



Travel Advisory and Guidance on Safer Essential Travel

Updated December 18, 2020

This Travel Advisory and guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health and is posted at www.sfgdcp.org/travel.

Summary of Changes from Travel Advisory 11/25/2020:

- Updated to reflect Health Officer Travel Order issued 12/17/20 that: 1) instituted a **mandatory quarantine of 10 days for anyone traveling, moving, or returning to San Francisco from anywhere outside the Bay Area** with limited exceptions and 2) strongly discouraged any non-essential travel within the 10-county Bay Area region.

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in many parts of the country. Nonessential travel, including holiday travel, is strongly discouraged. Despite San Francisco's escalating cases, it maintains one of the lowest infection rates in the Bay Area, state, and country. Travel outside San Francisco and outside the Bay Area increases your chance of getting infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, and spreading it to others after your return. Additional precautions should also be taken when hosting and interacting with people traveling to the Bay Area, especially from other areas with widespread COVID-19.

Many people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. The virus that causes COVID-19 can also travel in the air beyond 6 feet. **The virus collects indoors and in enclosed spaces including in planes, buses, trains, public transportation, or other shared vehicles.**

On December 17, 2020 a Health Officer Travel Order was issued that 1) instituted a **mandatory quarantine of 10 days for anyone traveling, moving, or returning to San Francisco from anywhere outside the Bay Area** with limited exceptions and 2) strongly discourages any non-essential travel within the 10-county Bay Area region.

- This includes travel outside the following counties: San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Sonoma, Napa, Marin and Santa Cruz
- For full text of the Order and FAQs related to the Order, see www.sfgdcp.org/travel

This requirement allows exemptions for medical professionals, first responders, official government business, and essential infrastructure work who must travel to perform their work. A limited number of other activities are also exempted including travel to receive medical care or travel required by a court order, like transferring custody of a child. People transiting through San Francisco International Airport on connecting flights and not staying overnight in San Francisco are not required to quarantine. For a full list of exemptions, read the Health Officer Travel Order at www.sfgdcp.org/travel.

If you MUST travel, plan ahead:

- Know how widespread COVID-19 is in the area you must travel to. For cases in the last 7 days by state, see https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days.
- Find out where you can be tested if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 during your trip. For a list of symptoms, see www.sfcddcp.org/covid19symptoms.
- People at high-risk of severe COVID-19 should be particularly careful about traveling, including:
 - People who are older, smoke or are overweight
 - Pregnant women
 - People with certain medical conditions like diabetes, heart problems, COPD, cancer, weakened immune systems, and sickle cell disease.

See www.sfcddcp.org/vulnerable for more information on who is at high risk of severe COVID-19.

- Avoid travel to the extent possible if you will be traveling with someone who cannot wear a mask consistently, including children under 2 who should not be wearing face masks due to risk of suffocation.

DO NOT travel if you are sick. You could spread COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (see www.sfcddcp.org/covid19symptoms), get tested and wait for a negative test result before you start your trip.

If you MUST travel, reduce your risk.

- **Wear a facemask and stay 6 feet of away from people you do not live with, including family members you do not normally live with.**
- **Avoid spending time indoors with people you don't normally live with, including family members, to the extent possible.**
The risk of getting COVID-19 is generally **much greater** indoors than outdoors because the virus that causes COVID-19 can travel in the air more than 6 feet and collects indoors and in enclosed spaces. If you must spend time indoors, choose a larger room that is well-ventilated or where windows and doors can be opened, and wear a face mask at all times. See more at www.sfcddcp.org/indoorkrisk.
- **Try to limit the number of people you interact with.** For example, if you are traveling for work or you must travel to see family, avoid in-person interactions with neighbors or friends.
- **Don't share vehicles with people you don't live with.** Vehicles are small enclosed spaces where COVID-19 can spread easily between people. If you must share a vehicle, try to ride with the same people each time, make sure everyone wears a facemask, open windows, and maximize outdoor air circulation as much as you can. See more at www.sfcddcp.org/safertransit
- **Given the Regional Stay at Home Order which took effect December 17, 2020 at 11:59 pm, gatherings with people of different households is prohibited. Avoid holiday meals or**

gatherings with people you don't normally live with, including family members. Eating and drinking together is higher-risk because people must take off their masks to eat or drink, are more likely to touch their mouths while eating, often sit within 6 feet of each other, and talk while eating, creating more respiratory droplets. If you do have a holiday dinner or gathering, it is safer for people in different households to sit outdoors at least 6 feet apart and to wear masks when they are not actively eating or drinking (such as when talking).

If you MUST host visitors from outside the Bay Area, take the same precautions.

- Make all attempt to avoid hosting visitors, particularly if they are coming from a part of the country with widespread COVID-19 (see [covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days](https://www.covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days)).
 - Be particularly mindful if you or anyone in your home is at higher-risk of COVID-19 (www.sfgdcp.org/vulnerable), or if anyone in your home or among your visitors, including children, will not be able to wear facemasks consistently.
- Do not host visitors who are sick, if possible. See www.sfgdcp.org/covid19symptoms.
- Take the steps above to lower the risk of infection during their stay.
- Consider self-quarantining for 10 days after their stay if they spent time within 6 feet of you or shared a vehicle with you when everyone was not wearing a mask.

Timing of testing following an exposure: Ensuring safe behaviors during the holidays is critical to slowing down the spread of COVID-19. Testing is more likely to correctly identify if you have COVID-19 if you get tested **3-5 days** after an exposure to someone who had COVID-19. Testing the day immediately following a potential exposure may lead to a falsely negative result. You may actually have COVID-19 that won't show up on a test until days later. That is why quarantining for 10 days is important if you traveled (see page 1).

A negative test also should not be interpreted as a safety clearance for traveling or engaging in other high risk activities. These tests assess for virus in your body the day you were tested; it is possible you may develop the virus in subsequent days and a negative test might create a false sense of security.

For more information on traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic, see:

- San Francisco Department of Public Health: www.sfgdcp.org/travel
- Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html