

Newsom announces new stay at home order

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COVID-19 restrictions could soon become stricter under new guidelines announced this week by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

At a press conference Thursday, Newsom said rising COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations could soon put the healthcare system at the breaking point. The new guidelines are in response to the increases number of people in the hospital and the threat of overwhelming the hospital system in California.

Under the new guidelines, a regional stay at home order will kick in when ICU capacity drops below 15 percent at any one of five regions in the state. Crescent City and Del Norte County are in the Northern California region along with Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity counties.

According the Newsom, no region in the state currently meets the 15 percent threshold, but several are expected to new week. According to the latest data released by Del Norte Public Health, there are no hospitalizations in Del Norte County.

If the stay at home order is implemented, residents are required to stay at home as much as possible and minimize mixing to reduce unnecessary exposure, while still being able to do important things like go to the doctor, buy groceries, pick up take out, go on a hike or worship outdoors. K-12 schools that are already open can remain open and retailers can operate indoors at no more than 20 percent capacity to reduce exposure risk.

The order takes effect Saturday. If a region hits the threshold, it will have 24 hours to implement the stay at home order. Once a region moves into the stay at home status, it will be there for a minimum of three weeks. Counties can only come off the stay at home order once their ICU capacity projected four weeks out reaches 15 percent.

“We are at a tipping point in our fight against the virus and we need to take decisive action now to prevent California’s hospital system from being overwhelmed in the coming weeks,” said Newsom. “By invoking a Stay at Home Order for regions where ICU capacity falls below 15 percent, we can flatten the curve as we’ve done before and reduce stress on our health care system. I’m clear-eyed that this is hard on all of us — especially our small businesses who are struggling to get by. That’s why we leaned in to help our small business owners with new grants and tax relief to help us get through this month. If we stay home as much as possible, and wear masks when we have to go to the doctor, shop for groceries or go for a hike, California can come out of this in a way that saves lives and puts us on a path toward economic recovery.”

“We know what a struggle this pandemic has been for so many California families, but our actions have saved countless lives,” said Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services secretary. “This targeted action will preserve vital ICU beds for people who need them — whether they’re COVID-19 patients or someone who has suffered a heart attack or a stroke.”

“Staying home for three weeks is a sacrifice, but if every Californian did that for a month, we could stop this disease in its tracks,” said Dr. Erica Pan, acting state public health officer. “This public health order strikes the balance between saving lives, providing essential services that we all rely on and still allowing Californians to participate in lower-risk outdoor activities that are crucial for our physical and mental health.”

The terms of the Regional Stay at Home Order closely mirror the March order, with some variations.

What does the Regional Stay at Home Order do?

The Regional Stay at Home Order would be in effect for three weeks after the trigger and instructs Californians to stay at home as much as possible to limit the mixing with other households that can lead to COVID-19 spread. It allows access to (including travel for) critical services and allows outdoor activities to preserve Californians’ physical and mental health. This limited closure will help stop the surge and prevent overwhelming regional ICU capacity.

In any region that triggers a stay at home order because it drops below 15 percent ICU capacity, all operations in the following sectors must be closed:

- Indoor and outdoor playgrounds
- Indoor recreational facilities
- Hair salons and barbershops
- Personal care services
- Museums, zoos and aquariums

Movie theaters
Wineries
Bars, breweries and distilleries
Family entertainment centers
Cardrooms and satellite wagering
Limited services
Live audience sports
Amusement parks

The following sectors will have additional modifications in addition to 100 percent masking and physical distancing:

Outdoor recreational facilities: Allow outdoor operation only without any food, drink or alcohol sales. Additionally, overnight stays at campgrounds will not be permitted.

Retail: Allow indoor operation at 20 percent capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.

Shopping centers: Allow indoor operation at 20 percent capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.

Hotels and lodging: Allow to open for critical infrastructure support only.

Restaurants: Allow only for take-out or pick-up.

Offices: Allow remote only except for critical infrastructure sectors where remote working is not possible.

Places of worship: Allow outdoor services only.

Entertainment production including professional sports: Allow operation without live audiences. Additionally, testing protocol and “bubbles” are highly encouraged.

The order does not modify existing state guidance regarding K-12 schools.

The following sectors are allowed to remain open when a remote option is not possible with appropriate infectious disease preventative measures including 100 percent masking and physical distancing:

Critical infrastructure
Non-urgent medical and dental care
Child care and pre-K

When does a Regional Stay at Home Order end?

The Regional Stay at Home Order will be implemented regionally once there is less than 15 percent ICU capacity remaining in the designated region. After three weeks from the start of the Stay-at-Home Order, the following criteria would apply:

End for a county in a region if the region's ICU capacity projected out four weeks (from three weeks since the stay at home order started) is above or equal to 15 percent. Each county in the region would be assigned to a tier based on the Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

Remain in effect in a county if the region's ICU capacity projected out four weeks (from three weeks since the stay at home order started) is less than 15 percent. This would be assessed on a weekly basis.

Non-Essential Travel Lodging

Except as otherwise required by law, no hotel or lodging entity in California shall accept or honor out of state reservations for non-essential travel, unless the reservation is for at least the minimum time period required for quarantine and the persons identified in the reservation will quarantine in the hotel or lodging entity until after that time period has expired.

Can people go outside?

Members of the same household are encouraged to maintain physical and mental health by safely going to a park, hike, walk or bike ride when safe to do so and socially distanced. Californians are also encouraged to keep connected with loved ones virtually.