



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

COVID-19 Update: State Moves San Mateo County Into “Orange” Tier

Shopping malls, restaurants, places of worship can operate at higher capacity, additional restrictions eased

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. – The state of California today announced the easing of certain restrictions on businesses, indoor and outdoor gatherings and other activities in San Mateo County. The changes take effect at 12:01 on Wednesday morning.

With the risk from coronavirus now officially declared “moderate,” the county moves into the less-restrictive orange Tier 3 in the state’s [four-tier, color-coded plan](#) for reducing COVID-19 with criteria for loosening and tightening restrictions on activities.

The move allows indoor family entertainment centers, outdoor bars and breweries not serving food, indoor climbing walls and certain other businesses and activities to open with capacity restrictions. Dine-in restaurants, movie theaters, places of worship and additional businesses can boost their indoor capacities as well.

To move forward, San Mateo County met key pandemic measures: rates of new COVID-19 cases continued to fall, as did the rates of tests returning positive overall and in disadvantaged areas.

The county met the orange Tier 3 status with a test positivity rate of 1.6 percent per 100,000 population, an adjusted case rate of 3.0 percent per 100,000 population and a [health equity test](#) positivity rate of 3.7 percent per 100,000 population.

“This is a total team effort, and by team I mean everyone who lives and works and loves San Mateo County,” said County Manager Mike Callagy. “Every time you wear your face covering, wash your hands, practice social distancing and take other common-sense

precautions, you contribute to the team effort to reopening our economy and returning our lives to as normal as possible.”

Businesses, museums, child care facilities and other operations that reopen must follow state health guidelines specific to that industry and adhere to local health orders mandating face coverings and other health and safety practices.

Local health officials credit in part the increased number of people who voluntarily got tested for COVID-19 for the good news. The County recently announced the ability to test up to 7,500 individuals each week – including children ages 5 and over at no-cost to participants. The County’s capacity supplements the testing provided by the private health care sector.

Widespread testing plays a key role in the [state’s criteria](#) for loosening or tightening restrictions on certain activities and the economy. The [County’s stated goals](#) are to exceed the state median for testing, ensure equitable access to testing and invest in strategic community testing.

To get tested for COVID-19, call your health care provider or visit smcgov.org/testing.

Local health officials also cautioned that the recent drop in the rate of COVID-19 cases is no cause to let one’s guard down.

“We ask everyone to continue to work to limit the exposure of themselves and their families to COVID-19,” said San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow. “We are moving quickly towards Halloween and the holiday season. We can’t stress enough: wear your face covering, wash your hands, avoid close-contact with anyone not in your household. We have too much riding on our progress to go backwards now. Our comeback depends on all of us.”

The County started September in the most restrictive purple Tier 1. Then on September 22, the state [moved San Mateo County](#) to the red Tier 2.

With the move to orange Tier 3, the following is now allowed:

Shopping malls: Can open indoors with modifications

- Closed common areas
- Reduced capacity food courts

Places of worship: Can open indoors with modifications

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

Dine-in restaurants: Can open indoors with modifications

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

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

- Encourage working remotely

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

Movie theaters: Can open indoors with modifications

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

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

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

Family entertainment centers

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

Hotels, lodging and short-term lodging rentals

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

Museums: Can open indoors with modifications

- Indoor activities limited to 50% capacity

Schools

- Schools may reopen fully for in-person instruction. Local school officials will decide whether and when that will occur

Youth sports

Follow this [guidance for youth sports](#) programs, including school-based, club, and

recreational programs. Review the guidance and prepare a plan to support a safe environment for players, coaches and trainers, families, spectators, event/program/facility managers, workers, and volunteers.

- Check the [questions and answers](#) about youth sports.
- Follow the [guidance related to cohorts](#) of children and youth.

For further information by industry sector, visit the state's [Industry Guidance](#) website.

Small private gatherings: allowed outdoors with modifications

- Masks and physical distancing required
- No more than 3 separate households attend (including the host's)
- Gatherings should be 2 hours or less
- Those with symptoms must not attend
- Those at high risk of severe illness strongly encouraged not to attend
- Singing, shouting, chanting, or exercising strongly discouraged

See guidance for [gatherings](#) and [holidays](#).

Travel, Halloween, Día de los Muertos

The move to orange Tier 3 does not change guidance from state and local health officials regarding travel and holiday gatherings.

Travel

From the [California Department of Public Health](#): You can travel for urgent matters or if such travel is essential to your permitted work. Even though businesses around the state are opening up, avoid travelling long distances for vacations or pleasure as much as possible.

Guidance for Safer Halloween & Día de los Muertos Celebrations

Many traditional holiday activities promote congregating and mixing of households, which increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19. For this reason, San Mateo County Health recommends that you choose a safer alternative way to celebrate Halloween and Día de los Muertos and strongly discourages trick-or-treating. [Learn more](#).

COVID-19 Metrics and Testing

As of Monday, October 26, San Mateo County Health reported a total of 11,198 COVID-19 cases and 159 total deaths since the pandemic began in early March.

COVID-19 [testing for adults and children](#) above the age of 5 is available through the County at no-cost to participants and by private health care providers.

To meet the orange Tier 3 level, a county must report from 1 to 3.9 daily new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents, a positivity rate below 4% and a [health equity metric](#) below 5.5% (a measurement of new cases in disadvantaged areas) over a seven-day period and meet that threshold for two consecutive weeks.

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