

# Amador County Public Health Department

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## Planning Principles for Reopening Amador

On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, the Amador County Board of Supervisors directed the Health Officer to proceed with her request to form a workgroup comprised of County leadership and staff, City elected officials and Tribal representatives with the purpose of planning for reopening Amador County. This document does not authorize the reopening of any type of business but is intended to inform how businesses may plan for reopening when authorized to do so consistent with the state order or state authorized local order.

The workgroup met on Thursday, April 30 and reviewed both the “National Coronavirus Response, A Road Map to Reopening” and “Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors” documents. The workgroup agreed that while our priority is to begin reopening businesses that had been considered “non-essential” under the Governor’s Executive Order N-33-20, that must be done in a manner consistent with minimizing the risk of COVID-19 transmission while conducting business transactions. At this time, Amador County is not able to release restrictions more quickly than the State. However, once the State moves to Stage 2 of the “California’s Pandemic Resilience Roadmap” or allows for local or regional ability to do so, we want to be prepared to reopen safely.

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf>

The California Roadmap identifies four Stages of the Resilience Roadmap. Amador County, in line with the State mandate, is currently in Stage 1. Once Stage 2 commences, the concept of “essential” versus “non-essential” activities is no longer the guiding principle, but rather a risk-based strategy determines what is allowable. The risk of any given activity or business is related to the number of contacts that occur, the proximity of those contacts (e.g., ability to maintain at least six-foot physical distancing is lower risk than a service that requires hands-on contact) and the duration of contact, with longer being higher risk.

Regionally, Health Officials have been working on assigning relative risk to categories of business and activities based on the two reopening guidance documents referenced above. We have asked that the State develop a standard list for each Stage of reopening, to minimize the likelihood of variation in assignment of risk and category between jurisdictions.

While Amador County remains under the State-mandated restrictions, Public Health and County Staff have developed a toolkit of safe operating protocols for our businesses, recreation, hospitality, and community agencies to prepare to implement measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission as we anticipate further direction from the State. We have also invited Sutter Amador Hospital to join the workgroup to bring the healthcare

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system perspective.

Amador County continues to coordinate closely with our regional partners and the State in assessment, planning and response to COVID-19. We rely on the State for management of grant funding, supplies, and healthcare surge capacity. For example, Amador County would be able to access the Sleep Train Arena Alternate Care Site (ACS) to care for COVID-19 patients should the capacity of our local hospital or skilled nursing facility be exceeded. The Sleep Train ACS has been established and funded by the State. We are also relying on the State to expand testing capacity for Amador County residents, as well as a State system to scale up capacity to do Contact Tracing and Investigation at the local level as more testing is anticipated to result in increasing numbers of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases.

Scientific principles must guide our decisions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Amador County has been fortunate to have a low number of cases and no deaths due to COVID-19 to date. Currently, our status remains in containment with no evidence of sustained community transmission, and we thank the public for their cooperation in achieving that. In the absence of a COVID-19 vaccine or specific therapeutics to treat infected individuals, preventive strategies, such as the restrictions on personal movement and interaction that have been implemented to varying degrees worldwide, are the most effective path to contain and mitigate the pandemic.

Two unique factors warrant concern for Amador County as the pandemic evolves:

1. The popularity of Amador County as a tourist destination. It is likely that tourism, especially from other regions of California, including some COVID-19 hot spots, will increase as people tire of stay-at-home orders and the weather warms.
2. A lack of immunity among the majority of Amador residents given a relatively low prevalence of COVID-19 during the first wave as compared to other areas of California.

An influx of visitors, increased public congregation, and lack of immunity could significantly increase risk for COVID-19 in the county. As such, a second epidemic wave of the COVID-19 outbreak could be larger, infecting more people than the first. Progressing from one stage of reopening to the next will require 3 to 4 weeks to assess effects of increased societal mixing and whether community transmission is increasing.

It is widely recognized that prolonged shutdown of businesses and activities due to the Stay-at-Home Orders can result in financial stress as well as feelings of insecurity and isolation among County residents. It is necessary to balance mental and emotional health against potential for the spread of infectious disease.

Loosening of restrictions will need to be phased in gradually and monitored based on local/regional data. If a substantial spike in new infections were to occur, especially an increase that threatens to overwhelm local healthcare capacity, restrictions would need to be reinstated.