

# L.A. County 'with all certainty' will keep stay-at-home orders in place through July

*By Colleen Shalby Staff Writer*

Los Angeles County's stay-at-home orders will "with all certainty" be extended for the next three months, county Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer acknowledged during a Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday.

Ferrer, though she didn't issue an official order, said that timeline would only change if there was a "dramatic change to the virus and tools at hand."

"Our hope is that by using the data, we'd be able to slowly lift restrictions over the next three months," she said. But without widely available therapeutic testing for the coronavirus or rapid at-home versions that would allow people to test themselves daily, it seems unlikely that restrictions would be completely eased.

Ferrer's comments came shortly after Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned Congress that states that push too quickly to ease orders could undo progress that would trigger an outbreak. Fauci said a 14-day decline in cases is the major checkpoint that states should meet before reopening.

In L.A. County, confirmed cases and deaths have continued to rise, even though beaches in the county are [set to reopen](#) on Wednesday, just days after the county lifted restrictions on hiking trails, parks and golf courses and allowed curbside pickup at nonessential businesses. But Ferrer warned Tuesday that further loosening of the rules will be slow.

But how people can use the sand will look different. Face coverings will be required when not in the water, and sunbathing won't be allowed. Only active recreation — surfing, running, walking and swimming — will be permitted. Coolers, chairs, umbrellas and any of the other accessories that typically dot the shoreline should be left at home.

The update to L.A.'s stay-at-home orders comes as officials try to satisfy two needs: restarting the economy under a new normal while also ensuring that the resurgence in activity doesn't upend progress in the fight against the coronavirus.

There has a big push in recent weeks to reopen the state's economy, which has been hurt by the stay-at-home orders. Gov. Gavin Newsom last week announced new protocols for retail stores and some workplaces to reopen.

Under the plan, some in-restaurant dining, car washes and shopping malls could also be allowed to reopen in coming weeks if public health officials in a county are able to demonstrate that the spread of the virus has stabilized and that they have adequate testing and hospital capacity.

Some rural counties that have seen relatively few cases are likely to be able to meet those benchmarks more quickly than urban counties such as Los Angeles.

[A Times data analysis last week](#) found most big California counties are not close to meeting Newsom's standards. The Times conducted an analysis to see which counties could pass just the first two [criteria](#) — whether deaths have stopped in the last 14 days, and whether there is no more than one case per 10,000 residents in that same time period.

Most of California failed that test. In fact, 95% of Californians live in counties that don't meet that standard, The Times analysis found. Not a single county in Southern California nor the San Francisco Bay Area met the criteria.

Newsom suggested Friday that the guidelines would be later modified on a statewide basis, allowing larger counties hit hardest by the outbreak to also reopen more broadly. "Over the next few weeks, we'll be making subsequent announcements for the entire state, not just those that meet those more restrictive criteria," Newsom said.

As other California regions have seen a decline in the number of reported infections and COVID-19-related deaths, L.A. County, the state's most populous, continues to see growth on both fronts. The county reported Monday an additional 566 people who tested positive for the virus, and an additional 39 deaths, bringing the death toll to 1,570. L.A. County's death count accounts for more than half of the state's total.

Officials have noted that the numbers reported at the start of the week are typically lower, largely because testing is not at full capacity on weekends.

More than 240,000 of L.A. County's 10 million residents have been checked for the virus and roughly 12% — more than 32,000 — have been infected. Officials have been encouraging all residents, even those without symptoms, to get tested.

Officials have said that social distancing has helped slow the spread of the virus, but also have warned that it remains contagious.

"It's safer to stay at home. COVID-19 [has not changed](#)," Ferrer reminded residents on Monday.

Some neighboring counties that are easing restrictions also continue to see increases in cases and deaths. Riverside County, where [officials voted last Friday](#) to lift requirements for face coverings, reported 150 new cases Monday and 12 additional deaths.

In Orange County, 55 more cases were reported as the number of hospitalizations — a count that fluctuates by the day depending on how many of the county's hospitals report statistics — hovers near 200.

Meanwhile in Santa Clara County, which was once the hottest spot for infections in the state, the number of cases has declined. Officials reported two additional cases Monday and zero deaths. Santa Clara is one of [six Bay Area counties](#) that have extended shelter-in-place orders.