



**ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. C19-17**

**ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER  
OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REQUIRING PEOPLE WHO  
HAVE ARRIVED IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO AFTER  
TRAVEL, MOVING, OR RETURNING TO THE COUNTY TO QUARANTINE, TO  
HELP REDUCE THE IMPACT ON TRANSMISSIONS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS OF  
THE CURRENT COVID-19 SURGE (“TRAVEL ORDER”)**

**(PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER)**

DATE OF ORDER: December 16, 2020 (updated December 30, 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 § 120295, *et seq.*; California Penal Code §§ 69, 148(a)(1); and San Francisco Administrative Code § 7.17(b))**

Summary: The City and County of San Francisco (the “County”) has been experiencing a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, as has the rest of California and the United States. The rise in cases has been overwhelming hospitals in the state and, unless abated further, could result in an unmanageable number of cases within the County due to the recent holidays and related gatherings and travel. Such a rise makes care less accessible to save the lives of people suffering from COVID-19 as well as other afflictions such as heart attacks, strokes, or serious injuries.

The County continues to maintain a low rate of COVID-19 deaths compared to most major cities in the country. This is so because together we have kept case counts low, allowing our hospitals to maintain the capacity to adequately care for COVID-19 patients. But if our hospitals become overwhelmed, we can expect an increase in avoidable and unnecessary COVID-19 deaths. We can prevent this by taking steps to keep COVID-19 from spreading further in San Francisco.

One important way to control local case counts is by limiting the movement of people who arrive in the County and may be carrying the virus. Today, while case rates in the County are high, we have the sixth lowest adjusted case rate in the state. Nationally, 43 of 50 states currently have higher COVID-19 case rates than San Francisco, ranging from almost twice as high in Nevada, to almost three times as high in other parts of the country. This means people who travel outside the County and visitors who come from other areas are at a much higher risk of being infected. These risks are only heightened by the nature of travel, which usually includes interactions with many people. And most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms of illness at all, thus there is no way to tell whether you are interacting with someone who has COVID-19 and could infect you. If even a small number of these travelers bring COVID-19 into the County, that additional introduction of virus into the community can magnify the spread of the disease at a time when hospitals’ ability to care for the seriously ill is already threatened.



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The purpose of this Order is to help prevent avoidable and unnecessary transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 in two ways. First, this Order strongly discourages anyone in the County from travelling for leisure, recreation, business or other purposes that can be postponed until after the current surge. Travel not only puts the traveler at risk but also all members of the community, if the traveler spreads COVID-19 to others after returning to San Francisco. Second, with limited exceptions defined below, this Order imposes a **mandatory** quarantine on anyone traveling, moving, or returning to the County from anywhere outside the Bay Area (as defined in Section 8 of this Order). The travel-related quarantine also will help protect the County against the spread of new variants of the virus, such as those detected recently in the United Kingdom, Colorado, and Southern California among other varied geographic locations worldwide.

This Order will be revised or rescinded when the infection rates become significantly lower and travel is safer.

Note: initially capitalized terms not otherwise defined in this Order are defined in Health Officer Order C19-07q (the “Stay-Safer-at-Home Order”), including as it may later be amended.

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  
SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE CITY AND  
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO ORDERS:**

**1. Purpose and Findings.**

- a. Purpose and Intent. This Order imposes a mandatory Quarantine on anyone traveling, moving, or returning to the County from anywhere outside the Bay Area, except as described in this Order. This Order strongly urges a Quarantine for all non-essential travel to the County from anywhere else within the Bay Area. The purpose and intent of this Order is to protect the well-being of all people in the County – and especially the ability of hospitals and other healthcare services in the County – from the worsening impact of the current surge of SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 cases in the County, the Bay Area, the State of California, and the United States of America. There is currently a substantial surge of cases across the United States and other parts of the world. Anyone who travels at this time is exposed to a relatively high rate of SARS-CoV-2 infections due to the fact that infection rates across most of California and the United States are much higher than in the County. As a result, and even after taking protective measures, travelers are at high risk of becoming infected during travel and bringing infections to the County. These risks are heightened by the increased person-to-person interactions inherent in many forms of travel. And if travelers come to the County with an active infection (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), there is a serious risk that even a small number of cases can lead to widespread infections that will hurt the health of people in the County and push our healthcare system beyond its limits to treat anyone with serious illness, whether COVID-19 related or otherwise. By generally requiring travelers from anywhere



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outside the Bay Area to Quarantine, this Order greatly reduces the risk of infections spreading to other people in the County. The Health Officer will continue to monitor data regarding COVID-19 and may amend or rescind this Order based on analysis of that data and knowledge.

- b. Interpretation. All provisions of this Order must be interpreted to effectuate the purpose and intent of this Order, as described in subsection (a) above. The summary at the beginning of this Order as well as the headings and subheadings of sections contained in this Order are for convenience only and may not be used to interpret this Order; in the event of any inconsistency between the summary, headings, or subheadings and the text of this Order, the text will control. Certain initially capitalized terms used in this Order have the meanings given them in Section 8 below. The interpretation of this Order in relation to the health orders of the State is described in Section 10 below.
- c. Continuing Severe Health and Safety Risk Posed by COVID-19. This Order is issued based on evidence of continued widespread community transmission of COVID-19 within the County, throughout the Bay Area, across California, and across the United States; evidence that most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms at all of illness; scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically, including limiting movement of people and through quarantine of those who may be exposed to the virus; 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; further evidence that others, including younger and otherwise healthy people, are also at risk for serious outcomes including death; the reality that a serious surge in SARS-CoV-2 infections and COVID-19 diagnoses is occurring throughout the United States, with most areas having a higher rate of infection, diagnosed disease, and death than in the County; and the fact that County hospitals have a substantial corresponding increase in COVID-19 admissions so as to put hospitals in the County and the Bay Area at imminent risk of reaching or exceeding capacity for intensive care unit beds and other acute care beds. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the general public, which is a pandemic according to the World Health Organization, there is a public health emergency throughout the County, region, State, and nation. That immediate threat to public health and safety is also reflected in the continuing declarations of emergency referenced in Section 9 below, including by the December 3, 2020, Regional Stay At Home Order (as subsequently modified) (the "Regional Stay at Home Order") announced by California Governor Gavin Newsom and issued by California's Acting State Public Health Officer. This situation has become a larger emergency due to the current surge in positive cases and in hospitalizations in the County, the Bay Area, the State, and the nation as shown by the Regional Stay At Home Order. There is also concern that new variants of the virus detected recently, such as those found in the United Kingdom, Colorado, and Southern California among other varied geographic locations worldwide,---- are spreading, and this Order



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will help protect against that spread.

- d. Local Health Conditions Relating to COVID-19. The efforts taken by residents and Businesses beginning in March 2020 under the shelter-in-place orders of the Health Officer, along with those of health officers of five neighboring counties, slowed the virus's trajectory. But the public health emergency and threat to the County's population remain severe. Across the region, the State, and the nation, there has been a significant reopening of Businesses and activities, accompanied by an increase in cases and hospitalizations, and these increases create risks to County residents and resources. Complicating the situation is the fact that the County and much of the rest of the Bay Area have been more careful and deliberate regarding health-protective measures than most of the rest of the United States, meaning that infection rates are substantially higher in many areas outside of the County. The County, Bay Area, State, and nation are now in a third surge in infections and hospitalizations, that is having significant local impacts and that has already resulted in unprecedented surges in cases and hospitalizations across the nation. We are also experiencing a "surge on top of a surge" due to the recent Thanksgiving holiday and associated gatherings and travel, which may worsen due to the impacts of the December and 2021 New Year's holidays. As we continue to evolve our strategies for protecting residents of the County from COVID-19, we must consider the trajectory of the virus in the County and across the region, as well as information regarding new infections and hospitalizations and the course of medical care provided to people with the virus to determine the best options for treatment and prevention.
- e. Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths. As of December 27, 2020, there were 22,776 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the County (up from 37 on March 16, 2020, the day before the first shelter-in-place order in the County went into effect) as well as at least 186 deaths (up from a single death on March 17, 2020). Local COVID-19 cases have more than quadrupled since early November 2020. San Francisco is currently averaging 247 new COVID-19 positive cases per day compared to the 34 per day that it averaged in late October. Moreover, the City currently has approximately 1,700 COVID-19 cases diagnosed per week and hospitalizations have nearly tripled over the last month. As a result, the City's hospital capacity is under considerable stress. Unlike in previous surges, the rest of the State's hospital capacity is strained and reaching patient limits and it is unlikely there will be additional hospital capacity in other counties if San Francisco's is compromised. In fact, the City has been receiving requests from other California jurisdictions and health systems outside the County to take hospitalized patients because those jurisdictions are reaching or have reached capacity, further straining the City's hospital resources. This information, as well as information regarding hospitalizations and hospital capacity, is regularly updated on the San Francisco Department of Public Health's website at <https://data.sfgov.org/stories/s/fjki-2fab> and incorporated into this Order by this reference.



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**2. Risks to Travelers and Risk Minimization.**

People are more likely to be infected when travelling to or through places with higher rates of COVID-19. The risk will be even greater during the December and New Year's holidays due to the large number of people travelling, engaging in indoor activities, and interacting while shopping or engaging in social gatherings. The virus that causes COVID-19 can travel in the air more than six feet and collects indoors and in enclosed spaces like vehicles, buses, trains, and planes. Most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms at all of illness. Just being indoors or in enclosed space, even when wearing a Face Covering and distanced, with people who are not part of your household is risky even if you are not interacting with them, and especially if those around you are not wearing a Face Covering. (See [www.sfdcp.org/indoorrisk](http://www.sfdcp.org/indoorrisk).) San Francisco and the Bay Area have high rates of Face Covering use compared to much of the nation. Travelers should be aware that spending time in areas where Face Covering use is less widespread will likely increase their risk of infection. Indoor businesses and other indoor activities that are not currently allowed in San Francisco will also likely increase the risk of infection when traveling outside the County.

Travelers should also be aware that hospitals in many parts of the nation are already overwhelmed. If they become ill or injured for any reason while travelling, they may not be able to receive the same level of care they would normally expect. Also, people who travel by air may not be able to return by plane if they become infected with COVID-19 during their trip.

Based on all of these risks, people in the County are strongly urged to avoid travel whenever possible. When travel is unavoidable, people are strongly urged to follow these best practices, without limiting the requirements of this Order below:

1. When travelling and after returning, always wear a Face Covering when around anyone who is not part of your Household, including while indoors, in vehicles or other enclosed spaces, and when outdoors within six feet of others.
2. When travelling and after returning, minimize time spent around people who are not part of your Household when any of those people (or yourself) are not wearing a Face Covering, including during meals.
3. When traveling and after returning, minimize interactions with others, such as by avoiding unnecessary shopping, indoor social events, and other interactions in large groups.

Additional best practices for unavoidable travel can be found at: [www.sfdph.org/travel](http://www.sfdph.org/travel).

**3. Business Requirements.**

Unless otherwise expressly provided below, this Order requires each Business to allow its Personnel to Quarantine as required by this Order and otherwise prohibits Businesses



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from directing or allowing Personnel to violate this Order's Quarantine requirements. But no Business is required by this Order to approve personal time off, leave, or vacation outside the Business's normal policies. This Order does not prohibit a Business from taking disciplinary action against Personnel who violate such policies. Each Business is also reminded of its obligations towards Personnel as to daily screening as required by Appendix A to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order which is posted at <http://www.sfcddp.org/screening-handout>.

**4. Quarantine Upon Traveling, Moving, or Returning to San Francisco.**

Except as expressly listed in Section 5 below, every person who travels to, moves to, or returns to the County after having been in any location outside of the Bay Area in the prior 10 days – including, but not limited to, travel for work for any allowed business or governmental activities in the County – must Quarantine as provided in this Order. For clarity, people who began their travel before the issuance date of this Order are not required to quarantine upon returning to the County, but are strongly urged to do so. Also, it is strongly recommended that anyone who travels, moves, or returns to the County from anywhere in the Bay Area outside the County, Quarantine as provided in this Order.

**5. Exceptions to the Quarantine Requirement**

- a. Subject to the requirements and limitations on their travel set forth in this section, the following people are exempted from the Quarantine requirements of this Order:
  - i. Any person who is an active licensed healthcare professional (as listed by the California Department of Consumer Affairs online at [https://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/healthcare\\_providers.shtml#professionals](https://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/healthcare_providers.shtml#professionals))—or who is licensed as an equivalent professional outside the State of California and is authorized to perform such professional duties in California—and whose travel was solely for the purpose of performing work as a licensed healthcare professional;
  - ii. Any person who is travelling, moving, or returning to the County to perform work at a General Acute Care Hospital in the Bay Area.
  - iii. Any person commuting to or travelling solely in the course of performing an Essential Governmental Function, as defined in Section 8.m of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order;
  - iv. Any person commuting to or travelling solely in the course of performing work for Essential Infrastructure, as defined in Section 8.l of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, where that work cannot be done via remote methods;



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- v. Any person (1) providing care to any minors, dependents, elderly persons or persons with disabilities and whose travel was solely for the purpose of providing that care, or (2) obtaining healthcare services from a Healthcare Operation, as defined in Section 8.g of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, and whose travel was for the sole purpose of obtaining that healthcare;
- vi. Any person who travelled outside of the Bay Area but whose employer provides them a written notice that the employee is required to return to work in the County due to a lack of staffing for an Essential Business, Essential Government Function, Healthcare Operation, Essential Infrastructure purpose, Additional Business, or Outdoor Business, but only if their travel into the County is primarily for such work and only to the extent those activities are permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order at the time such work is to be performed;
- vii. Any person who is travelling solely as required by law enforcement, by a court order, under the terms of binding custody arrangements, or to attend a court or administrative hearing in person or as otherwise required by law;
- viii. Any person who is solely transiting through the County and not staying overnight; and
- ix. Any person who is (1) a member of a professional or collegiate sports team, including team staff, who travels solely for away games where there is an existing, non-suspended Health and Safety Plan that was approved by the Health Officer allowing such travel and the protocols of such plan, including requirements to keep such individuals quarantined away from others in the County, are followed or (2) Personnel of a film or media production operating in the County under section 22 of Appendix C-1 of Health Officer Order C19-07q, including as that order may be amended, when traveling to the County solely for the purpose of employment with the film or media production.

**b. Limitations on Exemptions:**

- i. Even if a person is exempted from Quarantine under this Section 5, other members of the person's Household who are travelling, moving, or returning to the County – and who do not themselves qualify for an exemption – must still comply with all applicable Quarantine requirements of this Order. Non-exempt Household members may Quarantine in the same Residence (including, but not limited to, a temporary shelter) as their exempt Household member. For clarity, the exempt Household member may still go to work under those circumstances, consistent with this Section 5, and does not need to Quarantine.



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- ii. Even if a person is exempted from mandatory Quarantine under this Section 5, each person who is exempted is strongly urged to follow the protective steps listed in Section 2 above and to limit interactions with others to the extent possible after returning to the County.

6. **Applicability of Existing Isolation and Quarantine Directives.**

All people in the County, including those who travel, move, or return to the County from any distance and for any purpose (whether or not exempt from Quarantine under this Order), must comply with the existing Health Officer directives regarding isolation and quarantine. Those directives mandate that anyone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 must self-isolate and those who are a close contact to someone with COVID-19 must self-quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Health Officer Directive Nos. 2020-02c (regarding quarantine) and 2020-03c (regarding isolation) are available online at [www.sfdph.org/directives](http://www.sfdph.org/directives). Information on how to isolate or quarantine is found at [www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet](http://www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet). Translations of these instructions and additional information about isolation and quarantine is available online at [www.sfcdec.org/i&q](http://www.sfcdec.org/i&q).

7. **Notification Requirement.**

All transit facilities, including but not limited to airports (which includes San Francisco International Airport (“SFO”), which is County-owned and operated), bus stations, ports, and other facilities where persons may be regularly traveling into the County must ensure a copy of **Attachment A** to this Order is provided to each passenger upon arrival from a point of origin outside of the Bay Area. In lieu of providing a written copy of Attachment A, the facility may use announcements and signs in multiple languages placed in prominent locations to notify travelers of the requirements of this Order and make a copy of Attachment A available on request.

8. **Definitions.**

For purposes of this Order, the following initially capitalized terms have the meanings given below.

- a. ***Quarantine.*** “Quarantine” means to stay at home or another place of temporary shelter at all times without contact with any person other than members of one’s Household for 10 days (240 hours) from a person’s time of arrival in the County and otherwise in accordance with applicable guidance found at [www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet](http://www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet). Translations of quarantine guidance and additional information about quarantine is available online at [www.sfcdec.org/i&q](http://www.sfcdec.org/i&q).
- b. ***Bay Area.*** “Bay Area” means the area that includes all of the following California Counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma.



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**9. Incorporation of State and Local Emergency Proclamations and State Health Orders.**

- a. State and Local Emergency Proclamations. This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the March 12, 2020 Executive Order (Executive Order N-25-20) issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the February 25, 2020 Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency issued by Mayor London Breed, as supplemented on March 11, 2020, the March 6, 2020 Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) issued by the Health Officer, and guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health, as each of them have been and may be supplemented.
- b. State Health Orders. This Order is also issued in light of the State Regional Stay at Home Order, the earlier March 19, 2020 Order of the State Public Health Officer (the “State Shelter Order”), which set baseline statewide restrictions on non-residential Business activities, effective until further notice, the Governor’s March 19, 2020 Executive Order N-33-20 directing California residents to follow the State Shelter Order, and the other orders of the State Public Health Officer related to the pandemic and the State’s response to the pandemic.
- c. Health Officer Orders and Directives. This Order is also issued in light of other orders and directives issued by the Health Officer as they relate to the pandemic and the County’s response to the pandemic. Those orders and directives show the seriousness of the issue and the many efforts that the County, including but not limited to the Department of Public Health, have taken to address the spread of COVID-19 within the County. This Order incorporates by reference and is based in part on each of the other orders and directives issued by the Health Officer to this point, including as each of them may be updated in the future. That includes, without limitation, each of the following, including as they may be updated or amended in the future, in relation to this Order:
  - i. Order No. C19-07q (imposing restrictions on activities outside the home for all people in the County to protect all during the pandemic); and
  - ii. Order No. C19-12d (with limited exceptions, requiring all people in the County to wear Face Coverings when near people from different Households).

**10. Obligation to Follow Stricter Requirements of Orders.**

This Order adopts travel quarantine requirements that go beyond those required by the California Department of Public Health and State rules regarding travel and quarantine. Without taking these measures to minimize the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 across County borders from outside the Bay Area, the County will be less able to protect its population and prevent additional cases of COVID-19, thus risking



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worsening of the public health crisis in the County, overtaking available health care resources (including the capacity of hospitals to treat both COVID-19 and other patients), and increasing the death rate from COVID-19. Where a conflict exists between this Order and any state law or public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic or infectious diseases, the most restrictive provision (i.e., the more protective of public health) controls. Consistent with the August 28, 2020 Statewide Public Health Officer Order, California Health and Safety Code section 131080, and the Health Officer Practice Guide for Communicable Disease Control in California, except where the State Health Officer may issue an order expressly directed at this Order and based on a finding that a provision of this Order constitutes a menace to public health, any more restrictive measures in this Order continue to apply and control in the County.

**11. Enforcement.**

Under Government Code sections 26602 and 41601 and Health and Safety Code section 101029, the Health Officer requests that the Sheriff and the Chief of Police in the County ensure compliance with and enforce this Order. As stated at the beginning of this Order, the violation of any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and immediate menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

**12. Effective Date.**

This Order becomes effective immediately upon issuance, and will continue in effect (as it may be updated) until the Health Officer rescinds, supersedes, or amends it in writing. The Health Officer intends to rescind or revise this Order when the Bay Area Region is no longer subject to the State's Regional Stay at Home Order and the Health Officer has had an adequate opportunity to evaluate whether a change is supported by (a) ICU availability and other hospital capacity in the County, (b) COVID-19 hospitalization and case rates, and (c) epidemiological considerations outside the Bay Area, including case rates and other risk factors. To evaluate the impact of any traveling and gatherings that occurred during the December 2020 and 2021 New Year's holidays, the Health Officer will not have available the information necessary to make this determination for several weeks after the holiday season ends, so revisions to this Order are not expected to occur until after that evaluation is complete.

**13. Copies.**

The County must promptly provide copies of this Order as follows: (1) by posting on the Department of Public Health website ([www.sfdph.org/healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders)); (2) by posting at City Hall, located at 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl., San Francisco, CA 94102; and (3) by providing to any member of the public requesting a copy.



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**14. Severability.**

If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

**IT IS SO ORDERED:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Philip", written over a horizontal line.

Susan Philip, MD, MPH,  
Acting Health Officer of the  
City and County of San Francisco

Date: December 30, 2020



**City and County of  
San Francisco**

**Department of Public Health  
Order of the Health Officer**

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**ATTACHMENT A: Travel Quarantine Notice**

December 16, 2020

**To all travelers:**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and an alarming rise in cases that is threatening hospital capacity, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco has ordered that any person travelling, moving, or returning to the City and County of San Francisco from outside the Bay Area Counties listed below must quarantine.

**If you have travelled from anywhere outside of the following counties and come to San Francisco, you are required to quarantine for 10 days (240 hours) from the time of your arrival in San Francisco:**

**Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma.**

In order to quarantine, follow instructions at [www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet](http://www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet). Note that limited exceptions apply to people who are travelling for certain critical activities. For a list of those activities and more information on the rationale and importance of quarantining after travel, go to [www.sfdph.org/travel](http://www.sfdph.org/travel).

Anyone who has COVID-19 or is a recent close contact of someone with COVID-19 must isolate or quarantine regardless of where they traveled from. Additional information about isolation and quarantine is available online at [www.sfdcp.org/i&q](http://www.sfdcp.org/i&q).

[translations available online at [www.sfdph.org/travel](http://www.sfdph.org/travel)]