

Humboldt County COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions– Updated Shelter in Place– What’s Changed?



On March 30, Health Officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich issued an update to the Humboldt County Shelter-in-Place Order. This updated order addresses Humboldt County residents’ concerns regarding tourism, essential business and more. Here are some of the questions Humboldt County residents had about the previous order and some answers from the updated version.

1. The first Health Order said “people at high-risk of severe COVID-19 illness” should stay at home to the extent possible, except to seek medical care.

Who is considered high-risk for severe COVID-19?

The updated order clarifies that the following people are considered high-risk, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

- People ages 65 and older
- People who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities
- People of any age who have other high-risk conditions, including:
 - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - Serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised including because of cancer treatment
 - Severe obesity (BMI>40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, e.g. diabetes, renal failure or liver disease.

2. How have the rules about using parks and recreational facilities changed?

There are clearer and expanded restrictions that apply to all public parks, private designated parks and recreational areas.

- All communal structures/facilities (equipment, courts, picnic tables, gazebos, etc.) in public parks are closed.
- In public parks, any space that does not allow for 6 ft of social distancing when in use shall be closed.
- Walking, hiking and biking are permitted in open areas or designated trails, but not on trails and pathways that do not allow for 6 ft of distance.
- Golf courses are closed.
- Participating in team sports is not allowed.
- If a park is closed by the authority that controls it, then it is closed.

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3. Are there any changes to the definitions of “Essential Business or Activities”?

The following Essential Businesses have been added to the list of businesses permitted to operate under the order:

- Construction related to Essential Business
- Businesses that supply or support first responders
- Home appliance stores
- Animal care facilities that provide food, shelter, veterinary and/or routine care and other necessities of life for animals
- Car rental and retail necessary for Essential Business.

The following businesses are NO LONGER CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL:

- Businesses that supply products to enhance “quality of life.” This includes video rental stores, saunas, sporting goods stores, etc. Craft stores are still permitted to operate as they supply essential goods for businesses to operate from home.

4. Are there any changes to rules about food purchasing or distribution?

Yes. Essential businesses providing food may not allow for self-service by the customer, which includes the sharing of utensils for self-service or other similar food items which can’t be washed by the customer before eating. That means no bulk foods, no salad or hot food bars, no self-serve bakeries at grocery stores, etc.

5. What is being done to discourage tourism and non-essential travel into Humboldt County?

The new order of the updated health order prohibits people managing rental properties from renting to non-County residents. This includes hotels, motels, short-term/vacation rentals and campgrounds. However, this restriction DOES NOT apply to out-of-County residents who are engaged in:

- Essential Activities
- Essential Government Functions
- Essential Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations
- Caring for elderly, minors, dependents, people with disabilities, or other vulnerable people
- Law enforcement or court order
- People already within the County who are homeless and seeking shelter.

6. When does the updated order take effect? When does it end?

The updated order is effective 12 a.m. on March 30, 2020 and is in effect until rescinded (canceled) by the Health Officer.