



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 18, 2020

S.F. Bay Area Imposes “Shelter in Place” Order; NY Governor Nixes NYC Mayor’s Plan to Do the Same

Residents in six San Francisco Bay Area counties will be prohibited from leaving their homes for the next three weeks under a new shelter-in-place order aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus. The restrictions, which allow for some exceptions, have taken place in San Francisco, Marin, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties, as well as the city of Berkeley.



“Because of the risk of the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect all members of the community and the Bay Area region, especially including our members most vulnerable to the virus and also health care providers,” the order states, “this Order requires all individuals anywhere in San Francisco to shelter in place — that is, stay at home — except for certain essential activities and work to provide essential business and government services or perform essential public infrastructure construction, including housing.”

USA Today reported that the restrictions will remain in effect for the next three weeks, during which people in these counties will be restricted from all “non-essential travel “by “foot, bicycle, scooter, automobile, or public transit” outside their homes. Under the order, most businesses will be forced to close until April 7.

“I know today’s order is a radical step. It has to be. We need to act now, all of us, to protect the public health,” Fox News quoted said Dr. Grant Colfax, director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

The website of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department explained details of the “shelter in place” order. It stated that the order “limits activity, travel and business functions to only the most essential needs.”

It defined essential businesses allowed to operate during the “recommended” action as health care operations; businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals; fresh and non-perishable food retailers (including convenience stores); pharmacies; childcare facilities; gas stations; banks; laundry businesses and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of a residence.

On the opposite coast, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said on March 17 that residents there should be prepared for the possibility of a “shelter-in-place” order within days.

“Shelter in place, we want to work with the state very carefully on,” de Blasio told Bloomberg News. “The city and state should work together to resolve this issue within the next 48 hours. A decision has to be made very soon, and we have to work together to reach a common strategy.”

However, this proposal was too extreme even for New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who said the city didn’t have the power to make such a declaration and any such order.



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“There’s not going to be any ‘you must stay in your house,’ because, again, that will just cause people to go somewhere else, and that will be counterproductive,” Cuomo said.

“There is not going to be any quarantine, no one is going to lock you in your home. No one is going to tell you you can’t leave the city. That is not going to happen,” he said.

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Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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