



NEWS

March 14, 2020

For Immediate Release

Health Officer Amends Mass Gathering Order *Groups of 50 or more persons now prohibited in San Mateo County*

Redwood City – San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow has amended his previous order (March 12) to further limit the number of persons who may gather. Effective as of 12:01 a.m. on March 15, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on April 6, 2020, public or private gatherings of more than 50 persons are prohibited in San Mateo County.

During the same period, gatherings of fewer than 50 persons are prohibited in San Mateo County unless hosts or sponsors implement all of the COVID-19 risk mitigation measures listed in the order (see below).

The health officer still strongly urges hosts and sponsors to cancel all such gatherings, even with the implementation of mitigation practices.

The order defines a gathering as any event or convening that brings together or is likely to bring together 10 or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed indoor or outdoor space, such as restaurants, bars, theaters, event centers, and boats.

The order includes enclosed outdoor spaces, such as those with a fence, physical barrier, or other structure, and where people are present and likely to be within arm's length of one another for more than 10 minutes at a time.

Exceptions are made for normal operations at airports or spaces where persons are in transit, commercial office space or hotels, places of worship for purposes of conducting religious services or ceremonies, grocery stores, shopping malls and other retail establishments, and hospitals and medical facilities. The health officer strongly urges the implementation of COVID-19 risk mitigation measures in these settings as well.

The order does not include a group of residents within their residence.

The mitigation measures, which are required of gatherings of fewer than 50 persons, are:

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- The space in which the gathering is held must accommodate social distancing by allowing all attendees to stand or sit at least six feet from any other attendee;
- Proper hand hygiene and sanitation material must be readily available to all persons at all times, including soap and waste receptacles. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used.
- Persons hosting gatherings must alert prospective attendees at least 24 hours prior to the gathering that gatherings pose a heightened risk of COVID-19 transmission, and that older adults and individuals with existing health conditions are at particularly serious risk if they contract COVID-19 and should not attend;
- Persons hosting gatherings must clean surfaces with disinfecting wipes or other standard cleaners before, during, and after the event.

Dr. Morrow says that the order and mitigation measures are necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus, safeguard the public, and attempt to conserve health care resources as an influx of new patients is expected. Persons over 60 and those with chronic health conditions are at higher risk of infection and death from COVID-19.

As of Saturday, March 14, 2020, San Mateo County has 32 cases of COVID-19. There are over 150 cases in the surrounding Bay Area.

The text of the order is available here: <https://bit.ly/33iYjnt>

For more information, visit smchealth.org/coronavirus. For news updates from the San Mateo County Emergency Operations Center, subscribe here: cmo.smcgov.org/eoc.

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