

State Provides Guidance for Gatherings and Halloween *San Joaquin County Encourages Residents to Follow the Guidance*

Stockton, Calif. – On Friday, the California Department of Public Health released guidance on small private gatherings, easing coronavirus restrictions to allow up to three households to socialize outdoors. Today, the County is issuing an Order that integrates the State's new gathering guidance into the local Health Order.

Under the new requirements regarding private gatherings, up to three (3) households, can gather outside so long as they wear masks and follow other safety precautions. Gathering can be under awnings, roofs, or shade structures so long as at least three (3) sides are open to outdoor breezes. Gatherings should be two hours or less to reduce the risk of transmission. Guests who are not from the same household must wear masks when not eating or drinking, maintain social distancing, and food cannot be shared. Hand sanitizer or a place to wash hands must be available. Gathering organizers should keep track of who attended so they can notify them in case of an infection.

Also today, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released guidance on how to celebrate Halloween and Día de los Muertos in a safer way. San Joaquin County encourages all residents to follow that guidance. In the Holiday Guidance, CDPH strongly discourages trick-or-treating. It proposes safe, lower risk alternatives such as scary movie nights, online parties, car-based outings, or themed meals at home.

The more people from different households interact, the closer the physical interaction is, and the longer the interaction lasts, the higher the risk that a person with COVID-19 infection – symptomatic or asymptomatic -- may spread it to others. Participating in multiple gatherings with different households or groups is strongly discouraged. People who are sick or medically vulnerable should not attend public gatherings of any size. Any one that experiences COVID-19 like symptoms within 48 hours of a gathering should notify the organizer and others who attended.

San Joaquin County officials cannot be at every gathering, so residents are trusted to take every possible precaution to keep themselves and our community safe from COVID-19. The more individuals choose to protect others, the sooner that the County can move into a less restrictive tier and can continue to open more businesses and allow more activities. If anyone has questions about the new guidance, or believes someone is violating the Health Order visit SJReady.org.

Pursuant to the State's Blueprint for reopening and current COVID-19 data, San Joaquin County is currently in the Red Tier (Substantial). The current case rate is 6.6, and the positivity rate is 4.1%. The positivity rate for the Equity Metric is 7.4%.

You can help the County move into a less restrictive tier by following the Health Orders and guidelines, wearing a mask when in public, washing your hands regularly, practicing physical distancing, getting tested, and limiting mixing with people outside your household. Free testing is still available at many locations in San Joaquin County. To find testing locations or to schedule appointments, utilize the links at SJReady.org.

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