

COVID-19 Update From EKA – July 22, 2020

Stay At Home Order Day 125

Today is day 125 of the [statewide "Stay-at-Home" Order](#). 133 days ago, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Pandemic. Safer at Home orders have been in place in Los Angeles since March 19.

Previous EKA COVID-19 updates

Our previous COVID-19 updates can be found [here](#). Feel free to share our updates with friends and colleagues. We hope you find the information in the EKA updates and the questions they raise to be informative. If you have any COVID-19 government or communications questions, please reach out to any member of the EKA team. If you have a specific COVID-19 question, click [here](#) and we will attempt to answer it in our update

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Supervisors Approve \$1.22 Billion in COVID-19 Relief

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to approve a spending plan for \$1.22 billion in federal and state coronavirus relief funds. The vote was taken immediately after public comment that focused almost exclusively on other agenda items and without discussion by the board. In a statement issued after the vote, Supervisor Kathryn Barger said the money was sorely needed. "This funding comes at a critical time for Los Angeles County," Barger said. "This plan addresses our ability to provide essential services, expand testing, contract tracing and meet tangible needs for working families and small businesses who are struggling and increasingly bearing the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic."

COVID-19 Testing

According to the latest Public Health [guidance](#), the highest priority for testing should go to [people with symptoms](#)—including hospitalized patients, healthcare workers, first responders, employees and residents in group living settings, and people over 65 years old or with [underlying health conditions](#) that place them at higher risk of serious complications. According to LA County, employers should not require a negative COVID-19 test result before employees return to work, and employees do not need to present a certificate saying they have tested negative, under the current guidance from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Healthcare providers are required by a recent LA County Health Officer Order to provide their patients with access to COVID **testing** if they are symptomatic, are part of a public health investigation, or have been in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 infected person. The Health Officer order also encourages providers to bill private insurance plans for these services whenever possible. Patients are not allowed to be charged by their plan or provider for COVID-19 tests. Obtaining testing through a patient's regular provider network helps to assure tailored clinical advice and facilitates good follow-up in the case of positive results. . The County and the City of Los Angeles are adding capacity at existing sites, as well as standing up new County- and City-funded sites in high-need communities in the weeks to come. Learn more

Safer At Home Order

Los Angeles County health officials warned that another "Safer-at-Home" order was not off the table, adding that the increasing numbers of coronavirus cases and hospitalizations could lead to a spike in the number of deaths in the coming weeks. To view the current Health Order, click [here](#).

Daily COVID-19 Data Dashboard

LA County has created a Daily COVID-19 Data Dashboard includes daily updates, data trends and graphs, and explainers about what the data is telling us LA County's response. To view the dashboard, click [here](#).

LOS ANGELES

Crack Down COVID Violations

City workers have been dispatched throughout Los Angeles as part of the Business Ambassadors program to advise or cite businesses not following coronavirus safety guidelines. Mayor Garcetti said the city has received 549 complaints in the past two weeks about businesses not following health protocols for remaining open during the pandemic. The goal of the program is to help workplaces better enforce safety guidelines. Businesses that will receive a visit will be those where there is a report of a problem and non-compliance. The Mayor said the program was used early on during the pandemic and was a successful tool in getting businesses to follow guidelines. The Business Ambassadors Program is led by the LA. City Attorney's Office. It consists of attorneys who assist the City Attorney's Office with a variety of projects related to the coronavirus outbreak.

Safer LA

The City updated their Public *Order last week*. To view the current Safer LA Order, click [here](#). LA Mayor Eric Garcetti unveiled the indicator showing the current COVID-19 threat level. Here's what it means.

The spread of COVID-19 in Los Angeles is currently at Threat Level Orange.



Green : Low Risk

- Resume Normal Activities
- COVID-19 is contained or no longer transmitting due to treatment or vaccine being available and sufficiently deployed
- Contact tracing and testing capacity is sufficient or not needed
- Hospitals can serve clients without concern
- Residents should consider wearing face masks and do social distancing

Yellow: Moderate Risk

- Stay aware of the current situation
- COVID-19 is spreading in the community but is controlled and diminishing
- No strain of testing and contact tracing capacity
- Hospitals and health care system are meeting demand
- Avoid gatherings
- Wear face masks and do social distancing

Orange: High Risk

- Minimize contact with people outside of household
- COVID-19 is spreading at an uncontrolled level
- Contract tracing and testing is starting to be strained
- Hospitals are making plans for a surge
- Wear face mask and do social distancing

Red: Extreme Risk

- Stay at home
- COVID-19 is spreading at an uncontrolled level
- Contract tracing and testing is strained
- Health system is overwhelmed
- Wear face mask and do social distancing

SACRAMENTO

Virtual Instruction In Most California Counties

Last week, the Governor announced his plan for learning and safe schools ahead of the 2020–2021 school year, as the California Department of Public Health issued a framework for when and how schools should reopen for in-person instruction. The Governor's plan centers on five key areas:

1) Safe in-person school based on local health data

The California Department of Public Health today issued updated schools guidance that includes using existing epidemiological metrics to determine if school districts can start in-person instruction. CDPH currently uses six indicators to track the level of COVID-19 infection in each California county as well as the preparedness of the county health care system – data that includes the number of new infections per 100,000 residents, the test positivity rate, and the change in hospitalization rate, among others. Any county that does not meet the state's benchmarks is put on the County Monitoring List. Schools located in counties that are on the Monitoring List must not physically open for in-person instruction until their county has come

off the Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days. Schools in counties that have not been on the Monitoring List for the prior 14 days may begin in-person instruction, following public health guidelines. School community members – including parents, teachers, staff and students – can track daily data on whether and why their county is on the [Monitoring List](#). There is a single exception. Local health officers may grant a waiver to allow elementary schools to reopen in-person instruction if the waiver is requested by the district superintendent, in consultation with labor, parents and community-based organizations. When considering a waiver request, the local health officer must consider local data and consult with the California Department of Public Health. The Department also issued updated guidance for when schools must physically close and revert to distance learning because of COVID-19 infections. Following a confirmed case of a student who was at school during his or her infectious period, other exposed students and staff should be quarantined for 14 days. The school should revert to distance learning when multiple cohorts have cases or 5 percent of students and staff test positive within a 14-day period. The district should revert to distance learning when 25 percent or more of its schools have been physically closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days. Closure decisions should be made in consultation with local health officers. After 14 days, school districts may return to in-person instruction with the approval of the local public health officer.

2) Strong mask requirements for anyone in the school

In the updated guidance, all staff and students in 3rd grade and above will be required to wear a mask or face covering. Students in 2nd grade and below are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering. Students should be provided a face covering if they do not have one. The state has delivered over 18 million face coverings to schools to support them to reopen and ensure all students can participate in learning.

3) Physical distancing requirements & other adaptations

In the updated guidance, CDPH requires that all adults stay 6 feet from one another and 6 feet away from children, while students should maintain 6 feet of distance from one another as practicable. Anyone entering the school must do a health screen, and any student or staff exhibiting a fever or other symptoms will be immediately sent home. The guidance also provides that if anyone in a student or staff member's household is sick, they too should stay home.

4) Regular testing and dedicated contact tracing for outbreaks at schools

The public health guidance recommends staff in every California school be tested for COVID-19 periodically based on local disease trends and as testing capacity allows. The Governor also announced today that the state will provide resources and technical assistance for COVID-19 investigations in school settings.

5) Rigorous distance learning

Over the course of the pandemic, most schools will likely face physical closure at some point due to COVID-19. The Legislature and Governor Newsom enacted a budget that provided \$5.3 billion in additional funding to support learning, and set requirements to ensure schools

provide rigorous and grade-appropriate instruction. Under newly enacted state law, school districts are required to provide:

- Devices and connectivity so that every child can participate in distance learning.
- Daily live interaction for every child with teachers and other students. Class assignments that are challenging and equivalent to in-person instruction.
- Targeted supports and interventions for English learners and special education students.

The full guidance from the California Department of Public Health can be found [here](#):

Coverage for COVID-19 Business Income Losses

On July 2, 2020, the California Legislature amended California [Assembly Bill 1552](#) to help policyholders seeking business interruption coverage for their COVID-19 losses. The draft legislation states the need for the legislation to go into immediate effect in "order to protect the solvency of businesses that were forced to close their doors or limit business" due to the pandemic. If adopted, the proposed legislation would apply to all commercial insurance policies providing coverage for business interruption in effect on and after March 4, 2020. The proposed legislation would create rebuttable presumptions in favor of coverage for losses due to COVID-19 under Business Income, Extra Expense, Civil Authority and Ingress and Egress policy provisions. For instance, the proposed legislation would create presumptions that COVID-19 was present at the insured premises and caused damage to the insured property. The draft legislation also specifies that the virus shall not be considered a pollutant unless the policy specifies otherwise. The ultimate impact of the draft legislation is unclear, however given that it specifically "does not affect the applicability of any policy provision, including any language addressing loss or damage caused by a virus."

Cal/OSHA Urges Employers to Follow the State's Guidance

Cal/OSHA is urging all employers in California to carefully review and follow [the state's COVID-19 workplace safety and health guidance](#) to ensure their workers are protected from the virus. The guidance will help employers comply with their obligations to implement effective measures to train and protect employees at each worksite. Existing regulations require employers to implement effective measures to protect employees from worksite hazards, including recognized health hazards such as COVID-19. Employers must take steps to:

- Modify work or the worksite to allow people to be at least six feet apart or install effective barriers where that is not feasible.
- Provide workers enough time and supplies to disinfect common surfaces.
- Encourage workers to wash their hands frequently in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#), and provide enough time and supplies so they can do it properly.
- Provide employees with cloth face coverings or allow them to use their own and reimburse them for the cost.
- Screen workers for COVID-19 symptoms before they start work,
- Have workers stay home if they feel ill and inform them about sick leave benefits.

Employers in businesses that interact with the public must follow the latest public health orders and ensure a safe workspace to protect workers and customers. In response to an increased

number of COVID-19 cases, on July 13 Governor Gavin Newsom and the California Department of Public Health issued an [expanded statewide order on indoor closures](#) to slow the spread of the disease. Workers and customers should use face coverings at all times in accordance with the latest public health order. If employers are moving worksites outdoors, they must account for new hazards such as heat illness, moving vehicles and proper illumination for those working at night.

- Cal/OSHA's [COVID-19 related resources include multilingual guidelines, checklists and videos](#).
- Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Employers and workers who have questions or need assistance with workplace health and safety programs can call [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) at 800-963-9424.

REOPENING/CLOSING

Hair Salons And Barbershops

Last week, Governor Newsom ordered a halt to indoor operations at a variety of businesses, including fitness centers and personal care services such as nail salons and barbershops. On Monday, the Governor clarified that his intention with the directive was always to allow businesses such as hair salons and barbershops to operate outdoors, but he said that process turned out to be "more challenging" than expected. He said the state issued updated operating guidelines this week that will allow outdoor operations at such businesses.

California DMV Guidance Resolves Doubt About Where Digital Sales Occur

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced automobile dealers to increase their emphasis on digital sales as customers demand greater convenience and less physical contact with dealership personnel. Some dealers are gaining a competitive edge by offering a completely online purchase process with the delivery of a new car to the customer's home, virtually eliminating all physical contact or even the need for a customer to go to a dealership. The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) dispelled any uncertainty, however, with recently issued guidance [memorandum](#) regarding online vehicle sales and off-site delivery during the pandemic period, specifically declaring that those practices are permitted in California.

California's Guidance for Recording COVID-19 Illnesses

[Guidance](#) issued by the California Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) sets forward strict obligations for recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses for employees who contract COVID-19. The guidance differs in some key aspects from guidance issued by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). California employers must record work-related COVID-19 illnesses on their Log 300s that result in death, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, medical treatment beyond first aid, loss of consciousness, or a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other healthcare professional. An injury or illness is considered "work-related" if an event or exposure in the work environment either caused or contributed to

the resulting condition or significantly aggravated a pre-existing injury or illness. Work-relatedness is generally presumed for injuries and illnesses resulting from events or exposures occurring in the work environment.^[1]

Differences Between California and Federal Guidance

In key aspects, California's recording and reporting COVID-19 guidance differs from federal [standards](#). First, by requiring reporting in certain circumstances even without a positive COVID-19 test result, Cal/OSHA is broader than the federal reporting standard. Second, Cal/OSHA requires reporting of a serious injury or illness at work even if the COVID-19 illness is not work-related. The Guidance underscores that reporting a serious illness is not an admission that the illness is work-related and also is not an admission of responsibility. As counties lift restrictions on businesses and more employees return to their place of work, employers need to be prepared to make determinations about how to record and report COVID-19 illnesses.

Guidance For Restaurants Providing Outdoor Dining, Takeout, Drive-Through and Delivery

Adding to an already impressive list of industry specific guidelines, the California Department of Health and the Department of Industrial Relations/Cal-OSHA have issued an [Industry Guidance for Restaurants Providing Outdoor Dining, Takeout, Drive-Through, and Delivery](#). Restaurants are instructed to consult the [COVID-19 County Roadmap](#) for more information on reopening in particular counties within the state. In addition, the guidance reminds all business owners that the guidance is not dispositive and that other state and local health orders and guidelines may apply. In this regard, the guidance includes links to guidelines issued by the US Food and Drug Administration, the Center for Disease Control and Cal/OSHA.

- The guidance serves to remind employers of existing obligations to train employees on COVID-19 safety requirements, as well as the need to establish a written workplace-specific COVID-19 plan. Other topics include physical distancing guidelines, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, individual control measures and screenings.
- On the subject of face coverings, the guidance states that employers must remember to continue to adhere to all applicable worker regulations and statutes. Thus, employers must consider accommodating any worker who meets one of the exemptions from wearing a face covering. Workers who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition should be provided with a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape attached to the bottom edge, if possible.
- Businesses that are open to the public should be cognizant of the exemptions to wearing face coverings set forth in the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#) and should not exclude any member of the public for not wearing a face-covering if that person is complying with the guidance. All California employers should develop policies for handling these exemptions among customers, clients, visitors and workers.

LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

Hotels Sue to Block Cleaning Mandate

Claiming a new city law requiring daily cleanings of hotel rooms will financially strain already struggling businesses, hotel industry groups sued San Francisco in state court Monday. The [lawsuit](#) filed by the Hotel Council of San Francisco, California Hotel & Lodging Association and the American Hotel & Lodging Association seeks to block the "Healthy Buildings" [ordinance](#) passed by the city's Board of Supervisors on July 7. The law requires daily cleanings of guest rooms unless a guest specifically requests otherwise. Rather than making buildings safer, the industry groups say the law will endanger guests and employees by increasing the frequency of cleaning staff in guest rooms, creating more opportunities to catch and spread the Covid-19 virus in a confined space. To read the press release, click [here](#).

Escape Rooms

The owners of a niche business that operates seven "escape rooms" filed a legal action against Los Angeles County health officials, alleging they were ordered to close under threat of criminal action amid the coronavirus pandemic without the opportunity for a hearing. 60out filed the Los Angeles Superior Court petition against Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer and Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. Also named as defendants are Gov. Gavin Newsom, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and state Public Health Officer Sonia Angell. 60out seeks court orders forcing the government officials and agencies to "outline a clear process by which a business can determine whether or not it is allowed to reopen" and to provide a notice and chance to be heard before a mandated closure.

Churches Sue Governor For California Ban On Singing And Chanting

Governor Newsom is being sued by three churches: Calvary Chapel of Ukiah and Calvary Chapel Fort Bragg (both in Mendocino County) and River of Life Church in Oroville (Butte County). The 20-page lawsuit names California Governor Gavin Newsom; California Public Health Officer Dr. Sonia Angell; Mendocino Public Health Officer Dr. Noemi Dooham; and Butte County Public Health Officer Dr. Ngoc-Phuong Luu. The lawsuit is filed in the Redding office of the United States district court for the Eastern District of California and seeks the Court to issue a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), Preliminary Injunction, and a Permanent Injunction from enforcing the Worship Ban and the County Orders enforcing the Worship Ban. The lawsuit states that on July 1 the California Department of Public Health updated its Worship Guidance to include the Worship Ban by stating places of worship "must therefore discontinue singing and chanting." To read the ACLU press release, click [here](#).

Tribal Nations Appeal Ruling Over Federal Virus Relief Funds

Tribal nations are challenging a court decision that allows Alaska Native corporations to receive a share of \$8 billion in federal coronavirus relief funding set aside for tribes. The tribal nations filed a notice of appeal in the US Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, meeting the deadline set by a lower court judge. US District Court Judge Amit Mehta had said the US Treasury Department could release funding to the corporations if the tribes didn't move forward with the appeal by then. Congress approved the funding as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. The US Treasury Department and the tribal nations disagree over which entities Congress intended to be eligible for the tribal set-aside and the meaning of language included in the bill. Mehta ruled against the tribes saying the corporations can be treated as

tribal governments for limited purposes. But Mehta acknowledged he wrestled with the decision. He granted a request from the tribal plaintiffs to halt funding to the corporations while his decision is appealed.

VENTURA COUNTY

Breweries, bars, wineries can reopen in Ventura County for outdoor business

Local breweries, bars and wineries got the OK to reopen some outdoor operations after Ventura County officials aligned coronavirus restrictions more closely with state rules. The order from Ventura County's health officer, Dr. Robert Levin, eases rules that had shut local facilities without restaurant permits. Breweries that had on-site meals provided by food trucks, for example, could not operate under the local order, which was more restrictive than a statewide order from the California Department of Public Health. The new county order allows bars, pubs, breweries and similar operations to serve drinks outdoors if they also offer sit-down meals. Drinks can only be ordered with a meal. Wineries and wine tasting rooms can resume outdoor business even without food service. Current restrictions barring indoor dining at restaurants remain in place as before.

Ventura County Government Buildings To Closed

The recent surge in new coronavirus cases prompted Ventura County to once again shut down most of its government buildings to the public. The Ventura County Government Center and other county buildings are closed to public access. Certain essential offices will remain open, like county health clinics, the Sheriff's Office, the County Fire Department, and other public safety services. People will still be able to get marriage licenses at the County's Government Center by appointment. County staff members will continue to go to work, but will offer services to the public remotely, and in some cases by appointment. No reopening date is currently scheduled.

NATIONAL

ICE Announces Another Extension to I-9 Compliance Flexibility

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) confirmed that employers have an additional 30-day extension to the flexibilities in rules related to Form I-9 compliance. This relaxation of the requirement to physically inspect all new hires' identity and employment eligibility documentation was granted earlier this year, extended in May, and in June. The expiration date for these accommodations is now August 19, 2020. While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) extended the virtual I-9 policy, their [announcement](#) confirmed that no additional extensions would be granted to employers who were served Notices of Inspection (NOIs) during March 2020 and have been in the process of responding to ICE. We expect that no new NOIs will be issued until late August, but ICE has not confirmed this publicly.

- Expired List B Documents are Still Allowed: The [US Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\) temporary policy](#) allowing for the acceptance of expired List B documents

continues with employers still required to follow up, where necessary, on documents treated as receipts. Per the guidance in the temporary policy, any expired List B document that was not formally extended by the state's issuing authority should be treated as a receipt. However within 90 days after DHS terminates this temporary policy, the employee will be required to present a valid, unexpired document to replace the expired one presented when they were initially hired. The employee may also choose to present a different document.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC has produced a series of factsheets for young adults, ages 15-21. The factsheets cover a variety of topics, including what test results mean, how to stay safe at the pool or beach, how to wear a face covering and other preventive measures. To view the guidance, click [here](#).

New Legislation Would Grant Automatic Forgiveness of PPP Loans Under \$150,000

The smallest of small businesses may be able to avoid hassling with additional documents, worksheets and payroll/tax forms. A bipartisan bill called [The Paycheck Protection Small Business Forgiveness Act](#) has been introduced into the Senate that would allow small businesses who received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$150,000 or less to obtain automatic forgiveness after submitting a one-page attestation form. The attestation form would be limited to one-page, and the small business would simply attest that the loan is eligible for forgiveness and that the business complied with the requirements of the Paycheck Protection Program found in the CARES Act.

US Chamber Letter on the Phase 4 Coronavirus Relief Legislation

The US Chamber of Commerce and its members applauded the Administration and Congress for the actions taken to mitigate the direct and indirect economic effects of the COVID-19. The Chamber expressed its appreciation for the bipartisan approach that led to the enactment of the CARES Act and related legislation in a letter. Click [here](#) to read the Chamber letter.

Regulatory Reform and Expedited Infrastructure Review

Two recent executive orders ("EOs") issued by President Trump require additional efforts by federal agencies to facilitate regulatory reform and to expedite infrastructure projects, relying greatly on emergency and special exception authorities within federal statutes and regulations. One EO entitled, "Executive Order on [Regulatory Relief to Support Economic Recovery](#)," focuses on general regulatory Relief in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic ("Regulatory Relief EO"). The second EO entitled, "[Accelerating the Nation's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Emergency by Expediting Infrastructure Investments and Other Activities](#)," requires agencies with permitting, oversight and review roles under various environmental and other programs to expedite review and processing of these projects.

Another stimulus check?

Democrats and Republicans may have different ideas about what should be included in the next coronavirus aid package, but on this much they seem to agree: Many Americans need another stimulus check to help them bounce back from the economic hardships caused by the

pandemic. According to USA Today, the sticking point: Who should get those checks and how big they should be. [President Trump](#) has already signaled his support for additional cash payments as part of the next recovery package. The House already has passed a Democratic bill calling for a second round of direct payments of up to \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for joint filers. Senate Republicans also appear to be on board with an additional round of stimulus payments, although they want to limit who would qualify. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has suggested distributing the money to people who earn \$40,000 or less per year, arguing they would benefit the most from another round of stimulus payments. Forty percent of Americans earning less than \$40,000 a year lost their jobs in March, which means the economic burden of the coronavirus has fallen hardest on those least able to bear it, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell told lawmakers in May.

Other Issues On The Negotiating Table

According to various articles, below are some of the items that Congress is considering.

- **Payroll tax cut:** Trump has repeatedly floated the idea of a payroll tax cut, saying it would help put people back to work. The size of the cut and other details haven't been released, and lawmakers on Capitol Hill, including many Republicans, have resisted the idea.
- **State, local and tribal funding:** Democrats have made additional funds for state, local and tribal governments their No. 1 priority in the next package. Under the HEROES Act, nearly \$1 trillion would go to state, local and tribal governments that need funds to pay first responders, health workers and teachers who are in danger of losing their jobs because of the coronavirus pandemic. But Trump has said he has no interest in bailing out states that he thinks have been poorly managed. McConnell has called the bill a non-starter.
- **Liability protections for businesses:** Republicans are demanding that any new bill include protections for business from what conservatives have called frivolous and opportunistic lawsuits as states and companies begin to reopen. It is a proposition Democrats oppose.
- **Education and funds for schooling:** Republicans have made getting children back to school a focus and have signaled they want to make additional funds for schools a central piece of the next package in hopes of making schools safer as COVID-19 cases continue to spike. Democrats, while on board with more funding, have been cautious in their mandates for children to go back to school due to the pandemic.
- **Funds for hospitals, testing and hazard pay for workers:** Democrats and Republicans have highlighted the needs for more testing, and liberals are pushing for billions more to rapidly expand testing as the country attempts to reopen. Bipartisan proposals have also been floated for increased funding for rural hospitals and hazard pay for front-line workers, something the president has embraced. The House Democrats' plan establishes a \$200 billion fund to provide hazard pay for essential workers.
- **More funds for small businesses:** Congressional lawmakers in both parties have expressed an openness to possibly extending the Small Business Association's Paycheck Protection Program, which expires August 8.

- **Infrastructure spending:** Republicans and Democrats have repeatedly cited the need to repair the nation's aging infrastructure and members of both parties have suggested a massive infrastructure could help in a recovery effort, while also creating new jobs for Americans.

Expansion of the Main Street Lending Program to Nonprofits

The Federal Reserve Bank announced the expansion of the Main Street Lending Program to extend credit to nonprofit organizations such as hospitals and social service organizations. The expansion includes two new loan options: the Nonprofit Organization New Loan Facility (NONLF) and the Nonprofit Organization Expanded Loan Facility (NOELF). The expanded MSLP is open to nonprofits that are created or organized in the US with significant operations and employees located in the US To view the term sheet and forms for Nonprofit Organizations, click [here](#)

QUESTIONS EKA HAS RECEIVED

There Is A Great Deal Of Confusion Regarding The New Statewide Closure Orders. Can You Please help Us Understand The Order?

Effective July 13, 2020, California issued statewide restrictions on a number of business operations due to the resurgence of COVID-19. The five-page [Statewide Public Health Order](#) said that all bars to close for indoor and outdoor service, as well as indoor services for restaurants, wineries, and movie theaters. The State also closed fitness centers, non-essential offices, places of worship, hair salons, personal care services, and malls in at least 29 counties that have remained on the State's watch list for at least 3 days. The Governor further imposed restrictions on more businesses in counties that have remained on the state's [monitoring list](#) for three consecutive days. Currently at least 29 counties are on the list. Although the latest State directive has not expressly indicated which office workspaces fall under the category of "Offices in Non-Essential Sectors," the California Department of Public Health's concurrently issued [Guidance](#) directs businesses to refer to the State's [list of Essential Workforce](#), issued as part of the March 19 statewide shelter-in-place order. California's patchwork of county orders, frequently imposing stricter restrictions than the State, adds another layer of complicity to the analysis. Non-essential businesses considering keeping their offices open in the identified counties should consult their local County and City Public Health Departments, as well as any local orders, to ensure compliance with the State's order.

WHAT WE'RE READING

Younger Residents Continue To Drive Coronavirus Surge In LA County

Los Angeles County health officials have reported more than 2,700 new coronavirus cases, along with another 50 deaths, as younger residents emerge as a growing percentage of new infections. The number of people hospitalized remained elevated at 2,218, down from 2,232 on Monday but still among the highest numbers of the pandemic, according to the county

Department of Public Health. The number of hospitalizations has topped 2,200 for three straight days as of Tuesday. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Coronavirus Infections Far Higher Than Confirmed But Most Americans Still Not Exposed

Coronavirus infections in the United States are far higher than what has been confirmed, although the number of Americans who have been exposed is far below what is required for widespread immunity, according to data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data appeared on both the CDC website and in the journal [JAMA Internal Medicine](#) on Tuesday. The CDC estimated the number of infections is about 10 times higher than the confirmed cases, based on blood samples analyzed for antibodies in 10 regions. Those regions included the New York City metropolitan area, parts of Washington state, Utah, south Florida and Missouri. To read the full story, click [here](#).

How Mckinsey Is Making \$100 Million (And Counting) Advising On The Government's Bumbling Coronavirus Response

For the world's best-known corporate-management consultants, helping tackle the pandemic has been a bonanza. It's not clear what the government has gotten in return. In the middle of March, as the coronavirus pandemic was shutting down the country, McKinsey & Co., the giant management consulting firm, saw opportunity. The firm sprang into sales mode, deploying its partners across the country to seek contracts with federal agencies, state governments and city halls. Government organizations had been caught unprepared by the virus, and there was a lot of money to be made advising them on how to address it. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Energy Secretary Says National Labs Are Working On COVID Treatments

Speaking before a House panel Tuesday, Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette defended his department's response to the Covid-19 crisis and also emphasized the importance of securing the national energy grid. The hearing before a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee, which lasted more than three hours, focused largely on the Trump administration's response to the novel coronavirus, which has killed more than 136,000 Americans and infected over 3.4 million, according to a John Hopkins University [tracker](#). To read the full story, click [here](#).

Walmart And Sam's Club To Require Masks Nationwide Starting July 20 As COVID-19 Cases Rise

Walmart and Sam's Club will start requiring masks at stores and clubs nationwide starting Monday, July 20, the company announced Wednesday. "We know some people have differing opinions on this topic. We also recognize the role we can play to help protect the health and well-being of the communities we serve by following the evolving guidance of health officials like the CDC," the retailers' chief operating officers said in a [blog post Wednesday](#). The move comes two days after [Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said a mask mandate](#) in stores nationwide was "obviously something that's on our minds." [Best Buy](#) and [Starbucks](#) started requiring consumers nationwide wear masks Wednesday. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Does Your Boss Have to Tell You If Your Co-Workers Catch COVID-19?

Millions of Californians who are back at work or are preparing to return for the first time since the start of the 2020 pandemic fear for their safety on the job. As the guidance from state and local leaders evolves and changes, the NBC4 I-Team spoke to employment attorney Dominic Messiha about the responsibilities of employers and employees in the workplace. One big question often asked by employees: is how much information are employers obligated to share after a positive COVID-19 test result at a workplace? To read the full story, click [here](#).

Russia Is Hacking Virus Vaccine Trials, US, UK, Canada Say

Western governments accused hackers believed to be part of Russian intelligence of trying to steal valuable private information about a coronavirus vaccine on Thursday, calling out the Kremlin in an unusually detailed public warning to scientists and medical companies. The alleged culprit is a familiar foe. Intelligence agencies in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada alleged that the hacking group APT29, also known as Cozy Bear and blamed for American election interference four years ago, is attacking academic and pharmaceutical research institutions involved in COVID-19 vaccine development. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Return Of Parking Fines Delayed By COVID-19 Pandemic Costing CA Cities Millions

Since March, the reduction or absence of ticketing cars in many California cities has halted tens of millions of dollars in city revenues, worsening many city budget projections. Beginning in March, many cities stopped ticketing cars parked in no parking areas, without proper overnight designations, in streets on street sweeping days, and other situations where a ticket would have ordinarily been given. Cities, not wishing to burden residents with a flurry of bills or having residents unnecessarily go out during a pandemic, initially gave short term reprieves before moving on to longer term violations suspensions. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Rose Parade Canceled Due To The Coronavirus

PASADENA, Calif. — The 2021 Rose Parade has been canceled because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on planning for the New Year's Day tradition and the risk of spreading infections among its huge audience and participants, organizers said Wednesday. The Pasadena, California, Tournament of Roses Association said the decision was put off until organizers were certain that safety restrictions would prevent staging of the 132nd parade. To read the full story, click [here](#).

California Worker Safety Agency "Missing In Action" During Coronavirus, Critics Say

As Gov. Gavin Newsom attempts to rein in the state's rising coronavirus cases, the agency responsible for keeping California workers safe spent the July 4 holiday visiting more than 1,000 businesses to ensure they were following safety guidelines. Newsom hailed the multi-agency effort as a success — saying the resulting [52 citations](#) showed most businesses were following the rules. Worker rights' advocates, however, called the action more of a publicity stunt that distracts from the truth: an agency once considered among the best of its kind nationwide has largely abandoned in-person inspections since the pandemic began, potentially endangering the lives of millions of workers across California. To read the full story, click [here](#).

'This Is Real': Doctors, Nurses Who Helped New York With Coronavirus Surge Warn Their Home States

When Dr. Ray Baue, a neurosurgeon, sees fellow residents of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, not wearing masks or practicing social distancing to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, he grows frustrated and worried. That's because Baue knows exactly what it could all lead to — he saw it firsthand during the three weeks he volunteered at New York City's Elmhurst Hospital in April, when it was overwhelmed with coronavirus patients while the city was the center of the global pandemic. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Pandemic Leads To National Coin Shortage; Federal Reserve Task Force Created To Help

At fast-food restaurants, supermarkets, banks and other businesses across the country where cash normally changes hands, customers are being warned that coins are in short supply. Scott Talan found that out last weekend when he used a Starbucks drive-thru in Virginia and was met by a handwritten sign that read, "Due to the national coin shortage, we can only accept exact change or electronic payment at this time." To read the full story, click [here](#).

White House Official-Turned-Lobbyist Cashed In On CARES Act

A high-level staffer managing legislative affairs for President Donald Trump who left government earlier this year is listed in official filings as lobbying Congress on the \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief bill for an array of mammoth corporate and industry clients, such as the drug industry trade group PhRMA, an association representing private equity firms, Duke Energy, Major League Baseball, and the Children's Hospital Association. Despite Benjamin R. Howard's recent turn through the revolving door, he may turn through it yet again: Politico recently reported that the Oval Office is considering bringing him back for an even more senior White House job. And a close look at lobbying disclosures suggests the possibility he may have run afoul of Trump's ethics restrictions—but neither he, his lobbying firm, nor the White House responded to the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) when presented with the information in detailed queries. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Exclusive: White House document shows 18 states in coronavirus "red zone"

A document prepared for the White House Coronavirus Task Force but not publicized suggests more than a dozen states should revert to more stringent protective measures, limiting social gatherings to 10 people or fewer, closing bars and gyms and asking residents to wear masks at all times. The document, dated July 14 and obtained by the Center for Public Integrity, says 18 states are in the "red zone" for COVID-19 cases, meaning they had more than 100 new cases per 100,000 population last week. Eleven states are in the "red zone" for test positivity, meaning more than 10 percent of diagnostic test results came back positive. To read the full story, click [here](#).

White House Gets Blowback For Failing To Release Coronavirus Report

Scientists expressed dismay Friday that the Trump administration had not publicly released a document the Center for Public Integrity posted a day earlier showing that the White House Coronavirus Task Force considers 18 states to be in the "red zone" for virus cases. "Makes me angry," Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention during the

Obama administration, wrote on Twitter. "There is absolutely NO legitimate reason for this information — and much better information — not to be publicly available, in real time, RIGHT NOW for every community in the United States, every day." To read the full story, click [here](#).

White House Seeks To Block Funds For Testing In Coronavirus Relief Bill

Senate GOP lawmakers, angered by the administration's position, are pushing back and trying to keep the money for testing and tracing in the bill, two Republican sources told NBC News. Some White House officials reportedly believe new money shouldn't be allocated for testing because previous assistance funds remain unspent. The Trump administration is trying to use the legislation to fund priorities unrelated to the pandemic such as a new FBI building, according to The Washington Post. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Without A Trace: This California County Has Stopped Contact Tracing As Coronavirus Surges

Merced County promised 42 tracers to interview infected people. But it's not actually tracing. "All of us got sick, and the county didn't do anything to help us." A month ago, everyone in Merced County infected with the coronavirus got a call from county officials, asking questions about whom they'd come in contact with. It's a tracing process that experts say is critical to stopping the spread of the highly infectious disease. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Trump, Congress Square Off Over Virus Aid As Crisis Worsens

President Donald Trump acknowledged a "big flareup" of COVID-19 cases, but divisions between the White House and Senate Republicans and differences with Democrats posed fresh challenges for a new federal aid package with the US crisis worsening and emergency relief about to expire. Trump convened GOP leaders at the White House on Monday as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell prepared to roll out his \$1 trillion package in days. But the administration criticized the legislation's money for more virus testing and insisted on a full payroll tax repeal that could complicate quick passage. The timeline appeared to quickly shift. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Fed's Harker Warns Of Economic Fallout Of Increased COVID Cases

Philadelphia Federal Reserve President Patrick Harker says the mass spikes in coronavirus cases across the US will likely dampen the economy as well, Reuters reported. Harker said the impact could be twofold in its damage. "There's both the direct economic impact of businesses having to close down," Harker said during a webinar organized by the Fed, as reported by Reuters. "But I also worry about the psychological impact on consumer confidence." To read the full story, click [here](#).

Walmart, Lowe's, Aldi, Target Among Retailers Adding Face Masks Requirements Due To COVID-19. See The Full List.

The nation's largest retailers are now requiring what some states and cities won't: the use of face masks. Walmart, Target, CVS, Walgreens and Kroger are the biggest to announce they will soon mandate masks at stores nationwide joining the list of businesses with face covering requirements growing as COVID-19 cases rise. The coronavirus causes the disease COVID-19. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Hospitals Are Suddenly Short of Young Doctors — Because of Trump's Visa Ban

As hospitals across the United States brace for a difficult six months — with the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic still raging and concerns about a second wave in the fall — some are acutely short-staffed because of an ill-timed change to immigration policy and its inconsistent implementation. A proclamation issued by President Donald Trump on June 22, barring the entry of most immigrants on work visas, came right as hospitals were expecting a new class of medical residents. Hundreds of young doctors were unable to start their residencies on time. To read the full story, click [here](#).

US-Canada, Mexico Border Closures Extended Into Late August As American COVID-19 Cases Surge

Travelers looking to cross the land border into Canada or Mexico will have to wait at least another month after the Department of Homeland Security extended closures at both borders due to the coronavirus pandemic. Department of Homeland Security's Acting Secretary, Chad Wolf, tweeted the news on Thursday. "Based on the success of the existing restrictions and close collaboration with Mexico and Canada, @DHSgov will continue to limit non-essential travel at our land ports of entry with Canada and Mexico until August 20," he wrote. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Why LA Is Shifting Its Covid-19 Testing Strategy From Free-For-All To Targeted Access

New COVID-19 testing sites for Los Angeles County will target some of the neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, public health officials announced Wednesday. The plans will expand coronavirus testing by 65% in the coming weeks. The testing expansion will focus on underserved "hot-spot" areas of infection, including Montebello, South Gate, Panorama City, Downey, Norwalk and Compton. Existing testing sites will also be expanding in areas such as Bellflower, Pomona, El Monte and East Los Angeles, according to officials. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Trump To Consider Not Signing Coronavirus Relief Bill Without Payroll Tax Cut

President Trump would consider "not signing" a fourth round of coronavirus relief funding if it doesn't include a payroll tax cut, he said Sunday. "I want to see it," Trump told "Fox News Sunday." "I'll have to see but, yeah, I would consider not signing it if we don't have a payroll tax cut, yes." To read the full story, click [here](#).

Culinary Union: 22 Members Or Their Family Have Died From COVID-19, Hundreds Hospitalized

Nevada's largest labor union has released data showing how COVID-19 has affected 60,000 workers and their families. Since March, the contagious respiratory illness has killed 22 members of the Culinary Union, including their spouses or dependents. As of Wednesday, 352 members and their spouses or dependents have been hospitalized. Hospitalizations tied to the union have increased more than 860% since Nevada officials allowed casinos to reopen in June, according to the union. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Coronavirus Backlash Triggers Wave Of Progressive Activism From Asian Americans In Southern California

Activists hope surge will help break stronghold Republicans have long uniquely held on county's AAPI community, which is getting more attention from candidates on both sides of the aisle. After generations of benefiting from a conservative trope that painted Asian Americans as shining examples of how to assimilate and overcome racism, Tammy Kim said a wave of discrimination tied to the coronavirus pandemic has reshaped reality for many Asian Americans in Orange County. To read the full story, click [here](#).

FDA Approves Quest COVID-19 Test for 'Pooled' Sample Use

The US Food and Drug Administration reissued an emergency use authorization (EUA) to Quest Diagnostics to authorize its Quest SARS-CoV-2 rRT-PCR test for use with pooled samples containing up to four individual swab specimens collected under observation. The Quest test is the first COVID-19 diagnostic test to be authorized for use with pooled samples. To read the FDA press release, click [here](#).

How COVID Is Deepening California's Income Inequality In 5 Charts

The pandemic has left millions of Californians without jobs, food or money for next month's rent. Meanwhile, the state's many billionaires got richer. The decade dawned on a California that was both "the richest and poorest" state in the nation, in the words of Gov. Gavin Newsom. Wages for the top 10% of California's earners had grown three times as fast as those of the bottom 10% of earners since 1980 — all as the cost of buying or renting shelter skyrocketed. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Oxford Coronavirus Vaccine Induces Strong Immune Response, Early Trial Results Suggest

A coronavirus vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca is safe and shows signs of inducing an immune response, according to early clinical trial results published Monday in the medical journal [The Lancet](#). The trial did not look at whether the vaccine prevents coronavirus infection, however. That's a question that will be answered in trials that are ongoing. To read the full story, click [here](#).

California Needs \$28 Billion In Taxes By The End Of July

Among the many unprecedented challenges faced by **Gov. Gavin Newsom** and California legislators in crafting the budget signed into law last month, few were as foundational as the lack of solid data about how much money the state government would have to spend. Newsom gave California taxpayers an automatic extension of the April 15 deadline to pay their personal income taxes, moving the date to July 15. Those who normally pay their taxes quarterly were also allowed to use the new due date. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Fraud Concerns Loom Over Move To Forgive Small Business Loans

The banking industry is pressing Congress to convert millions of emergency small business loans into grants with minimal paperwork — an idea that some lawmakers and watchdog groups warn could expose the government to massive fraud. The banks are pushing the issue because businesses that took the so-called Paycheck Protection Program loans are beginning to file

applications to have the loans forgiven, a time-consuming and confusing process for both lenders and borrowers. The \$670 billion program stipulates that the loans can be forgiven if employers kept workers on payroll, a key incentive for businesses to participate. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Is It Safe To Go To The Gym During The Coronavirus Pandemic?

Is it safe to go to the gym during the coronavirus pandemic? It depends on where you live and the precautions you and the gym take. If cases of COVID-19 are poorly controlled where you live, experts say it's best to stay away. But if you live in an area where the spread is being contained, there are ways to minimize risk when going for a workout. To ensure everyone stays at least 6 feet apart, gyms should take steps such as moving machines, blocking off areas and limiting the number of people allowed inside, says Dr. Marybeth Sexton, an assistant professor of infectious diseases at Emory University. To read the full story, click [here](#).

How To Understand COVID-19 Numbers

I've watched so many reporters, both at ProPublica and at other outlets, do their best to debunk myths, demystify confusing trends and answer the public's questions. It is, frankly, exhausting, especially when the same arguments keep coming up again and again. I'm also concerned to see not just laypeople, but local and national leaders, using data out of context to justify their own narratives. At the same time, I see members of the public who are sincerely confused, trying to find a way through all the numbers and charts being thrown around, asking: "How concerned should I be right now? How bad are things, really?" To read the full story, click [here](#).

Antibody Tests Show Virus Rates 10x Higher, CDC Says; US Accuses Chinese Hackers In Targeting Of COVID-19 Research

Testing for the new coronavirus vastly under-counted the true number of COVID-19 infections in the US from March to May, according to a new federal study relying on antibody testing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study shows that COVID-19 rates were more than 10 times higher than what was reported. Meanwhile, the Justice Department has accused two Chinese hackers of targeting the computer networks of companies known to be developing a potential coronavirus vaccine and treatment. Prosecutors say the hackers allegedly stole information for themselves as well as information they knew would be of interest and value to the Chinese government. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Lithia Motors Sued In California Over Bonuses, Covid-19 Furloughs

Car retailer Lithia Motors Inc. violated California labor laws when paying customer service bonuses and reneged on promises made to employees furloughed in the pandemic, a representative action filed in state court alleges. Karen Koval sued the company July 17, seeking to recover penalties on behalf of herself and other current and former employees. To read the full story, click [here](#).

US Says China Backed Hackers Who Targeted COVID-19 Vaccine Research

In the latest attempt to "name and shame" China's government-sponsored cyber theft, the Justice Department announced an indictment Tuesday charging two Chinese nationals — both in China — with hacking governments, dissidents, human rights activists and private companies, including those engaged in COVID-19 vaccine research. The indictment says the hackers operated both for their own profit and also for the main Chinese intelligence service, the Ministry of State Security. It says they were assisted by an unnamed Chinese intelligence officer known to the grand jury. Officials said these were the first federal charges related to alleged theft of coronavirus research. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Hidden Risk of Domestic Violence during COVID-19

The unintended consequences of the COVID-19 lockdowns have been severe: mass unemployment, increased drug overdoses and suicides, and widespread social unrest are but a few of them.

On Monday, the National Bureau of Economic Research released a paper detailing another: increased domestic violence. Analyzing government-mandated lockdowns in India, researchers Saravana Ravindran and Manisha Shah found evidence of a 131 percent increase in complaints of domestic violence in May 2020 in "red zone districts," or districts that experienced the strictest lockdown measures, relative to districts that had less strict measures ("green zones"). To read the full story, click [here](#).

Coronavirus Hospital Data Goes Live On New HHS System

HHS is set Monday to restore public access today to coronavirus data that hospitals report to the government, senior department officials said, in a bid to end a flap over missing dashboards that tracked critical information on hospitalizations. The data will go live Monday on its new data system, HHS Protect, and officials say they have implemented safeguards to prevent tampering, such as keeping a record of all changes that were made. To read the full story, click [here](#).

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