

MONO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Officer Order:

Gatherings: Update on Restrictions

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October 22, 2020

This Order supplements guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health on October 9, 2020, authorizing outdoors, socially distanced private gatherings of up to 3 household units, with specified restrictions (the “State Gathering Guidance”). Within Mono County, all persons must comply with both the State Gathering Guidance and this Order. Violation of this Order or the State Gathering Guidance is punishable by law.

WHEREAS, a state of emergency has been declared by the State of California, and local emergencies have been declared in both Mono County and in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, in response to the virus COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, gatherings, informal and formal, are known to contribute significantly to the spread of the pandemic virus between members of different households, yet it is challenging to sustain restrictions for long periods of time and adherence to restrictions is inconsistent; and

WHEREAS, State public health directives continue to prohibit most professional, social and community gatherings. Gatherings are defined as meetings or other events that bring together persons from multiple households at the same time for a shared or group experience in a single room, space, or place such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, or other indoor or outdoor space. Gatherings pose an especially high danger of transmission and spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS. On May 25, 2020, in an effort to balance First Amendment interests with public health, the State Public Health Officer created an exception to the prohibition against mass gatherings for faith-based services and cultural ceremonies, like weddings and funerals, as well as protests; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the reality that some people are gathering for social purposes despite State restrictions, on October 9, 2020, the State of California issued updated guidance easing the prohibition on gatherings to permit outdoor, socially-distanced gatherings of people from up to 3 households, with adherence to specified requirements; and

WHEREAS, this Local Health Order is issued for the purpose of supplementing the State Gathering Guidance by specifying the total number of individuals who may attend private gatherings and continuing existing limitations for wedding ceremonies;

NOW, THEREFORE, effective immediately in Mono County, including the Town of Mammoth Lakes, under the authority of California Health and Safety Code sections 101040, 101085 and 120175 and Title 17 California Code of Regulations, Section 2501, the Mono County Health Officer **HEREBY ORDERS** as follows:

1. Limited gatherings of persons from different household units are permitted up to 12 persons from a maximum of 3 different households. Such gatherings shall comply with the State Gathering Guidance issued on October 9, 2020, which may be accessed at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Guidance-for-the-Prevention-of-COVID-19-Transmission-for-Gatherings-10-09.aspx>.
2. Religious, cultural and political protest gatherings continue to be permitted with precautions and in compliance with State guidance for those activities, which may be accessed at: <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>. Such constitutionally allowable gatherings are subject to limits defined by the County's tier status under California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy.
3. Wedding ceremonies shall continue to be restricted to 30 persons, including the wedding party and guests, and are subject to State guidance for weddings and places of worship, which may be accessed at: <https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/#worship>; <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>.
4. Wedding receptions that include more than 3 households or more than 12 persons are prohibited. Receptions including 3 or fewer households and 12 or fewer persons are allowed, subject to all requirements of the October 9, 2020, State Guidance for Private Gatherings.

General Provisions

1. This Order shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect until rescinded or revoked by the Mono County Health Officer. This Order rescinds and revokes the Health Officer Order of July 31, 2020, related to private gatherings, which shall be of no further force or effect. The Health Officer, in consultation with the Unified Command/Emergency Operations Center, will review this Order, as necessary.

2. This Order is issued because of the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 disease, also known as "novel coronavirus," which has infected millions of people worldwide with about half a million attributable deaths to date.

3. This Order is issued based on evidence of transmission of COVID-19, scientific evidence regarding the most effective approach to slow transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically, as well as best practices as currently known and available to protect the public from the risk of spread of or exposure to COVID-19.

4. This Order is intended to reduce the likelihood of exposure to COVID-19, by referencing restrictions issued by the State of California and providing additional clarifications within the County of Mono, including the Town of Mammoth Lakes, thereby slowing the spread of COVID-19 in communities worldwide. As the presence of individuals increases, the difficulty and magnitude of tracing individuals who may have been exposed to a case rises exponentially.

5. This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the: March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom; the March 15, 2020 Declaration of Local Health Emergency based on an imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of novel COVID-19 in Mono County; the March 17, 2020 Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mono proclaiming the existence of a Local Emergency in the County of Mono regarding COVID-19 and ratifying and extending the Declaration of Local Health Emergency due to COVID-19; the guidance issued on March 11, 2020 by the California Department of Public Health regarding large gatherings of 250 people or more; Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Order N-25-20 of March 12, 2020 preparing the State to commandeer hotels and other places of temporary residence, medical facilities, and other facilities that are suitable as places of temporary residence or medical facilities as necessary for quarantining, isolating or treating individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or who have had a high-risk exposure and are thought to be in the incubation period; the guidance issued on March 15, 2020 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the California Department of Public Health, and other public health officials through the United States and around the world recommending the cancellation of gatherings involving more than fifty (50) or more persons in a single space at the same time; the March 16, 2020 order of the Public Health Officer prohibiting all gatherings with expected presence above ten (10) individuals; and Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-33-20 of March 19, 2020 ordering all persons to stay at home to protect the health and well-being of all Californians and to establish consistency across the state in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

6. This Order is made in accordance with all applicable State and Federal laws, including but not limited to: Health and Safety Code sections 101030, et seq.; Health and Safety Code sections 120100, et seq.; and Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations section 2501.

7. To the extent necessary, pursuant to Government Code sections 26602 and 41601 and Health and Safety Code section 101029, the Health Officer requests that the Sheriff and all Chiefs of Police in the County ensure compliance with and enforcement of this Order.

8. This Order is made because of the propensity of the virus to spread person-to-person and because the virus is causing physical property loss or damage due to its proclivity to attach to surfaces for prolonged periods of time.

9. Copies of this Order shall promptly be posted on the County of Mono's Public Health Department's website (monohealth.com) and provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.

Thomas Boo, MD

Thomas Boo, MD
Public Health Officer
For Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes

Date October 22, 2020