



March 2020 Special Edition of Sebastopol Community Newsletter

Please visit the City of Sebastopol website at www.CityOfSebastopol.org for the most up-to-date local information on the coronavirus crisis. There are two pages dedicated entirely to the crisis (type "coronavirus" or "shelter in place" in the search bar) where you will find specific resources and answers to many questions that you may have.

The City of Sebastopol is also on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [NextDoor](#).

CITY OPERATING UNDER "ESSENTIAL SERVICES ONLY" MODEL

- The Police and Fire Departments are continuing to provide emergency services as usual.
- **If you have an emergency, call 911.**
- For non-life-or-safety-threatening situations, we encourage the public to call the 24/7 police non-emergency line at **(707) 829-4400**.
- Police Department lobby is open to the public. All other City offices are closed to the public.
- A reduced staffing schedule is in effect for most of the City – However, city staff is responding to voice mails and emails as soon as time permits. Please first check the City website to see if your question can be answered there. If you still need to reach City Hall or any City Administrative Service, please email info@cityofsebastopol.org; or call **707-823-1153** and leave a message. Response may be delayed due to reduced staff.

SHELTER IN PLACE

All citizens are under "Shelter in Place" orders. This means that you must stay at home except for essential needs and that all non-essential businesses must remain closed until further notice.



Essential needs include those necessary to the health and welfare of your household including: to get food, care for a relative or friend, get necessary health care, or go to an essential job.

Go to <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/> for more information.

Essential businesses include businesses such as gas stations, pharmacies, grocery stores, banks, laundromats, essential state and local government functions, including law enforcement, etc.

Go to <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf> for a full list of essential businesses.

CITY UTILITIES AND SERVICES

These are bewildering and difficult times for all of us. The City of Sebastopol wants to reassure you that the City Council and City staff are working very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone. Due to COVID-19, the City is making modifications to continue to serve our residents, consumers and businesses. The City recognizes the hardship that the pandemic and Resulting Shelter in Place Orders, have created in our community. We want to reassure our residents that the water and sewer* systems are operating as usual. During this national emergency, the City of Sebastopol will temporarily suspend non-emergency turnoffs and late fees. Once the crisis has passed, the City will work with customers to set up bill payment plans.

Additionally, all residents/customers should know that the water the City provides remains safe. The State Water Resources Control Board has determined that there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus survives the disinfection process for drinking water. Customers can continue to use and drink water from the tap as usual.

Since City offices are closed to the public, here are three ways that you can pay your water and sewer bill:

- Pay online here: <https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/billpay>
- Mail payment (check only) **City of Sebastopol, P.O. Box 1776, Sebastopol, CA 95473**
- Drop payment (check only) through the mail slot at **City Hall at 7120 Bodega Ave.**

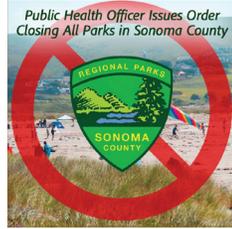
***Reminder:** In order to keep the sewer system operating properly, it is very important that residents not flush wipes or paper towels.

Also, business licenses and permits may take longer than usual to process due to reduced staffing.



ALL SONOMA COUNTY PARKS (Including Sebastopol City Parks) ARE CLOSED

Sonoma County's interim public health officer has ordered the closure of all parks in Sonoma County to further enforce the county's shelter-in-place directive during the COVID-19 emergency. The closure goes into effect March 24 and remains in effect until further notice. Go to <https://bit.ly/AllParksinSonomaCountyClosedPR> to see the full press release.



The closure applies to all agencies and jurisdictions operating parks and open spaces in Sonoma County, including city, county, state and federal parklands and recreational lands operated by private groups and nonprofits.

The order comes after parks, trails and beaches countywide were crowded with visitors during the initial days of the shelter-in-place orders issued by the county and state. Parking areas and surrounding roads were filled with cars, and visitors gathered on trails, in parking areas, at picnic sites and in other common areas, despite orders to practice social distancing outdoors.

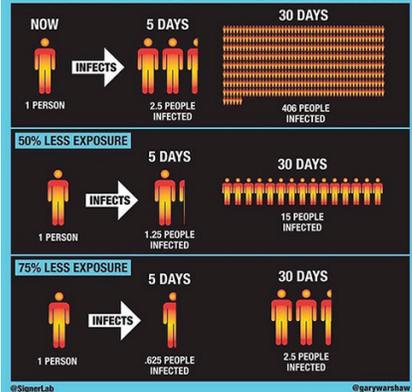
IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL DISTANCE

The City has received complaints that many in our community are failing to do the one simple thing that the CDC tells us will greatly reduce the spread of COVID-19 – maintain social distance. We are asking that you **STAY AT HOME**. And, if you **MUST** go out for essential needs that you remain at least 6

feet away from others. If you do plan to go out for essentials, check with your neighbors who are elderly or may require assistance to see if you can pick something up for them.

If we can slow the spread of the virus, we will reduce the strain on the health care system.

THE POWER OF SOCIAL DISTANCING



RUMORS

We've all heard rumors of all sorts around the pandemic. FEMA has created a web page that is frequently updated to separate fact from fiction on the most common rumors at www.fema.gov/coronavirus-rumor-control



FEMA

OPEN BUSINESSES

The Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce is managing a list of local businesses supplying essential services. Visit their website at <https://www.sebastopol.org/open-local-businesses> for an updated list.

Sonoma West Times & News will also publish a list on their website at <http://www.sonomawest.com>. Sonoma West Times & News has removed its paywall for COVID-19 related articles.

Designated as an essential business, the Sunday Farmer's Market on the Plaza is currently open and taking safety precautions and practicing social distancing. Check their website at <http://sebastopolfarmmarket.org> for more information

When visiting local businesses for essential needs, please maintain social distance.

HELP FOR BUSINESSES

FOR BUSINESSES: Sonoma County small businesses are now eligible to apply for financial assistance due to COVID-19 and should contact the SBA directly to continue the next step of the process. Application deadline is December 16, 2020.

For information on the program, visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster

FOR EMPLOYEES: The California EDD (Economic Development Department) website has a section with information about filing for benefits for coronavirus-related unemployment due to illness or loss of work. https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019/faqs.htm

FEED YOUR COMMUNITY

CALLING ALL NEIGHBORS

California's vulnerable communities need assistance obtaining food and supplies due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

- Offer to pick up items at the grocery store or pharmacy**
Check in with your neighbors (text, call, or video chat) to see what they need and offer to drop supplies safely at their door. You can also offer a tutorial on how to online shop.
- Know your community**
Contact your county social services department to learn about available resources to share with your neighborhood.
- Give a gift card**
Consider purchasing a gift card to give to a neighbor in need.
- Donate to a food bank**
Check with your local food bank to learn about available volunteer opportunities and to see what items are needed most. Visit cafoodbanks.org to find a food bank near you.
- Connect using social networks**
Social media can bring people together in support of a community. Utilize apps such as Nextdoor to connect with those around you and see if anyone needs help.
- Shop smart**
Buy what you need and leave enough for others. This provides everyone the opportunity to get the items they need. Support local business if you can.
- Be Safe**
Most importantly, remember to follow the California Department of Public Health's guidelines. Visit covid19.ca.gov for more information.

Visit serve.ca.gov

