

Ventura County reopens parks, golf courses, beaches; LA County officials' response: Stay home

With more gorgeous weather forecast, Ventura County officials are loosening up coronavirus-spurred restrictions on its parks, golf courses and beaches. Los Angeles County officials' plea to residents here: Stay home, folks.

"I do want to beg people in LA County, please don't go to Ventura to use their outdoor spaces," said Barbara Ferrer, Los Angeles County Public Health director this week.

The neighboring county's public and private golf courses will operate with some restrictions, allowing gatherings of no more than four masked and gloved golfers, and with physical distancing required.

The City of Ventura also relaxed rules on parks and beaches, allowing residents to access beaches, the promenade, the pier, walkways, trails and all city beaches — as long as residents observe social distances.

Visitors are allowed to walk, hike, jog and bike on the sidewalks while playgrounds, parking areas, restrooms, sports and recreational fields or courts will remain closed, the ordinance said.

If any beach, promenade or pier becomes overcrowded, officials might ask visitors to leave.

Ferrer's advice: Fight the temptation, L.A. County residents.

"For a couple of reasons, you'll overwhelm a county that is trying to relax some of their restrictions for their residents," Ferrer said. "You could unenviably come back and infect yourself or spread that infection to people in our county — something we desperately trying to avoid."

Starting Friday, boaters will have access to the public launch ramp at Ventura Harbor. Ventura Port District General Manager Brian Pendleton said the public boat launch ramp will re-open under the following conditions and protocols:

- 24/7 hours of operation
- Each vehicle/vessel is limited to members of the same household
- No fishing will be allowed at the public launch ramp
- No loitering will be allowed at or around the public launch ramp
- Boaters will maintain six feet social distancing
- Masks are recommended when outside the vehicle or vessel in the public launch ramp and parking lot areas

"The reopening will provide our boating community the opportunity to get back on the water," Pendleton said in a statement. "In doing so, we are asking the public to be

respectful of each other and practice social distancing while meeting the requirements of the Ventura County Public Health Order issued April 20, 2020.”

Pressure on officials to loosen the state, county and city “Safer at Home” orders has grown, including at least to public protests from restless residents in Orange County.

Last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom released the criteria needed to ease the restrictions and potentially reopen businesses and allow the public gatherings, including finding effective treatments and a vaccine for the coronavirus.

L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti released a list of “five pillars” that must be attained before the city should consider easing restrictions, including more available testing and greater hospital capacity.

Two county supervisors this week introduced motions that would create an advisory coalition to recommend steps for a gradual reopening of the economy.