



Imperial County's

Roadmap to Recovery

IMPERIAL COUNTY'S ROADMAP TO RECOVERY

WORKING DOCUMENT

Introduction

Over the last several weeks, California counties, in coordination with the California Department of Public Health, have worked extensively to create a meaningful framework that supports the decision to reopen local economies. Four stages have been created and based on the direction from the State of California, Imperial County, along with the other 57 counties throughout the state, will begin a slow and gradual move from stage to stage, always keeping health and safety of the community as a priority.

Guidelines for moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 – Lower Risk Sectors

In alignment with the State of California and local health jurisdictions throughout the state, Imperial County began to slowly allow low-risk sectors to reopen as of Friday, May 8, 2020. Sectors allowed to open include, but are not limited to childcare, retail, manufacturing, and logistic businesses at a limited capacity. Examples of businesses that can open with modifications include, but are not limited to bookstores, clothing stores, florists, home and furnishing stores, antique stores, shoe stores, jewelry stores, toy stores, and sporting goods stores, etc. General guidance documents and checklists for several business sectors can be found in the California [Resilience Roadmap](#).

Guidelines for moving from Stage 2 – Lower Risk to Stage 2 – Higher Risk

Not all Stage 2 businesses will be able to open Friday with modifications. Sectors that are not included in the May 8th “reopening” include offices, seated dining (**dine-in**) at restaurants, schools, and outdoor museums and open gallery spaces. These sectors will be part of the later Stage 2 openings, the “Stage 2 – higher risk.” In order for these sectors to open, Imperial County must demonstrate a high level of readiness and low COVID-19 prevalence level. Further, Imperial County must: 1) conduct a self-evaluation; 2) meet established metrics; 3) develop a containment plan in conjunction with the local hospitals and county stakeholders; and 4) submit a written attestation, signed by the Imperial County Health Officer, to the State of California.

Guidelines and Considerations for all Stages

Individuals:

- **Continue to adhere to state and local orders**
- **Continue to practice good hygiene**
 - Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces
 - Avoid touching your face
 - Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow
 - Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible
 - Use face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit

- Stay home if sick
- Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider

Employers:

- **Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices, regarding:**
 - Social distancing and protective equipment
 - Temperature checks
 - Sanitation and use of disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
 - Business travel
- **Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms.**
- **Develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following employee COVID+ test.**

Potential Increased Community Transmission when Re-opening Businesses and the Economy.

Opening public spaces will entail an increased risk of community transmission. Certain populations will be more at risk for serious consequences and mortality from contracting the disease. Those most at risk include:

- Healthcare workers, first responders and other essential workers in contact with the public;
- Vulnerable populations (people with disabilities and living in state institutions, group homes, other congregate settings);
- 65 and older, in particular those living in nursing homes, assisted living, and senior housing; and
- People experiencing homelessness.

Strong and Clear Communication and Public Engagement Plan.

Communication is an integral part during a crisis and is even more important as Imperial County moves toward reopening. It is critical that public engagement is incorporated into the response plan to minimize the risk of misunderstanding, confusion, or protest by individuals who believe reopening should either be faster or slower. It is important that Imperial County evaluates the different needs, risk factors, and resources.

LOCAL VARIANCE

Counties can move more quickly through Stage 2, if the local public health officer attests that the County meets the state’s readiness criteria for containing COVID-19. The public health officer would certify, through submission of a written attestation to the California Department of Public Health, that the county has met the readiness criteria (outlined in the following page) designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The written attestation must be accompanied by a letter of support from the County Board of Supervisors, as well as a letter of support from the local hospitals.

READINESS FOR VARIANCE

Counties must create and submit a readiness plan which the state will make publicly available. Imperial County must submit documentation of its readiness to increase the pace through Stage 2, and it must clearly indicate its preparedness according to the criteria included below.

Table 1: STATE READINESS CRITERIA to PROGRESS FROM Stage 2-Low Risk to Stage 2-Higher Risk

Criteria	Metric
Epidemiological Stability	<p>Metric 1: Demonstrated stable/decreasing number of patients hospitalized for COVID-19 by a 7-day average of daily percent change in the total number of hospitalized confirmed COVID-19 patients of <+5% -OR- no more than 20 total confirmed COVID-19 patients hospitalized on any single day over the past 14 days.</p> <p>Metric 2: 14-day cumulative COVID-19 positive incidence of <25 per 100,000 -OR- testing positivity over the past 7 days of <8%.</p>
Protection of Essential Workers	<p>METRIC 3: Guidance for employers and essential critical infrastructure workplaces on how to structure the physical environment to protect essential workers</p> <p>METRIC 4: Availability of supplies (disinfectant, essential protective gear) to protect essential workers.</p>
Testing	<p>METRIC 5: Capacity: Minimum daily 1.5/1,000 residents (272 daily/Imperial County)</p> <p>METRIC 6: Testing availability for at least 75% of residents, as measured by a specimen collection site (including established health care providers) within 30 minutes driving time in urban areas, and 60 minutes in rural areas: AND COVID-19 Surveillance plan to include: how many tests will be done, at what frequency and how it will be reported to the state, as well as a timeline for rolling out the plan.</p>
Containment Capacity	<p>METRIC 7: Sufficient Contact Tracing Staff. 15 per 100,000 population (27.45 for Imperial County)</p> <p>METRIC 8: Availability of temporary housing units for 15% of county residents experiencing homelessness and COVID-19 positive [212 homeless (1,413 total 2019 Imperial County count)]</p>
Hospital Capacity	<p>METRIC 9: Hospital capacity to accommodate a minimum surge of 35% due to COVID-19 cases in addition to providing usual care for non-COVID-19 patients.</p> <p>METRIC 10: Hospital facilities have a robust plan to protect the hospital workforce, both clinical and nonclinical, with PPE.</p>
Vulnerable populations	<p>METRIC 11: Skilled nursing facilities (SNF) have >14-day supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on hand for staff</p> <p>METRIC 12: Established process for ongoing procurement from non-state supply chains</p>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE STATE CRITERIA

Epidemiologic stability of COVID-19. A determination must be made that the prevalence of COVID-19 cases is low enough to be swiftly contained by reintroducing features of the stay at home order and using capacity within the health care delivery system to provide care to the sick.

Protection of Stage 1 essential workers. There needs to be clear guidance and the necessary resources to ensure the safety of essential critical infrastructure workers.

Testing capacity. There must be testing capacity to detect active infection that meets the state's most current testing criteria.

Containment capacity. There must be adequate infrastructure, processes, and workforce to reliably detect and safely isolate new cases, as well as follow up with individuals who have been in contact with positive cases.

Additionally, there must be temporary housing units available to shelter at least 15% (of county residents experiencing homelessness in case of an outbreak among this population requiring isolation and quarantine of affected individuals.

Hospital capacity. Hospital capacity, including ICU beds and ventilators, and adequate PPE is available to handle standard health care capacity, current COVID-19 cases, as well as a potential surge due to COVID-19.

Vulnerable populations. The proposed variance maintains protections for vulnerable populations, particularly those in long-term care settings.

Triggers for adjusting modifications. Metrics that would serve as triggers for either slowing the pace through Stage 2 or tightening modifications, including the frequency of measurement and the specific actions triggered by metric changes must be shared.

COVID-19 CONTAINMENT PLAN

While not mandatory, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) strongly recommends that counties requesting a variance to increase the pace through Stage 2 create a county COVID-19 containment plan. While not exhaustive, the following areas and questions are important to address in the containment plan.

Testing.

- Is there a plan to increase testing to the recommended daily capacity of 2 per 1,000 residents?
- Is the average percentage of positive tests over the past 7 days <7% and stable or declining?
- Have specimen collection locations been identified that ensure access for all residents?

- Have contracts/relationships been established with specimen processing labs?
- Is there a plan for community surveillance?

Contact Tracing

- How many staff are currently trained and available to do contact tracing?
- Are these staff reflective of community racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity?
- Is there a plan to expand contact tracing staff to the recommended levels to accommodate a three-fold increase in COVID-19 cases, presuming that each case has ten close contacts?
- Is there a plan for supportive isolation for low income individuals who may not have a safe way to isolate or who may have significant economic challenges as a result of isolation?

Protecting the Vulnerable

- How many congregate care facilities, of what types, are in the county?
- How many correctional facilities, of what size, are in the county?
- How many homelessness shelters are in the county and what is their capacity?
- What is the COVID-19 case rate at each of these facilities?
- Do facilities have the ability to safely isolate COVID-19 positive individuals?
- Do facilities have the ability to safely quarantine individuals who have been exposed?
- Is there sufficient testing capacity to conduct a thorough outbreak investigation at each of these facilities?
- Do long-term care facilities have sufficient PPE for staff, and do these facilities have access to suppliers for ongoing PPE needs?
- Do these facilities (particularly skilled nursing facilities) have access to staffing agencies if and when staff shortages related to COVID-19 occur?

Acute Care Surge

- Is there daily tracking of hospital capacity including COVID-19 cases, hospital census, ICU census, ventilator availability, staffing and surge capacity?
- Are hospitals relying on county MHOAC for PPE, or are supply chains sufficient?
- Are hospitals testing all patients prior to admission to the hospital?
- Do hospitals have a plan for tracking and addressing occupational exposure?

Essential Workers

- How many essential workplaces are in the county?
- What guidance have you provided to your essential workplaces to ensure employees and customers are safe in accordance with state/county guidance for modifications?
- Do essential workplaces have access to key supplies like hand sanitizer, disinfectant and cleaning supplies, as well as relevant protective equipment?
- Is there a testing plan for essential workers who are sick or symptomatic? Is there a plan for supportive quarantine/isolation for essential workers?

Special Considerations

- Are there industries in the county that deserve special consideration in terms of mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission, e.g. agriculture or manufacturing?
- Are there industries in the county that make it more feasible for the county to increase the pace through stage 2, e.g. technology companies or other companies that have a high percentage of workers who can telework?

Community Engagement

- Has the county engaged with its cities?
- Which key county stakeholders should be a part of formulating and implementing the proposed variance plan?
- Have virtual community forums been held to solicit input into the variance plan?
- Is community engagement reflective of the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the community?

Relationship to Surrounding Counties

- Are surrounding counties experiencing increasing, decreasing or stable case rates?
- Are surrounding counties also planning to increase the pace through Stage 2 of California’s roadmap to modify the Stay-at-Home order, and if so, on what timeline? How are you coordinating with these counties?
- How will increased regional and state travel impact the county’s ability to test, isolate, and contact trace?

Imperial County is now in Stage 2 – low Risk. Below are guidelines and checklists for businesses to follow if they are permitted to open.

Review the guidance that is relevant to your workplace, prepare a plan based on the guidance for your industry, and put it into action.

When complete, you can post the [Industry-Specific Protection Plan](#) in your workplace to show your customers and your employees that you’ve reduced the risk and are open for business.

Before reopening, all facilities **must**:

1. Perform a detailed risk assessment and implement a site-specific protection plan
2. Train employees on how to limit the spread of COVID-19, including how to screen themselves for symptoms and stay home if they have them
3. Implement individual control measures and screenings
4. Implement disinfecting protocols
5. Implement physical distancing guidelines

It is critical that employees needing to self-isolate because of COVID-19 are encouraged to stay at home, with sick leave policies to support that, to prevent further infection in your workplace. See additional information on.

Industry Guidance

CONCLUSION

The threat of COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future. There is a high probability that Imperial County will experience continued outbreaks that will force us to revert to earlier stages at some point during the reopening process. Now is the time to build capacity and create partnerships, across our county with employers, nonprofits, and community groups, to respond effectively to this challenge. This is also the time to provide clear guidance and an evidence-based framework for reopening our local economy. Discussions with the state and federal government will continue with the purpose forward movement that best meets the needs of the community while protecting the health of public.