

More California counties see COVID-19 case improvements

May 18 2021, by John Antczak



Designer Gere Kavanaugh, left, wears a face mask of her design, as she exercises with Silver Age Home Health licensed vocational nurse Daisy Cabaluna during a weekly outdoors session at her home in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

Five more California counties will move to less restrictive tiers because of improving COVID-19 conditions and no counties regressed, the state Department of Public Health said Tuesday.

Orange, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and Amador counties are moving from the orange, or moderate, tier to the yellow, or minimal, tier. Tehama County is improving from the red, substantial, tier to orange.

The moves will put 13 counties in yellow, 35 in orange, 10 in red. No counties are in the purple, or substantial, tier.

Santa Clara County's health officer, Dr. Sara Cody, immediately announced that new yellow tier rules will be implemented Wednesday. Among the local rules being lifted are requirements that businesses maximize the number of staff who are teleworking.

The improvements were announced a day after the state's health director announced that California will require people to keep wearing masks and practice social distancing indoors until June 15—the date when Gov. Gavin Newsom has said nearly all COVID-19 restrictions will be dropped if cases remain low.

More than 34.8 million vaccines have been administered in California, and the seven-day positivity rate is down to just 0.9%.

During a virtual meeting of the California Travel and Tourism Commission on Tuesday, the governor noted, however, that since the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended looser masking guidelines last week there has been a decline in vaccinations "that is creating some pause and a little bit of concern."



Designer Gere Kavanaugh, left, wears a face mask of her design in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. At right, Silver Age Home Health licensed vocational nurse Daisy Cabaluna monitors her temperature during a weekly outdoors visit at her home. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Some visitors wear face masks outdoors while taking pictures of the Hollywood sign at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Bijan Parsi looks at his phone while carrying his daughter Ava, 6, on his shoulders in Laguna Beach, Calif., Monday, May 17, 2021. California won't lift its mask requirement until June 15 to give the public and businesses time to prepare and ensure cases stay low, state Health Director Mark Ghaly said Monday. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong



People walk past a sign requesting customers to wear masks in Laguna Beach, Calif., Monday, May 17, 2021. California won't lift its mask requirement until June 15 to give the public and businesses time to prepare and ensure cases stay low, state Health Director Mark Ghaly said Monday. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong



Visitors are seen without face masks at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15.
Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Visitors wear face masks outdoors at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15.
Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Drue Burkey and his girlfriend Reace Hammel sunbathe in Laguna Beach, Calif., Monday, May 17, 2021. California won't lift its mask requirement until June 15 to give the public and businesses time to prepare and ensure cases stay low, state Health Director Mark Ghaly said Monday. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong



Jose Cartamo, 64, originally from El Salvador, wears a face mask as he collects recyclables at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. Cartamo plans to make an appointment to be vaccinated. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Student Sander Albertson, from Minnesota, wears a face mask outdoors with his friends at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Monday, May 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing face masks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Los Angeles Park Rangers wears facemasks at the the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles Monday, May. 17, 2021. California is keeping its rules for wearing facemasks in place until the state more broadly lifts its pandemic restrictions on June 15. State officials said Monday, that the delay will give people time to prepare, and for the state to make sure that virus cases stay low. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

More than a dozen other states, including neighboring Oregon, have already followed the new CDC masking guidelines.

Most of the 58 counties in California—including gigantic Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego—are heeding the state's masking schedule.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis said Monday the county will

use the extra month to fully vaccinate more people. "More than half of our adult population remains vulnerable," she said.

After becoming the epicenter for the virus in the U.S. at the start of the year, California has experienced a tremendous decline in COVID-19 cases.

Newsom, like the Biden administration, has been under pressure to ease mask restrictions as coronavirus cases decline nationwide. But the Democratic governor faces a recall election this fall driven largely by frustration with his handling of the pandemic.

The tiers are based on cases, positivity rate and on vaccination figures. Newsom has indicated California will do away with the system in mid-June.

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