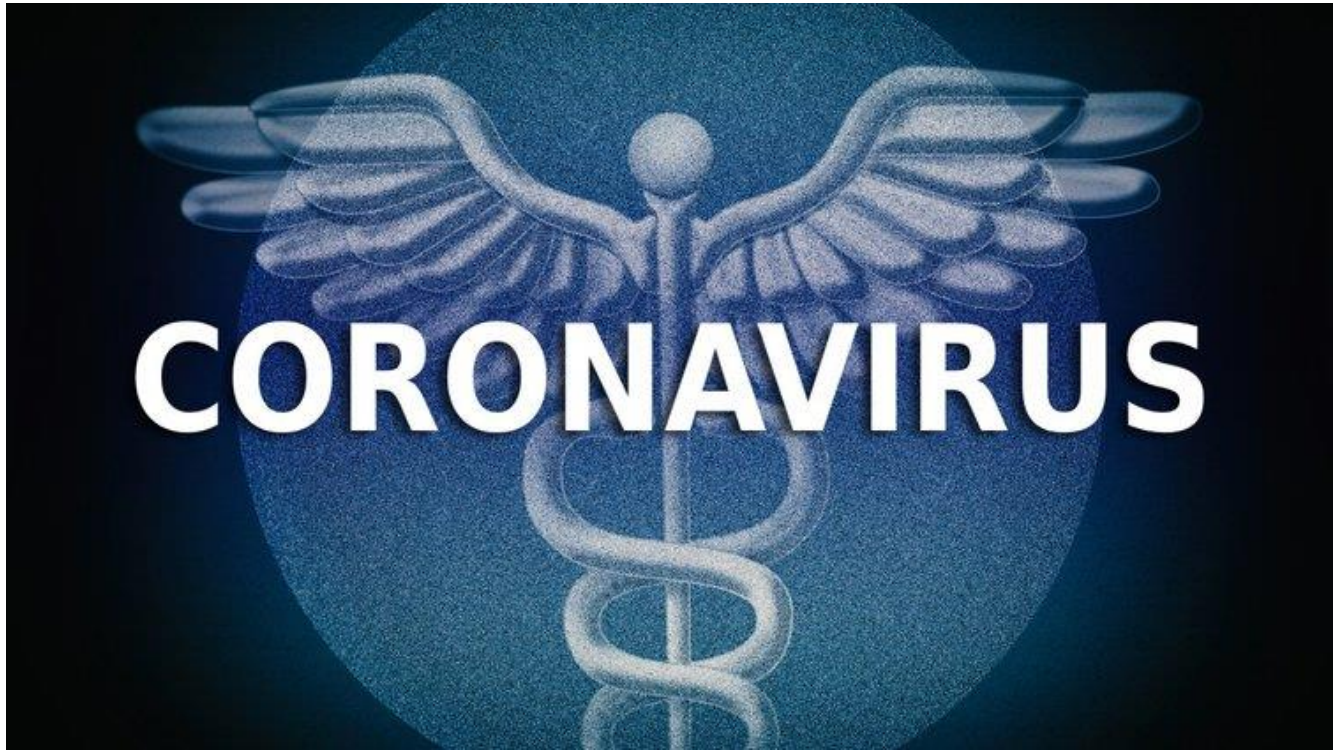


# SJ County issues guidelines for non-essential business to perform basic operations



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While businesses that have been classified as non-essential still aren't allowed to open to the public, health officials are now allowing those businesses to carry out basic operations during the COVID-19 shutdown.

On Sunday, San Joaquin County released a video explaining the new rules in the amended order that issued last week – an order that included a provision that will allow for minimal basic operations for non-essential business as long as they stay closed to the general public during this time period.

Interim Public Health Officer Maggie Park detailed the new addition in the video and explained specifically what businesses are allowed to do if they are deemed non-essential.

“Essential businesses are directed to maximize the number of employees who work from home unless their job duties require them to work outside the home. All non-essential businesses within the county are required to cease activity,” Park said in the video explaining the new rules.

“The new stay-at-home order introduces guidance to non-essential businesses, allowing them to perform minimal basic operations.”

“Minimal basic operations means that businesses are permitted to carry out the following activities while maintaining social distancing: protect that business’s inventory and facilities, ensure security, safety, and sanitation, process payroll, and provide for the delivery of existing inventory to residences or businesses. Except for employees performing minimum basic operations, non-essential businesses must remain closed to the public – this means gyms, bingo halls, card rooms, bars, tasting rooms, brew pubs, and in-dining restaurant services shall remain closed.”

While the county works to ensure that medical services are not overwhelmed while dealing with the influx of COVID-19 patients, the existing stay-at-home order will remain in place and social distancing efforts are required of those either have to leave their home for essential purposes or to carry out an essential job.

According to Marcia Cunningham, the Director of Emergency Services for San Joaquin County, this means that residents are still ordered to stay at home and all gatherings for non-essential purposes – both public and private – continue to be prohibited.

“All residents are still ordered to stay home or at their place of residence until further notice. You can leave your home for essential things like getting food, medical supplies, or exercise,” Cunningham said in the video. “Anyone using shared or outdoor spaces for exercise or walking a dog is required to maintain social distancing standards of at least 6 feet from any other person.”

“This order does not apply gathering limitations to those who live in the same household or living unit. People performing essential services in shared or outdoor spaces must, to the fullest extent possible, maintain social distancing as well. It is important to note that all public and private gatherings of any number of people who do not live together are prohibited.”

Earlier this month the county released a video showing how the forecasted number of COVID-19 patients was not realized as a result of social distancing efforts that they feel inevitably saved lives. So far hospitals throughout the county have not yet reached capacity, although the peak is not expected for another month.

While efforts to protect the public and the healthcare workers on the front lines that are saving lives are underway, unrest over the economic uncertainties that California faces after the crisis passes is growing – evidenced by protests at the State Capitol on Monday that mirrored those from other states in the country that want to open businesses back up to the public despite public health warnings.

As of 5 p.m. on Monday, San Joaquin County has 446 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 18 deaths as the result of the virus.