landscaping services continue to operate?**

Yes. Arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar service professionals can operate as outdoor businesses, as that term is defined in the Order, but they must strictly comply with social distancing requirements.

**16. 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.

**17. Are janitorial/custodial and security staff essential workers?**

Yes, janitorial/custodial and security services are allowed because they are necessary for health, safety, and sanitation. If the janitorial/custodial and security staff are working, please visit CDC's [website](#) for more business guidance.

**18. 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.

**19. 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.

**20. Can real estate agents show residences or commercial properties in person?**

Generally, no. Real estate agents, escrow agents, and other service providers that facilitate real estate transactions like home sales, apartment rentals, and sale of commercial properties are essential workers, but all appointments and viewings must happen virtually (via video or livestream). If a virtual viewing is not possible, then a single photographer or videographer is permitted to visit the property once to take



photographs and/or video. This should be done at a time when the occupant is not present in the residence. Only if these options are not possible, then in-person showings can occur by appointment with no more than two visitors at a time from the same household, and only one agent showing the property. In-person showings or walk-throughs are not allowed when the occupant is present in the residence. Commercial viewings should be limited to the minimum number of persons possible.

**21. Can notaries public continue to operate?**

Yes.

**22. Can title insurance companies continue to operate?**

Yes.

**23. What if some of the work my business does at its facility is essential and some is non-essential?**

Businesses that include an Essential Business component at their facilities alongside non-essential components must “scale down” their in-person operations to the Essential Business component only. For instance, if 20% of manufacturing capacity in your business is devoted to essential products, and 80% of capacity is devoted to non-essential products, you can only operate at 20% capacity. The exception to this rule is that retail storefronts that are allowed to stay open under the Order do not need to scale down and can keep their entire retail storefronts open.

**24. What if part, but not all, of my retail business is an "essential business" as that term is defined in the Order?**

For retail businesses that fall within section 16.f.ii of the Order (stores that sell food, hygienic items, and certain household consumer products), if at least 25% of the total floor area your store regularly uses for product sales is currently occupied by the products identified in section 16.f.ii, then the store may remain open to the public. For stores that fall within the other categories of essential businesses, if more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales is currently occupied by products associated with that essential business category, then the store may remain open to the public. The section of the Order stating that businesses with both essential and non-essential components must "scale down their operations to the Essential Business component only" does not apply to retail stores.

**25. Can my company tend to its labs under this Order?**

It depends. Your lab may operate only if it performs work that is exempted in the Order. Otherwise, you and your employees are allowed to perform only minimum basic operations onsite at your workplace, and must strictly comply with the Order’s social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another,





frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) .

You must also prepare, post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the Order) for any facility where you are carrying out minimum basic operations, and you must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee. Other than that, employees cannot be onsite at your lab locations.

**26. I operate a “big box store” that sells some clothing in addition to groceries and personal hygiene products. Can I keep open the part of my store that sells clothing?**

Yes. If your store sells a significant amount of groceries and hygiene products, you can keep your entire store open.

**27. Can I operate my liquor store?**

You may keep your liquor store open if it also sells a significant amount of products like food, and household cleaning and personal hygiene items. Specifically, at least 25% of the total floor area your store regularly uses for product sales must be occupied by products identified in section 16.f.ii of the order, like food and personal hygiene items.

**28. I operate a store that mainly sells non-essential goods, but also sells a small amount of essential goods like food and hygiene products. Can I continue to sell products to customers at my storefront?**

No. If you do not sell a significant amount of goods like food, hygiene, or cleaning products, you cannot keep your storefront open. Your store can deliver items directly to customers' residences. Other than that, you can only maintain minimum basic operations, such as store security and safeguarding your inventory.

**29. I operate a large retail store selling largely non-essential items, but we also sell some goods that essential businesses need to operate. Can I keep my retail store open as an essential business that supplies other essential businesses?**

No. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with the support or supplies they need to operate can remain open only for the purpose of supplying those essential businesses. They cannot stay open to keep making sales to the general public from retail storefronts.



**30. I am in the business of manufacturing food that I supply to grocery stores and other food retailers. Am I required to shut down?**

No. Businesses that supply food goods and prepared meals to grocery stores and other food retailers are essential and may continue operating.

**31. My business provides critical services and products for the federal government that we are required to provide on a time-certain basis--can we continue to manufacture these products or perform these services?**

Employees and contractors of any governmental entity may continue to provide the services and products if the governmental entity determines that they are necessary to carry out an essential governmental function.

**32. Can my business keep manufacturing and selling beauty products?**

No. Businesses engaged in the retail sale of hygienic products and household consumer products necessary for personal hygiene, as well as businesses that supply those retailers, are essential businesses. Beauty products do not fall within the exemption. A business that makes and sells beauty products can arrange for shipping or delivery of its existing inventory directly to residences or businesses as part of allowable minimum basic operations, but it cannot continue manufacturing these products within the County.

**33. My business manufactures, supplies, or repairs cell phones. Can it stay open?**

Yes. If your business is primarily engaged in supply or repair of cell phones or other telecommunications devices, then it is essential and may continue to operate under the Order for that purpose.

**34. Can plant nurseries stay open?**

Plant nurseries that qualify as outdoor businesses under the Order may open. An outdoor business is a business that was primarily operating outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. For retail businesses, this means that more than 50% of the total floor area regularly used for product sales was outdoors prior to March 16, 2020.

Outdoor businesses, including plant nurseries, must conduct *all* business and transactions involving members of the public outdoors. This means that if a nursery includes an indoor facility or indoor portion of its retail space that typically serves the public, that indoor facility or indoor portion of retail space must be closed to the public, although employees may bring products outdoors.



**35. Are car washes allowed to continue operating under the Order? What if they are no-touch car washes?**

Car washes that qualify as outdoor businesses under the Order may open. An outdoor business is a business that operated primarily outdoors prior to March 16, 2020, and that has the ability to fully maintain social distancing of at least six feet between all persons. Outdoor businesses must conduct all business and transactions involving members of the public outdoors. This means that if a car wash includes an indoor facility that typically serves the public, that indoor facility must be closed to the public.

**36. The Order states that convenience stores, liquor stores, and other similar types of establishments can stay open if a “significant” portion of the inventory they offer to the public consists of food, hygienic products, or household products necessary for the sanitation, habitability, and operation of a residence. What is a “significant” portion?**

These storefronts may stay open if at least 25% of the total floor area used regularly for product sales is currently being used for food, hygienic products, and/or household consumer products necessary for personal hygiene or the habitability, sanitation, or operation of residences.

**37. Does the Order require that businesses stop work that is necessary to our healthcare system?**

No. The Order exempts any business that is performing work related to the delivery of health care, including 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, and veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals.

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***Essential Workers & Businesses (For Employees)***

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

Many businesses are not allowed to operate under this Order. Essential businesses, as defined in the Order, are allowed (and encouraged) to continue operating. Outdoor businesses, as defined in the Order, are also allowed to operate. If your work is not an essential or outdoor business, you are not allowed to go to work and your employer cannot make you go except for limited minimum basic operations such as maintaining the value of a business’s inventory, keeping the business site safe and secure, or ensuring that employees are able to work remotely. The Order does not prohibit anyone from working from home. Your employer can require you to work from home – and you can do so – if your work allows it.



**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 even if you want to. You can work from home for any business if your employer allows it and your work can be done from home.

**3. I work for 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. But most employees of these companies need to work from home. The only employees of these companies who can go to work are: (i) employees who are needed to maintain the minimum basic operations described in the Order; or (ii) employees who are needed to work onsite to operate, maintain, or repair Essential Infrastructure (i.e., essential global, national, and local infrastructure for internet, computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services for the community) and who cannot perform their work duties from home.

Any employees who are onsite must strictly follow the Order's social distancing requirements, including maintaining a distance of six feet from one another (unless incompatible with the job duty), frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an effective hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a face covering, as required in the Health Officer's [April 17, 2020 Order](#), except if a face covering is not required for them (e.g., anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance); and avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with COVID-19 symptoms (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>). Any business that is carrying out minimum basic operations at a facility in the County must also prepare, post, and implement a social distancing protocol (see section 16.h and Appendix A of the Order) and must provide a copy of that protocol to each employee.

**4. 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.

**5. I work in a cemetery—can I go to work?**

Yes, cemeteries are essential infrastructure.



**6. 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.

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### ***Construction & Essential Infrastructure***

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**1. Can I get a building permit or building inspection from the Planning Department for my construction project, or make sure my business gets the Fire Department's fire safety and hazmat inspection that I need to keep operating?**

Contact the relevant city or county agency to determine if it is still providing the service you need as an essential governmental function.

**2. Are commercial and residential construction projects allowed?**

The Order allows all construction projects that are permitted under the March 19, 2020 Order of the California State Public Health Officer (the "State Shelter Order"), as long as the projects comply with the Construction Safety Protocols listed in Appendices B1 and B2 of the [Order](#). Once they comply with the Construction Safety Protocols, construction sites do not also need to post a Social Distancing Protocol.

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

Yes, if the project you are working on is immediately necessary to the maintenance, operation, or repair of Essential Infrastructure. Essential Infrastructure means airports, utilities (including water, sewer, gas, and electrical), oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste facilities (including collection, removal, disposal, recycling, 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).

**4. What recycling businesses are allowed to operate under the Order?**

All recycling facilities may operate, including but not limited to those providing for recycling of beverage containers, scrap metal, used oil, construction and demolition debris, and any other materials that can be, or are required to be, recycled by the State of California.



**5. Can composting facilities operate?**

Yes. Composting facilities may operate and composting activities may take place.

**6. Can quarries continue to operate under the Order?**

Yes. All quarries must complete, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol and provide all employees with a copy of the Protocol. They must also strictly comply with Social Distancing Requirements set forth in the [Order](#).

**7. My business installs distributed solar, storage, and/or electric vehicle charging systems – can it continue to operate?**

Yes, this is permissible construction activity and must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendix B of the [Order](#). Businesses may also operate to manufacture distributed energy resource components, like solar panels.

**8. I have County Ordinance Code violations on my property and have been ordered by the County (or have agreed with the County) to correct the violation. Can the abatement work be done while the Shelter in Place Order is in effect? Will I be penalized if the work isn't done?**

Yes. This work must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendices B1 and B2 of the [Order](#) or the Social Distancing Protocols in Appendix A, as applicable.

**9. Can I conduct site assessment, remediation, or mitigation work that I have been directed to perform by the County Department of Environmental Health under a remedial action agreement?**

Yes. This work must comply with the Construction Project Safety Protocols in Appendices B1 and B2 of the [Order](#) or the Social Distancing Protocols in Appendix A, as applicable.

**10. Does the Order allow for state-mandated testing, operator inspections, and repairs of underground storage tanks?**

Yes. State-mandated tests and operator inspections of underground storage tanks are essential activities and should continue under the [Order](#). Repairs necessary to maintain the safety of underground storage tank systems and activities to respond to alarms and address unauthorized releases are also essential and should continue. All such work must be conducted in accordance with the Order, including adhering to social distancing requirements.