

 <p><b>SAN JOAQUIN</b> — COUNTY — <i>Joint Information Center</i></p>	<p><b>Joint Information Center</b></p>
<p><b>NEWS</b></p>	<p>San Joaquin Operational Area</p>

For Immediate Release

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**Questions about San Joaquin County Public Health Officer and  
Director of Emergency Services Order directing individuals to  
Stay at Home due to COVID-19**

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**General Information**

**Q. When does this Order become effective?**

A. This Order became effective at 11:59 pm on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

**Q. How long will the order last?**

A. The Order is in place until it is rescinded in writing by the Health Officer.

**Q. What areas does this Order apply to?**

A. This Order is in effect in all of San Joaquin County.

**Q. What does this order do?**

A. This order continues the requirement that residents in San Joaquin County are to stay at home or their place of residence. For most people, this means you and those you live with should remain at home. You are allowed to leave your home for specified reasons to make sure you have the necessities of life such as getting food and medical supplies. *You are also allowed to go outside to take care of pets, go on a walk, exercise outside, and just get outside, so long as you do not congregate in a group and maintain at least six feet of distance between you and other people.*

## Q. Why is this order in place?

A. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the 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 COVID-19 virus have no symptoms or have mild symptoms, which means they may not be aware they are carrying and spreading the virus. Because even people without symptoms can transmit the disease, and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, gatherings can result in preventable transmission of the virus. The scientific evidence shows that at this stage of the emergency, it is essential to slow virus transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed. One proven way to slow the transmission is to limit interactions among people to the greatest extent practicable. By reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, this Order helps preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity in the County.

## Q. Why now?

A. With the increases in cases of confirmed COVID-19 in the County, and deaths, this Order is necessary to slow the rate of spread. Additionally, this order implements Executive Order N-33-20, issued by Governor Newsom on March 19, 2020. Additionally, under the previous County order, the evidence suggests that individual efforts taken to date have been insufficient to reduce the transmission rate.

## Q. What does this order mean?

A. The “stay at home” Order means to stay in your home and not leave unless necessary for one of the designated exceptions listed in the Order. Some reasons you would leave your home are to get food, to get a prescription, to see a doctor, to go to work, if your work is considered essential as defined in the Order, to take your child(ren) to and from childcare that is authorized under this Order, and to help people you care for get the things they need to live and be healthy and safe.

## Q. What is new to this Order?

The order updates and clarifies some language and references from the previous order, such as:

- **Essential businesses** are directed to maximize the number of employees who work from home and may only assign those employees who cannot perform their job from home to work outside the home.
- **Non-essential businesses** are allowed under the new Order to undertake Minimum Basic Operations to protect that business’s inventory and facilities, process payroll and provide for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses. Non-essential businesses must comply with all social distancing requirements and protocols outlined in this new Order. Non-essential businesses must remain closed to the public.
- **Social Distancing Protocols must be adopted and posted by all operating essential businesses and non-essential business performing minimum basic operations before April 18, 2020. See Paragraph 12 of the Order and Attachment A.**
- **Clarifies that only Retail businesses that were selling a significant portion of essential goods such as food, hygiene and consumer household products before March 19, 2020 are permitted to remain open.**

- Businesses supporting residential real estate transactions are allowed to operate within certain parameters contained in paragraph 13 of the Order

**Q. Is the Order mandatory or just guidance?**

A. Yes, it is mandatory. This is a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply. It is critical for everyone to follow the Order 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 Order. Violation of or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

**Q. Am I allowed to leave my home while this Order is in effect?**

A. Yes. Individuals may leave their place of residence to acquire or receive essential services or supplies to ensure the health and safety of yourself and your family, engage in outdoor activity that does not involve close contact with other people, obtain services and supplies for yourself and your family, and to perform employment functions that are permissible under the Order. You may also engage in outdoor activity, keeping in mind the social distancing requirements, such as walking, hiking, biking, running, equestrian activities.

**Q. What are “essential activities”?**

A. Essential activities include:

- To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (including, but not limited to, pets), such as, obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies needed to work from home.
- To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others, such as, canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.
- To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with Social Distancing Requirements, such as, walking, hiking, biking, running or equestrian activities. **DO NOT USE PARK OR PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT**
- To work as an Essential Critical Infrastructure Worker.
- To care for a family member or pet in another household.

**Q. Who do I call if I suspect the Order is being violated?**

A. If you would like to report a suspected violation of the Order, you may call the non-emergency telephone number of the law enforcement agency that provides services in the jurisdiction where the violation is occurring.

- Non-emergency phone numbers
  - Stockton Police Department: (209) 937-8377
  - Lodi Police Department: (209) 333-6727
  - Manteca Police Department: (209) 456-8101
  - Ripon Police Department: (209) 599-2102
  - Escalon Police Department: (209) 838-7093
  - Tracy Police Department: (209) 831-6550

- San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office: (209) 468-4400

*\* This answer is stated as agreed upon by the agency heads for the city police departments and Sheriff in San Joaquin County.*

**Q. What is the role of law enforcement officers who investigate suspected violations?**

A. Assuring the safety of the public is always a primary role of law enforcement agencies. Officers who investigate suspected violations will evaluate the circumstances and determine what action should be taken to assure the safety of the public. In many cases, educating community members on the best ways to assure their safety and the safety of the community is all that is necessary.

*\* This answer is stated as agreed upon by the agency heads for the city police departments and Sheriff in San Joaquin County.*

## **Products and Services**

**Q. Should I stock up on necessities such as food and medicines?**

A. 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.

**Q. Can I get my prescription drugs or other health care supplies?**

A. Yes. Pharmacies, healthcare supply stores, and healthcare facilities are allowed to operate.

**Q. Will my daycare be shut down?**

A. Childcare facilities may only operate if they enable employees exempt by this Order (Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers) to continue working as permitted and only under certain conditions. Among these conditions, children must be cared for in groups of 12 or fewer, groups of children may not mix with each other, and providers may not circulate between groups.

**Q. What if my plumbing gets stopped up? How will I access those sorts of services?**

A. Call your plumber. This Order allows service providers like plumbers, electricians, and exterminators to keep working and providing their services to the public. To obtain supplies for a DIY solution, you can also visit your hardware store, which is allowed to stay open under this Order.

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

A. Yes, the Order identifies businesses that deliver goods or services directly to residences as "essential businesses" that may continue to operate.

## **Travel**

**Q. Does the Order allow me to leave the County?**

A. The Order allows travel out of the County only to perform "essential activities," operate "essential business," or maintain "essential governmental functions," as those terms are defined in the Order.

**Q. What happens if I leave San Joaquin County to go on a planned vacation?**

A. The Order requires that you remain in your place of residence. If you leave San Joaquin County for vacation or another reason that is not an essential purpose exempt

under the Order, then you may not be permitted to return to your residence. Traveling runs the risk of spreading the virus to other areas and exposing new populations.

**Q. Can I continue to use public transit?**

A. Public transit will continue to operate on a limited basis. Public transit can only be used to perform “essential activities,” to get to and from work to operate “essential business,” or to maintain “essential governmental functions,” as those terms are defined in the Order. People riding public transit must comply with Social Distancing Requirements.

## **Food**

**Q. I don't cook - how can I purchase meals?**

A. 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.

**Q. How can I access free or reduced price meals for myself or my family?**

A. 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.

## **Health**

**Q. I become anxious when cooped up in my house. Am I allowed to go to a park or on a hike?**

A. Yes. Spending time outside improves mood and wellbeing, and is particularly beneficial to children. You can go for walk, but should maintain social distance (i.e. be more than 6 feet away from persons who are not part of your household) when on walks and in parks to avoid spread of the virus.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is changing life for all of us. You may feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, depressed, lonely or frustrated in these circumstances. If you are feeling overwhelmed with sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

**Q. What should I do if I am feeling sick?**

A. Unless you are experiencing a medical emergency, call your doctor, nurse hotline, or urgent care center first before going to the hospital. Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are experiencing a medical emergency.

**Q. Where can I get tested?**

A. If you are interested in getting tested for COVID-19 to help protect yourself or other people, visit [ProjectBaseline.com/study/covid-19/](https://ProjectBaseline.com/study/covid-19/). Based on the responses and testing appointment availability, you will learn whether you can get tested through this program. You must be 18 and a resident of San Joaquin County.

## **Business**

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

A. No, Businesses that are needed to maintain the continuity of operations of Essential Critical Infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as may be designated by the State Public Health Officer may continue to operate. For information on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Sectors, see <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

### **Q. What if my business does not support Essential Critical Infrastructure? Does this Order require that I shut down my business facility?**

A. No. The Order retains the prior requirement that all non-essential businesses in the County cease operations, but adds that they may perform Minimum Basic Operations. Minimum Basic Operations are defined in Section 11.a.v. as:

a. 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.

b. 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.

Non-essential businesses performing Minimum Basic Operations are required to adopt and post a Social Distancing Protocol.

### **Q. Are non-profit organizations allowed to continue to operate?**

A. If they provide support essential critical infrastructure as described in the Order, then yes they can and should continue providing those services. This would include non-profits operating food pantries, providing housing for homeless residents, and many other critical services.

### **Q: Are Private recycling centers allowed to operate?**

A: According to Executive Order N-33-20, Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers include those necessary to maintaining safety and sanitation essential to the operation of residences. They include workers who ensure effective removal, storage and disposal of residential and commercial solid waste and hazardous waste.

To the extent private recyclers accept or pickup waste, e-waste, hazardous waste, solid waste they would fall under the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers category they may operate. Private recycling primarily limited to recycling of bottles and cans does not meet the waste collection category, and therefore operation of that type of collection center is prohibited.

### **Q: Are ice cream shops considered part of the Essential Critical Infrastructure in San Joaquin County?**

The Essential Critical Infrastructure list approved by the State Public Health Officer on March 22, 2020 includes the Food and Agriculture Sector. That sector includes the following category:

- Restaurant carry-out and quick serve food operations – including food preparation, carry-out and delivery food employees

Additionally, the Order of the San Joaquin County Public Health Officer allows people to leave their homes for the purpose of obtaining food. Although ice cream may be a

dessert, it is a form of food. Therefore ice cream shops qualify as quick serve food operations and may continue to operate.

Even essential businesses are required to comply with social distancing requirements (See Paragraph 11.f.) If a business fails to comply with the social distancing requirements it is in violation of the Order and may be punished by fines of up to \$1,000.00 per day.

**Q: Can Real Estate Offices continue to operate and hold open houses?**

A: Yes, provided they implement Social Distancing protocols and abide the other requirements of the Order. In person open houses are prohibited. See Paragraph 13 of the Order.

**Q: Can stand alone car washes (carwashes with onsite employees) continue to operate?**

A: The Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers list dated March 22, 2020 categorizes workers who provide auto repair and maintenance as essential workers. The list does not include workers at public car washes. The operation of manned carwashes is contrary to Executive Order N-33-20, and County Public Health Order of March 26, 2020, requiring all persons to remain in the place of residence except to carry out essential activities.

**Q: Can businesses selling new and used cars continue to operate?**

A: The Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers List published by the State Public Health Officer on March 22, 2020, does not include car sales as a category of essential worker. The list does include “Automotive repair and maintenance facilities.” Dealerships that provide automotive repairs and maintenance may continue to provide those services. The revised CISA list, which has not been adopted by the State, includes “Employees supporting personal and commercial transportation services – including taxis, delivery services, vehicle rental services, bicycle maintenance and car-sharing services, and transportation network providers.” The fact that neither list specifically includes car sales may be because the purchase of a car is a highly personal decision that often requires test-driving multiple vehicles. Because the COVID virus can exist on hard surfaces for an extended period, the exclusion may be purposeful as a measure to reduce opportunities for the spread of disease. Because of the potential for increased transmission of the virus, new and used car sales are prohibited.

**Q. What about golf courses?**

A. Golf Courses: All public and private golf courses are to remain closed for play. Golf courses may engage in Minimum Basic Operations. Golf Clubs that provide food service may continue to do so by delivery or through pickup. Golf Clubs that are licensed to, and elect to serve food for pick-up or delivery, shall prepare, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol at each facility where food is served, as specified in Section 12. Social distancing shall be required for persons picking up food on site.

## **County Landfills**

**Q. Why can't you keep the landfill open when grocery stores are open?**

A. Garbage disposal is a critical essential service just like grocery stores. Grocery stores have made changes to their hours and procedures to minimize transmission of the COVID-19 virus, and so have we. Foothill Landfill and Tracy Disposal Material Recovery Facility are still open to all customers because they can safely comply with the County's Stay at Home Order. We are receiving only commercially collected garbage at Lovelace Transfer Station and North County Recycling Center and Landfill to minimize public contact with our staff so that we will have sufficient staff to continue processing

and disposing of garbage through the duration of this emergency. While Foothill Landfill is open to all customers, we are urging residents to limit non-essential disposal trips and travel in order to comply with the Health Officer's orders to eliminate non-essential trips.

**Q. Will my garbage be picked up each week?**

A. Weekly commercial curbside garbage collection continues as before. We are receiving only commercially collected garbage at Lovelace Transfer Station and North County Recycling Center and Landfill to minimize public contact with our staff so that we will have sufficient staff to continue processing and disposing of garbage through the duration of this emergency. Note that commercially collected garbage for the most part refers to garbage-collected curbside from residences, and dumpsters collected from restaurants and other businesses that are still open. The County-owned Foothill Landfill and Tracy Disposal Material Recovery Facility are still open to all customers because they can safely comply with the County's Stay at Home Order. However, the County urges residents to follow the Stay at Home Order and limit or avoid non-essential travel. See <https://www.sjgov.org/solidwaste/> for the address and operating hours of those facilities.

**Q. I don't touch anyone at the drive through at the landfill. Why should that be shut down?**

A. Most self-haul customers hand cash or credit cards to the cashiers, which potentially exposes cashiers to virus transmission. In addition, the spotters who direct traffic and load checkers who work with self-haul customers are potentially exposed. Finally, we have reduced non-essential on-site staff to prevent community spread of COVID-19 to ensure employee safety, and some of our staff are staying home because of high-risk factors or to care for children who are out of school. So, we are focusing our remaining staff on disposal of the commercially collected garbage from households and essential businesses.

**Q. Why would I be any different from a commercial hauler? If they are allowed, why shouldn't I be?**

A. Disposal of garbage-collected curbside from residences and essential businesses is required to maintain the health and safety of our community. Our staff has virtually no interaction with commercial haulers. Those haulers drive across the scales, back up to the pit, and dump their loads without any close interaction with staff. They are all billed monthly, so no cash, credit cards, or papers are exchanged.

**Q. If we are to be sheltered in place, isn't it productive to clean the house and yard taking advantage of this time?**

A. While this may be productive, we encourage you to comply with the Order issued March 26<sup>th</sup>, which prohibits all non-essential travel. The pertinent portion of that order, at <https://www.sjgov.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=32463>, would not seem to allow trips to dispose of yard debris or junk that has collected in your garage over several years. If you do have a reason to deem these trips essential, the Foothill Landfill and Tracy Disposal Material Recovery Facility are still open to all customers. See <https://www.sjgov.org/solidwaste/> for the address and operating hours of those facilities. We ask residents to be patient, continue their spring cleaning and wait for the landfills to reopen.

**Q. What steps are you taking to help people like me who were planning to do spring-cleaning and take the junk to the dump?**

A. See answer above. You may also call the hauler who provides your curbside collection to see if they can provide bin service or a bulk pickup. Some of the

commercial haulers provide this service, and we are asking the others to provide this type of service if they are able. Contact information for your hauler can be found at <https://www.sigov.org/solidwaste/dynamic?id=22251>

**Q. What other options do I have to dispose of my waste?**

- A. Currently the only facilities in San Joaquin County accepting self-haul waste are the County-owned Foothill Landfill near Linden and Tracy Disposal Material Recovery Facility. You may also call the hauler who provides your curbside collection to see if they can provide bin service or a bulk pickup. Some of the commercial haulers provide this service, and we are asking the others to provide this type of service if they are able. Contact information for your hauler can be found at <https://www.sigov.org/solidwaste/dynamic?id=22251>

**Q. Do I have to hire a commercial company to take my trash away? Will it cost me more to dispose of my waste at another facility?**

- A. Currently the only facilities in San Joaquin County accepting self-haul waste are the County-owned Foothill Landfill near Linden and Tracy Disposal Material Recovery Facility. Disposal rates at Foothill Landfill are quite inexpensive, but lines may be long during this emergency. Tracy Disposal's rates are generally higher, but that facility is much more convenient for many County residents. You may also call the hauler who provides your curbside collection to see if they can provide bin service or a bulk pickup. Some of the commercial haulers provide this service, and we are asking the others to provide this type of service if possible. Contact information for your hauler can be found at <https://www.sigov.org/solidwaste/dynamic?id=22251>

**Q. Why is self-haul considered a non-essential service?**

- A. Most self-haul does not fit the criteria in the Order issued March 26<sup>th</sup>. We are continuing to accept self-haul waste at the Foothill Landfill because commercial garbage service is not mandatory in some rural areas of the County, and we need to provide a disposal option for residents who lack commercial garbage service.

**Q. What are you going to do about illegal dumping now that the people cannot go to the dump?**

- A. We are confident that most residents will refrain from illegal dumping. To report illegal dumping, call 209-468-4400.

**Q. Can I still drop off my household hazardous waste?**

- A. The Household Hazardous Waste Facility is also closed for now. Staff at those sites must handle each item brought into that facility, so the risk of virus transmission to our staff at that site is high.

**Q. Could you reopen by only allowing non-cash payments (e.g. contactless credit cards, on-line payments)?**

- A. We will continue to evaluate our options. In addition to cashiers, self-haul customers require spotters and load checkers who are potentially exposed. We have reduced non-essential on site staff to prevent community spread of COVID-19 to ensure employee safety, and some of our staff are staying home because of high-risk factors or to care for children who are out of school. So we are focusing our remaining staff on disposal of the commercially collected garbage from households and essential businesses.

**Q. I am a rural resident who does not have garbage service, and I used to take my garbage to the Harney Lane facility. Now what do I do?**

- A. You may still dispose of your garbage at the Foothill Landfill at 6484 North Waverly Road near Linden. We apologize for the inconvenience that this might cause you and thank you for helping us keep our community safe during this emergency.

## **Additional Questions**

### **Q. Where can I get more information?**

A. The State maintains an up-to-date website that provides ongoing updates on illness rates at [covid19.ca.gov](https://covid19.ca.gov). The San Joaquin County Office of Emergency Services maintains and updates [www.SJReady.org](http://www.SJReady.org) with additional preparedness information on COVID-19 and other pertinent information for any emergency.

### **Q. Where can I ask a question?**

A. Please email [SJReadyFeedback@sjgov.org](mailto:SJReadyFeedback@sjgov.org)

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