



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services
4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2020

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Alameda County Statement on Red Tier

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – Last month the State announced their [color-coded four-tier Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). Today the State announced that Alameda County is in the Red Tier. This is a tier below Purple, and still reflects the substantial risk of COVID-19 in our county.

While movement to the Red Tier allows for additional sectors to open with restrictions, local Health Officers can proceed more cautiously than the State allows. As with all other re-openings, it will be important for Alameda County to take a measured and phased approach to avoid dramatic increases in disease transmission and re-closures. As we did when the Blueprint for a Safer Economy was first announced, we are carefully examining the potential impact of activities that may be permitted to reopen or expand in the Red Tier.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, we have learned a lot more about the effectiveness of COVID-19 mitigation strategies like limiting mixing among different households and maintaining stable groups, consistent use of face coverings, physical distancing, good handwashing technique, and screening of symptoms and exposure.

We are using the next two weeks (through October 6) to ensure our metrics remain stable and we will release a phased plan that balances increased risk of spread of COVID-19 from newly permitted activities alongside appropriate mitigation strategies that can be implemented. At this time, there is no change to permitted or prohibited activities in Alameda County.

Bringing students back for in-person learning is a top priority for the next phase of reopening. Though counties in the Red Tier are permitted to open schools for in-person learning after two weeks in the Red Tier, our [Health Officer Order issued on August 28](#) clarified that schools must continue distance learning until such time that local conditions support in-person learning, even if the County meets the State’s criteria for in-person learning.

While an immediate return of all Alameda County K-12 students and school staff could potentially increase transmission of COVID-19, the impact of distance learning on both students’ mental health and their ability to learn is clear. We know that educational inequities and the achievement gap are likely exacerbated by having children learning from home. We also know it is hardest for younger children to spend all day learning online.

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All Alameda County schools and school districts are urged to prioritize preparing for reopening and engaging parents and staff in the planning so they can be ready. The Public Health Department and the County Office of Education have developed reopening guidance to help schools implement COVID-19 health and safety measures: <https://www.acoe.org/schoolguidance>

As announced on September 2, Alameda County elementary school waivers are being received and reviewed. We will send applications to the state for their recommendation on a rolling basis. All Alameda County schools are encouraged to use state and locally permitted school-based small cohorts (FAQs) to provide targeted, specialized services for students with special needs and English learners, access to internet and devices for distance learning, and in-person support for at-risk and high need students.

For the list of activities that are currently open and not open in Alameda County, visit: <https://covid-19.acgov.org/sip.page>.

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