



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Mono County Health Department

[www.monohealth.com/Coronavirus](http://www.monohealth.com/Coronavirus)

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## PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER ISSUES ORDER EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION WITH COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATIONS

**July 14, 2020** - Mono County Health Officer Dr. Tom Boo has issued a Public Health Order emphasizing the importance of Public Health investigations (contact tracing) in controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Mono County. The Order clarifies that persons who have confirmed or presumed COVID-19 are required to cooperate with Mono County Public Health staff by providing information about the people they have been in contact with during the period in which they may have been infectious. Employers of persons who have confirmed or presumed COVID-19 are also required to cooperate with the contact tracing process, if requested. The Order also seeks to reassure individuals affected by the virus that the information they provide is handled in a confidential manner, and is used only for public health purposes.

Contact tracing is critical to controlling the COVID-19 epidemic in our communities. Occasionally, our contact tracing staff encounter someone who may be reluctant to provide information about where they have been and who they have been around while they have been infectious. This lack of cooperation puts the community at risk, and threatens additional spread. Under the new Public Health Order, individuals who choose not to cooperate or provide accurate information may face legal penalties, including possible fines, incarceration, or both.

### How Contact Tracing Works

- First, investigators interview people who have tested positive to find out who they have been near during their illness and, in the case of COVID-19, in the few days before they knew they

had infection. This requires openness and honesty, and it may take some effort to recall all the places they have been and persons they've encountered.

- Next, investigators talk to the individuals who were exposed to see if they have any symptoms of illness and to refer them for testing.
  - Those who test positive and/or are ill must **isolate** themselves until there is no risk of infecting others.
    - Usually people with COVID-19 isolate themselves at home, if they are able to avoid exposing others in their household. Sometimes it is preferable to have people isolate themselves elsewhere, such as in a hotel room.
    - People with COVID-19 must isolate themselves for a minimum of 10 days. In addition, ALL symptoms must be gone, and they must have gone at least 3 days without fever.
- People who have had risky exposures to infected persons but don't have any symptoms or signs of illness are tested to rule out asymptomatic infection and are **quarantined** for 14 days from the last time they were exposed to the infectious person. Quarantine is necessary because people who have been exposed may be in the incubation period when the virus has entered the body and is multiplying but cannot yet be identified by testing and is not causing any symptoms of illness.
- People who have been instructed by Public Health investigators to isolate or quarantine must stay home and avoid exposing others. Such people may not go to work outside the home, the store, or anywhere else, except for medical services.
- People in home isolation and quarantine should take care to reduce the chance of infecting other people in their home by keeping distance, wearing face coverings, and cleaning hands and shared surfaces.

Public Health investigation information is treated confidentially, and is not shared with the public or with other government agencies without the knowledge of the persons who are the subject of the investigations.

Should an individual in isolation or quarantine need assistance (food, rent, lodging outside the home, etc.), contact tracing staff can help by linking people with services.

The Public Health Order can be accessed here:

<https://coronavirus.monocounty.ca.gov/pages/directives>

We encourage everyone to #STAY SAFE TO STAY OPEN!

*Please utilize the resources below for local information about the coronavirus.*

Call: 211 (English & Spanish) | Website: [MonoHealth.com/Coronavirus](http://MonoHealth.com/Coronavirus)

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