

Insights

BACK TO WORK: GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM ISSUES GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING CALIFORNIA

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SUMMARY

California Governor Gavin Newsom was the first U.S. governor to impose a statewide stay at home order. He has now reported that his aggressive action appears to have flattened the curve of COVID-19 cases in the state, and many are now looking to Newsom for guidance on easing restrictions and getting people back to work.

Last week Newsom laid out a framework for lifting California's stay at home order. He said the state must first be able to:

- Closely monitor and track potential cases of COVID-19,
- Prevent infection of high-risk people,
- Increase surge capacity at hospitals,
- Provide enough personal protective equipment to protect first responders,
- Develop therapeutics to help treat patients,
- Ensure physical distance at schools, businesses and child care facilities, and
- Develop guidelines for when to ask Californians to stay home again if the governor modifies the stay at home order and the virus surges.

Newsom has not provided a date certain for lifting the stay at home order, noting the length of the order depends on when hospitalizations and intensive care patients with COVID-19 decline in California. He said the end date is fluid but he expects to provide an answer in the next two weeks if conditions continue to improve.

Newsom also has not provided specifics on which businesses will be allowed to resume in-person operations, and when that is likely to occur. He did note that until a vaccine is widely available, California residents should expect to see the continued use of face coverings; staggered start times for schools; restaurants reopening with fewer tables, disposable menus and waiters wearing masks and gloves; and the continued prohibition of large gatherings.

Also this week, Newsom and the governors of Washington and Oregon announced they will form a "Western states pact" to coordinate their efforts to reopen.

Newsome indicated that he would provide a further update, and potential dates for a phased return to work, on April 29.

In the meantime, there are a few steps that businesses should consider to prepare for being reopened:

- Develop plans to comply with the anticipated social distancing requirements.
 - 6 foot distance between employee work stations
 - Marked spacing in areas where lines form
 - Protections for employees who have direct customer interactions
 - Availability of wash stations, hand sanitizers, face masks, and other appropriate PPE
- Confirm that cleaning staff or vendors are prepared to comply with CDC, OSHA, state, and local cleaning requirements.
- Develop protocols for identifying and addressing COVID illness in the workplace.
- Develop policies regarding leave for suspected COVID illness, and employee messaging.
- Prepare your supply chain for your reopen by notifying your suppliers that you will be reopening soon, and getting information on lead times for necessary products.
- Notify your customers that you hope to be resuming in-person operations, recognizing that until the return to work orders are issued, it is unclear what those resumed operations will entail, and when they will be approved.

BCLP is actively tracking new developments regarding COVID-19 shutdown orders, and associated guidance, so please contact the [COVID-19 Shutdown Team](#) if you have specific jurisdictional questions or if it would be helpful to have a portfolio audit so that your team can more effectively manage these changes across jurisdictions as they occur.

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