



## ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF SONOMA No. C19-10

### AMENDED PARKS CLOSURE ORDER TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19, ALLOWING LIMITED, NON-VEHICULAR ACCESS TO SOME PARKS, FOR NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING, JOGGING, HIKING AND BICYCLING

DATE OF ORDER: APRIL 28, 2020

**Please read this Order carefully. Violation of or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. (California Health and Safety Code § 120275, *et seq.*)**

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF SONOMA (“HEALTH OFFICER”) ORDERS:

- 1) This Order shall become effective at 12:01 a.m. on April 29, 2020, and will continue in effect until the Order of the Health Officer re Shelter in Place (C19-05, as it may be amended or replaced from time to time) is terminated, or until the Governor Executive Order N-33-20 is terminated, unless this Order is separately rescinded, amended, or superseded and replaced by a future Order of the Health Officer.
- 2) This Order rescinds, supersedes and replaces the March 23, 2020, Order of the Health Officer “Closing Parks to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19” (Order No. C19-04.)
- 3) The intent and effect of this Order is to allow restricted and limited use of some parks to provide the opportunity for residents to walk, jog, hike or bike to and in Parks near their homes.
- 4) On March 23, 2020, a high volume of usage by the public of parks, beaches, and open space made it necessary to close all parks in the County to protect public health, under the Health Officer’s Order Closing Parks to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 (No. C19-04). Then, as now, crowding makes it extremely difficult for persons to maintain the required social distancing to protect public health during this pandemic, especially in those areas that bring an increased number and concentration of visitors by use of automobile.
- 5) The diligent and responsible cooperation of the community in complying with the Shelter In Place Orders and the previous Park Closure Order, along with increased testing, and the use of facial coverings and social distancing, have led to indications of a leveling off in the number of newly detected COVID-19 cases which is “flattening the curve”. While it is too

early to lift all provisions of these orders, modification of the Park Closure Order to allow a trial restricted access program is appropriate because of the burden the closures have placed on the community, the initial progress in “flattening the curve,” and the reduced risk of transmission while outdoors, as long as diligent social distancing and facial coverings are utilized as required by Order No. C19-07.

- 6) For purposes of this Order, “Park” means an area of land, beach or water open to the public for recreation, including but not limited to walking, hiking, biking, relaxing, boating, fishing, and playing, regardless of ownership.
- 7) All Parks located within Sonoma County shall continue to be closed to cars, trucks, vans, campers, busses, and any other vehicular access, except to the limited extent necessary to provide for disabled access as a reasonable accommodation.
- 8) The purpose of the following loosening of restrictions on Park use is intended to allow residents to access Parks near where they live, without resulting in the crowding and virus transmission risks that led to the previous Parks closure. With that as context, walking, jogging, hiking or bicycling in Parks and on trails is permitted, under the following limitations:
  - a. The recreation must be initiated from one’s residence and may not involve the use of a motor vehicle to travel to any Park location, except to the limited extent necessary to provide for disabled access as a reasonable accommodation;
  - b. Use of Park recreational areas or facilities which contain high-touch equipment or that encourage gatherings, including, but not limited to, playgrounds, dog parks, outdoor gym equipment, picnic areas, drinking fountains, and barbecue areas, is prohibited, and all such areas shall be closed to public access. Park owners shall post and, where appropriate, install physical barriers to access such areas. Failure to do so does not, however, excuse violation of this Order by users of the Park, trail or facility;
  - c. Every potential Park user must conduct a self-assessment of their health and shall not enter a Park if they have any of the following symptoms consistent with COVID-19:
    - Fever of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or greater;
    - Cough;
    - Sore throat;
    - Shortness of breath;
    - Unusual headaches;
    - Severe fatigue;
    - Chills;
    - Gastro-intestinal symptoms such as diarrhea or stomach cramps; or
    - Loss of sense of smell or taste.
  - d. If the potential Park visitor has had direct contact with a COVID-19 positive individual(s) in the past 14 days that person shall not enter a Park, and should contact their primary health care physician for further instructions.

- e. In addition to compliance with the requirements of the social distancing and hygiene protocols in the Shelter in Place Order (No. C19-09), the following social distancing and hygiene protocols must be adhered to at all times within any Park.

All persons must:

- i. Maintain a minimum six-foot distance from persons who are not part of the same household or living unit;
  - ii. Carry facial coverings with them at all times, and wear them in all circumstances required by the Health Officer's Order No. C19-07, including specifically if or when unable to maintain a six-foot distance from others (such as when passing on a trail);
  - iii. Not use any facilities or equipment that are closed; and
  - iv. Not engage in sports or other activities that use shared equipment.
- f. Use of shared facilities for recreational activities outside of residences, including, but not limited to, golf courses, tennis, bocce and pickle ball courts, sports fields, climbing walls, pools, spas, shooting and archery ranges, gyms, disc golf, basketball courts, campsites, and boat launches, is prohibited and those areas must be closed for recreational purposes, including by signage and, as appropriate, by physical barriers. Golf courses, or other facilities that have suitable paths or trails may, however, make those available *solely* for walking, jogging, hiking and bicycling; and
- 9) Coastal Zone Parks have continued to attract a significant number of daily visitors by vehicle despite the March 23, 2020 Park Closure Order. The majority of these visitors have traveled from outside of Sonoma County, and there are limited public safety resources to enforce the Health Officer's COVID-19 related Orders, including this one, in these remote areas. Therefore, all Parks, trails, and beaches in the Coastal Zone as defined by the County of Sonoma Local Coastal Plan, shall remain closed.

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10) Recreational fishing is permissible only if:

- a. It is in a Park that is open and permits recreational fishing;
  - b. It is initiated from one's residence and does not involve the use of a motor vehicle to travel to the Park, except to the limited extent necessary to provide for disabled access as a reasonable accommodation;
  - c. Includes only members of the same household; and
  - d. Is conducted in compliance with the social distancing and hygiene requirements of this Order, and the currently applicable Shelter-in-Place Order, and;
  - e. All other licensing or other applicable regulatory requirements are met.
- 11) Community Gardens can be operated as agricultural operations providing food for participants, but only if they are operated in compliance with the following additional social-distancing and hygiene protocols:

- a. They may be operated only for the purpose of food growth/production;
- b. Soap and running water will be available;


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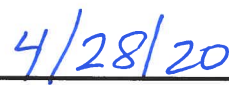
- c. There can be no more than one person in a garden at a time, unless it is sufficiently large to accommodate more than one person while maintaining at least six feet of distance at all times;
  - d. All garden entry and use shall be subject to the health and exposure self-assessment limitations set out in section “8.c” and “8.d” above;
  - e. Masks must be worn in order to allow more than one person at a time in a garden, in addition to maintaining the six feet of distance between gardeners;
  - f. Gardeners are strongly encouraged to bring their own tools;
  - g. All tools used will be cleaned with a CDC recommended disinfectant after each use and will not be shared throughout the day;
  - h. Gardeners must use their own gloves;
  - i. Signage will be displayed at all entrances to the garden with these rules; and
  - j. Benches and other communal spaces will be marked as off-limits for the duration of this Order.
- 12) Each and all Park owners are free to decide whether to re-open their Parks under the limited authority provided for in this Order. If a Park is re-opened, however, the Park owner/manager shall adopt Social Distancing Protocols consistent with this Order, and shall post them, along with this Order, prominently in all locations most likely to be seen by visitors.
- 13) Interpretation of this order should take into consideration that the intent is to allow brief respite from our homes for limited periods. Longer and more frequent outings inherently come with greater risk of virus transmission.
- 14) In the event of crowding, widespread non-compliance with the limitations of this Order, or other evidence of activities presenting an unacceptable risk of spread of COVID-19 through Park use, any or all Parks may be closed again in their entirety or on a case-by-case-basis by the Health Officer, or by the individual Park owner, including but not limited to County Parks as determined by the Director of Regional Parks, as needed.
- 15) This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 19, 2020 Executive Order of the Governor (No. N-33-20); the April 29, 2020, Order of the Sonoma County Health Officer re Shelter in Place (No. C19-09); the March 13, 2020 Order of the Health Officer No. C19-02; the April 13, 2020, Order of the Health Officer No. C19-04 concerning Facial Coverings; the March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom; the March 2, 2020 Proclamation of Local Emergency for the County of Sonoma issued by the Director of Emergency Services Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency in the County Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19); the Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) issued by the Health Officer; the March 4, 2020 Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma Ratifying and Extending the Declaration of a Local Health Emergency, and the March 4, 2020 Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma Ratifying and Extending the Proclamation of a Local Emergency.



- 16) This Order is issued based on evidence of continuing occurrence of COVID-19 within the County and throughout the Bay Area, scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically, and evidence that the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of the County places it at risk for serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the general 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 carry the virus. Because even people without symptoms can transmit the disease, and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, social distancing consisting of a six-foot separation between people is currently required for all activity that is permitted by the County's Shelter in Place Order No. C19-05 and the Governor's Executive Order, including outdoor activity.
- 17) The scientific evidence shows that at this stage of the emergency, it is essential to continue 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 continuing to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, this Order helps preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity in the County.
- 18) This Order also is issued in light of the existence of 217 cases of COVID-19 in the County as well as two fatalities, as of April 24, 2020, including a number of suspected cases of community transmission, and likely additional cases of community transmission if physical distancing is not carefully maintained in this critical period.
- 19) Additional recreational activities may be allowed under addenda to this Order as appropriate protective criteria and safety guidance is developed and approved by the Health Officer.

**IT IS SO ORDERED:**

  
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Dr. Sundari R. Mase, MD MPH  
Health Officer of the County of Sonoma

  
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Date