



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Contact: San Francisco Joint Information Center, 415-558-2712, dempres@sfgov.org

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**SAN FRANCISCO ISSUES RULES LIMITING VISITORS TO
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES TO SLOW SPREAD OF
COVID-19**

The City and County of San Francisco issued a Public Health Order affecting rules at all listed residential facilities within city limits

Action protects vulnerable population of residents from exposure

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed today announced that the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco has issued a [Public Health Order](#) prohibiting non-essential visitors from entering long-term care facilities within San Francisco city limits. This measure is necessary to slow the spread of novel coronavirus in the community. It builds on the City's public health recommendations and a prior [Public Health Order](#) issued on March 7th regarding City-owned and operated long-term care facilities at Laguna Honda and Zuckerberg San Francisco General hospitals.

Because of their age or medical conditions, residents of long-term care facilities are at elevated risk of getting seriously ill, or even dying, if they get COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. Since the virus is circulating in the community, visitors to those facilities may have it and have mild symptoms or be asymptomatic and, therefore, expose vulnerable residents to infection. This new Public Health Order requires 18 private long-term care facilities in the City to exclude non-essential visitors from entry or access. Laguna Honda Hospital and Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital's skilled nursing unit began restricting visitors as of March 7th.

"This Order is supported by our best scientific evidence and follows best practices for limiting the spread of the novel coronavirus," said Mayor Breed. "We're following the recommendations of public health officials to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community and are taking steps to protect those who are most vulnerable to the virus."

"We know the hardship that this temporary limit on visitors will have on seniors and on their families and loved ones," said Board President Norman Yee. "We strongly encourage using other means of communication to stay in contact, such as phone calls, video calls, e-mail. As soon as our public health experts let us know that it is safe to do so, these protocols will be adjusted appropriately. Thank you to everyone who is keeping the health and safety of our most vulnerable populations in mind."

"We know that this virus has the greatest likelihood of harming elderly people and those with underlying health conditions and chronic illnesses," said Dr. Grant Colfax, San Francisco



Director of Health. “Looking at the patterns of illness in California and Washington State, we have chosen to move aggressively to protect residents of long-term care facilities in our community by restricting visitors who could unwittingly bring exposure to the virus into the building with them.”

In addition to prohibiting non-essential visitors, the Order requires long-term care facilities to create a COVID-19 plan that addresses the screening of residents, staff and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness. The Order also includes conditions for authorized visitors to reduce the risk of infection, such as hand washing, appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), maintaining at least six feet distance from other people, and limiting the duration of visits, sending sick employees home immediately and notifying DPH of any positive COVID-19 result for a resident or staff member.

Public Health Orders and recommendations from the San Francisco Department of Public Health can be found at www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp along with up-to-date on coronavirus news and information. You can also call 311 and sign up for the City’s alert service for official updates: text COVID19SF to 888-777.

Remember, these are the best ways for all San Franciscans to reduce their risk of getting sick, and preventing COVID-19:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Try alternatives to shaking hands, like a wave.
- If you have recently returned from a country, state or region with ongoing COVID-19 infections, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials.
- There is no recommendation to wear masks at this time to prevent yourself from getting sick.

You can also prepare for the possible disruption caused by an outbreak:

- Prepare to work from home if that is possible for your job, and your employer.
- Make sure you have a supply of all essential medications for your family.
- Prepare a child care plan if you or a caregiver are sick.
- Make arrangements about how your family will manage a school closure.
- Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.
- Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.

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