

Questions & Answers Related to California's Stay at Home Order as of April 11, 2020

The City of Newport Beach updates this list of questions and answers as we receive new or clarified information from the Federal, State and County governments or as we make changes locally.

The questions and answers are categorized as follows:

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About the Stay at Home and Emergency Orders

What did Governor Newsom sign?

Governor Newsom signed an Executive Order requiring all California residents to stay at home. Residents are permitted to access essential services such as health care, groceries, take-out food, laundromats, banking, pharmacies and gas stations. You can find more information on the [State's Covid-19 response website](#).

Also, those that work in certain private sector jobs and in government are permitted to provide essential and critical services. More information is provided below.

When does the Stay at Home order end?

The governor has not announced an end date.

Will the City of Newport Beach, County of Orange, or State of California enforce the Governor's Order?

No. Our understanding from the governor's comments is that he expects Californians to do the right thing and follow the order. He also expects Californians to "self-regulate", noting its incumbent on all us to change our behaviors.

City staff, including Newport Beach Police Department personnel, will continue to encourage the public to follow the order through direct contacts and our website, social media posts, and signage.

What is the Emergency Order?

On March 15, City Manager Grace Leung, serving in her capacity as the City's director of emergency services, issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency. It was ratified by the City Council on March 18. This action enables the City to access federal and state resources if needed and to potentially recoup City funds spent responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The Proclamation and the City's activated Emergency Center enable us to respond quickly and efficiently to assign personnel and procure needed materials, equipment and services. The order remains in place until it is terminated by the City Council.

Where can I get more information?

- The California Department of Public Health has information on COVID-19 and the Stay at Home Order, a list of Frequently Asked Questions, and more at [covid19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov).
- You can also find information on the [Orange County Health Care Agency's Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#), including details about the County Health Officer's Order.
- The County of Orange Hotline provides recorded information about resources available to county residents. 1-833-426-6411
- The City website also has information at newportbeachca.gov/covid19.

Industry / Business / Employee Information

Is the City of Newport Beach closed?

No, the governor's order permits local government agencies to continue to provide essential services and we are doing so. Our public safety personnel (police, fire, lifeguards) are on duty and we have personnel working in technical and field operations (water, wastewater, harbor, inspectors, etc.) to provide services to our community. Certain administrative personnel are also working as they are needed to support those essential service areas.

However, City buildings including City Hall, OASIS Senior Center, libraries and recreation centers, are closed to the public through May 3.

Should I open my business / go to work?

To enable citizens access to essential services, gas stations, pharmacies, banks, laundromats/laundry services, grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, convenience stores, and take-out and delivery restaurants are permitted to remain open.

In addition, the Stay at Home Order exempts activity necessary for maintaining "the continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors", including critical government services, schools, childcare, and construction, including housing construction.

The State released [additional information](#) that provides more details about "essential critical infrastructure workers" to assist those businesses and employees trying to determine if the stay-at-home order applies to them.

The State has more information and a list of questions and answers here - <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>

We encourage business owners to review the information provided by the State and determine if your business fits one of the categories provided. The City also provides information here – <https://www.newportbeachca.gov/government/departments/city-manager/economic-development/small-business-support>

All businesses permitted to operate under the order should implement social distancing practices (maintaining six-foot distance from others) and other preventive measures.

Is construction work allowed?

Yes. It is one of the work sectors permitted to operate.

What help is there for small business?

Please visit our website for a list of local, state and federal resources available to help small businesses -

<https://www.newportbeachca.gov/government/departments/city-manager/economic-development/small-business-support>

I'm now out of work, what should I do?

Please visit our website for the resources available from the State and others to assist those whose hours have been reduced or are out of work -

<https://www.newportbeachca.gov/government/departments/city-manager/economic-development/support-for-employees>

Does the City have resources available to help employers and workers as they work from home or seek other employment?

Yes. We have a web page of free resources available from the Newport Beach Public Library and local organizations such as SCORE and the Small Business Development Center.

<https://www.newportbeachca.gov/government/departments/city-manager/economic-development/small-business-support/business-employee-resources>

Recreational Activities/Dining/Tourism

Does the City have online recreation or library programs?

Yes. The City has established an [Online Recreation Center](#) that offers classes and activities.

The Newport Beach Public Library offers free resources at www.newportbeachlibrary.org and through its [e-Branch](#). NBPL card holders can place materials on hold and pick them up curbside. The service is available at all NBPL locations, Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Can I go outside to exercise or walk my dog?

Yes, but you must maintain a physical distance of six feet or more from people who aren't part of your household. Gyms and fitness studios are closed.

Are the beaches and parks closed?

Most beaches, parks and most hiking trails in Newport Beach remain open. (Please see the following section for exceptions.) Users must follow social distancing guidelines and maintain a six-foot separation from people that are not part of their households.

What recreation-related limits or closures are in place in Newport Beach?

The City has taken the following actions to further discourage gatherings of any size and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Closures

- **Park amenities closed** - Though City parks are open, but the amenities within the parks including playgrounds, fitness equipment, fields (baseball, soccer, multi-use), all courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball, handball and volleyball) and the dog park are closed.
- **Oceanfront Boardwalk closed** – The Oceanfront Boardwalk on the Balboa Peninsula will remain closed to all users through the duration of the Emergency Order.
- **Bayfront Walkway closed** – Balboa Island's Bayfront Walkway is closed for the duration of the Emergency Order.
- **West Jetty Park** – The park, located near the Wedge in Balboa Peninsula Point, will remain closed through the duration of the emergency order.
- **City Buildings** – City Hall, OASIS Senior Center, and City libraries and recreation centers are closed to the public through May 3.
- **Ocean Blvd. Park and Grassy Areas** - Inspiration Point, Lookout Point, and the remaining grassy areas along the ocean side of Ocean Blvd. are closed until further notice.
- **Goldenrod Footbridge** – The pedestrian bridge is closed until further notice.
- **Buck Gully Trail** – The trail is closed until further notice.
- **The Wedge** – The popular surf area is now closed to all surfboards and flotation devices from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day from now through October 31. The annual "black ball" period typically begins May 1, but was moved up three weeks this year. The beach area from "M Street" to the West Channel Entrance is also now closed.

Limited Use or Access

- **Bayside Drive closed to motor vehicles** - Back Bay Drive is closed to vehicular traffic, to provide more room for recreational users, such as bicyclists, runners and walkers to maintain at least six feet of physical separation from others.
- **Entryway to Balboa Island** - To reduce crowding on Balboa Island, the City has combined temporary traffic diversion with messaging noting “No Island Parking, Stay Home – Stay Safe”. The traffic diversion prohibits access to the island directly from Jamboree Road. Those needed to access Balboa Island, such as island residents and businesses, may do so via Bayside Drive. The traffic diversion is in place until further notice.
- **Ocean Blvd. Sidewalks** - One-way signage is in place along the sidewalks along Ocean Blvd. Pedestrians should walk in a single direction on the sidewalks along one side of Ocean Blvd. and in the other direction on the opposite side of the street to help prevent passing others in close proximity. This one-way directional movement will remain in place until further notice.

Additional Signage in Other Areas

Social distancing signage has been placed in our community’s most popular recreation areas to remind users of the social distancing directive and the importance of maintaining at least six feet of separation from others.

Why is the six-foot separation important?

According to the [Centers for Disease Control website](#), the virus is thought to mainly spread between people who are in close contact (defined as within about six feet). It spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The now airborne droplets can land in the mouths or noses or possibly be inhaled into the of those nearby. Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

What is the City doing about people who aren’t following the six-foot-separation directive?

Our response is in line with what neighboring cities are doing and more importantly, it is in line with Governor Newsom’s expectations. He has not called for enforcement of the social distancing directive. Rather, he is asking Californian’s to self-regulate, use common sense and change our behaviors to conform with the Stay at Home order and social distancing directive.

To reinforce the importance of social distancing, the City is closely monitoring high-visibility and popular areas like the boardwalk and beaches and increased the presence of Newport Beach Police Department personnel. Officers are explaining the Governor's Executive Order and encouraging the public and businesses to follow it.

The City placed more signage in and around our community's most popular recreational spaces this week to reinforce the importance of social distancing and we're also increasing the messages we distribute through our website and social media channels.

Do I need to wear a mask when I go out in public?

The Orange County Public Health Officer issued a recommendation strongly encouraging employees of essential businesses to wear face coverings while interacting with the public and co-workers. The recommendation also applies to residents conducting essential business, such as grocery shopping.

And, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), everyone over the age of 2 should wear a cloth face covering – one that covers your mouth and nose - when going out in public. (There are exceptions – those having trouble breathing or are incapacitated should not wear a face covering.)

A face covering is meant to protect others in case you are infected. Please use a cloth face covering and not a mask meant for healthcare worker. Also, public health officials emphasize that face coverings are not substitutes for physical distancing – keeping six feet away from others – and regular hand washing.

The City of Newport Beach is strongly advising all residents to wear a face covering when out in public to help protect their community and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Are Newport Beach restaurants closed?

Many remain open for takeout and delivery and we encourage those that can, to support our local restaurants. The Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce, Corona del Mar Chamber of Commerce, and the Newport Beach Restaurant Association have assembled lists of the restaurants offering takeout and delivery.

Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce list – <https://www.newportbeach.com/newportdelivers/>

Newport Beach Restaurant Association list – <https://www.visitnewportbeach.com/newport-beach-dining-alternatives/>

Corona del Mar Chamber of Commerce list – <https://www.cdmchamber.com/business-discounts-and-promotions/>

Are Newport Beach hotels closed?

There are hotels open, but occupancy is very low.

Is short-term lodging still allowed?

No new short-term rentals are allowed between April 3 and May 20. Those occupying a short-term rental unit as of April 3 (the day the ban was put in place), were permitted to remain for the duration of their existing rental agreement.

Is fishing allowed on the beach or the jetty?

Yes.

Is boating allowed in the harbor?

Yes, boating is allowed. Please limit occupants to family and those living in the same house. Observe the 6-foot social distance rule whenever possible.

Community-Specific Matters

Why doesn't the City establish a "residents only" parking permit system to save parking in the areas most impacted by visitors?

Some residents have asked the City to issue residential parking permits as part of its COVID-19 response, particularly in the congested beach and harbor areas. There are two main reasons why we haven't done so. Historically, the California Coastal Commission opposes such programs as they hinder coastal access to the public. We've tried and failed before to get resident parking programs permitted. Also, establishing a resident only parking permit system is complex and would take several weeks to properly implement, at a time when City staff must maintain focus on the priorities of emergency response, public safety, and essential services.

The City has taken a number of steps to reduce the number of visitors in the popular beach areas, including closing all beachfront public parking lots and popular attractions such as the Oceanfront Boardwalk on the Balboa Peninsula and the Bayfront Walkway on Balboa Island.

Why are the public restrooms still open?

Public restroom facilities must remain open regular hours for sanitation and public health purposes. Citizens walking or exercising, visitors, City staff and contractors, homeless individuals, and employees of other agencies (County, SCE, Gas Co., etc.), all need to have access to a public restroom. Washing our hands well and often is an important factor in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

I saw that Newport Beach is among the cities with the highest number of COVID-19 cases. What does this mean?

There are several important things to keep in mind about the number of local cases.

1. The city-by-city figures reflect the place of residence for those who have tested positive, not necessarily where the transmission occurred.
2. The data provided does not reflect all COVID-19 cases in a given community because testing is prioritized for those at greatest risk, or who are the most sick. Those who are asymptomatic and have mild cases may not be tested, and therefore not reflected in the data.
3. The city-by-city numbers should not be interpreted to reflect where transmission is geographically focused or not, because COVID-19 is present in all communities in the county.

It is essential for all Orange County residents to practice social distancing as directed by the Governor and the Orange County Health Officer regardless of case count in their city. Doing so will help to reduce the spread of infection, ease the burden on our hospital and healthcare system, and protect those most vulnerable in our county.

The County provides updated information daily at <https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc>

How can I participate in a City Council meeting during the Stay at Home order?

The City of Newport Beach has established a technology solution that enables you to view and participate in Council meetings meeting in real time. Using a program called WebEx, the City will live stream the meetings through its website (www.newportbeachca.gov) and will broadcast the meetings on its cable television channel NBTv (Cox Channel 852 and Spectrum Channel 3). The Mayor and City Council members will be seen on screen as they participate in the meeting from their homes or other secure locations. In addition to providing written comments prior to the meeting, members of the public can call in to provide their comments for agenda items in real time. The telephone numbers are listed after agenda item titles on the Council agendas and will appear on viewers' screens at the appropriate times. Consistent with in-person Council meetings, callers will have three minutes to provide comments on an agenda item.

Here's a summary of how you can provide comments for City Council meeting agenda items.

- You can submit your questions and comments in writing for City Council consideration by sending them in advance of the meeting (24 hours is preferred) to the City Clerk at cityclerk@newportbeachca.gov.
- You can participate via telephone. telephonically. If you are watching the meeting on NBTv or via the livestream, phone numbers for the public to call and to comment on specific agenda items will be posted on the screen. The telephone numbers will also be listed after agenda item titles on City Council agendas.

If you are unable to participate in the meeting by viewing online or NBTv, and providing comments in writing and/or by phone, please contact the City Clerk at (949-644-3005 or cityclerk@newportbeachca.gov) and our staff will attempt to accommodate you.