

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 29, 2020

Governor Announces Blueprint to Reopen the Economy

MERCED COUNTY, CA—Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled a new blueprint to reopen the economy during a press conference yesterday, Aug. 28.

Known as “California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” the plan replaces prior guidelines associated with the State Monitoring List and outlines a new tiered system to assess county risk levels:

- **Purple—Widespread: Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed**
 - More than 7 daily new cases per 100k
 - More than 8 percent positive tests
- **Red—Substantial: Some non-essential indoor business operations are closed**
 - 4-7 daily new cases per 100k
 - 5-8 percent positive tests
- **Orange—Moderate: Some indoor business operations are open with modifications**
 - 1-3.9 daily new cases per 100k
 - 2-4.9 percent positive tests
- **Yellow—Minimal: Most indoor business operations are open with modifications**
 - Less than 1 daily new case per 100k
 - Less than 2 percent positive tests

Every county in California is assigned to a tier based on its rate of new cases and percentage of positive tests. Merced County is currently in the purple, or widespread, category. At a minimum, counties must remain in a tier for at least 3 weeks before moving forward. Data is reviewed weekly and tiers are updated on Tuesdays. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier’s criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county’s metrics worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier. Public health officials are constantly monitoring data and can step in if necessary.

Additional details can be found here: www.gov.ca.gov/2020/08/28/governor-newsom-unveils-blueprint-for-a-safer-economy-a-statewide-stringent-and-slow-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/

These new criteria take effect Monday, Aug. 31 and will immediately impact business sectors in Merced County. Hair salons and barbershops can resume indoor operations with modifications. Nail salons, massage therapy studios, and Estheticians can open outdoors only with modifications. Grocery stores in purple tier counties (which includes Merced County) are required to operate at 50 percent maximum capacity. All other retail stores in purple tier counties are required to operate at 25 percent maximum capacity. For current guidance, please visit www.covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy.

Dr. Salvador Sandoval, Merced County’s Public Health Officer, said the new criteria from the State should renew everyone’s commitment to practice preventative measures in an effort to reopen more of the economy.

“If we want to move forward through these new tiers, we need to continue wearing face coverings, avoiding large group gatherings, and practicing social distancing,” Sandoval said. “We have a long way

to go, but if we collectively commit to slowing the spread of COVID-19 by practicing preventative measures, our numbers will continue to improve.”

As a reminder, it is now a statewide requirement to wear a cloth face covering inside of, or in line to enter any indoor public space, or when unable to maintain six feet of social distance outside. Merced County health officials strongly urge all residents to exercise the following safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- ✓ Practice social distancing
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- ✓ When handwashing is not possible, use hand sanitizer with 60 percent alcohol base
- ✓ If you experience any COVID-19 symptoms (available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) **stay home** and self-monitor.

All business sector safety guidance can be found at www.covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance. Further COVID-19 information is located on Merced County Department of Public Health’s resource website at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus.

###