

Trouble viewing this email? [Click here »](#)



## State releases new standards for reopening schools and economy

Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled a [new classification system](#) today for measuring COVID-19 risk and reopening the economy in the state's counties. The new formula also impacts when schools can reopen for instruction generally — going beyond the exceptions made for small groups in [state guidance released Aug. 25](#).

### The basics of the new plan

The plan, released on Aug. 28, establishes four categories to indicate the severity of COVID-19 spread in California. Each of the state's counties are placed in one of four color-coded categories — purple, red, orange or yellow — in order from highest to lowest risk. Purple counties, which are essentially counties that were on the state "monitoring list," are considered at highest risk and have the most restrictions. As counties move toward the yellow classification, which has the fewest constraints, additional categories of businesses can reopen and more activities become permissible. Conversely, a county can be demoted to a more restrictive tier if it falls short of the criteria for its current tier for two consecutive weeks, or if it experiences a dramatic rise in COVID-19-related hospitalizations.

The new plan requires each county to stay in the tier they are initially placed in or later moved into for at least three weeks, except for the initial placement of counties into the purple "widespread" tier. Generally, to move into another tier, whether forward or backward, counties must meet that tier's criteria for at least two consecutive weeks. One exception applies to counties placed into the purple tier on Aug. 31. If a county is placed into the purple tier on Aug. 31, and had met the red tier criteria the previous week, the county receives credit for that week. As a result, instead of waiting three weeks, the county can move into the red tier on Sept. 7 if it continues to meet the red tier criteria during the week following the Aug. 31 assessment.

New assessments will be performed weekly and a county must meet metrics for the less restrictive tier for at least two straight weeks to be eligible for promotion. It's important to note that the standards for an individual county may exceed those contained in the state's framework.

## Reopening schools

The new guidance regarding schools is largely the same as what was presented in the [California Department of Public Health's July 17 School Reopening Framework](#), except that Tier 1 (Purple tier) is now substituted for monitoring list status.

**In order to reopen schools for in-person instruction, counties must not only move into the red tier (second-most restrictive), but also remain there for at least two weeks in order to welcome students back to campus. That means a county must effectively have a test positivity rate under 8 percent and fewer than seven new cases per 100,000 residents for at least a month to reopen schools. Purple-tier counties can still apply for elementary school reopening waivers but may not reopen secondary schools until their status is upgraded to the red tier.**

At the press conference announcing the new system, California Health and Human Services Director Dr. Mark Ghaly cited progress in the fight against COVID-19, noting that the number of cases has fallen 40 percent since July 21, but added that the infection rate is still higher than in June and stated that “we are not out of the woods.”

### Current status of California counties

- *Purple: 38 Counties totaling 87 percent of population*
  - More than seven daily new cases per 100,000 residents, or test positivity greater than 8 percent
  - Most non-essential business are closed for indoor operation
  - Risk is considered “widespread”
- *Red: 9 Counties totaling 12 percent of population*
  - Four to seven new cases daily per 100,000 residents, or test positivity between 5 percent and 8 percent
  - Some non-essential businesses are closed for indoor operation, but fewer than under the purple classification
  - Schools can reopen after the county has remained in the red tier for two straight weeks
  - Risk is considered “substantial”
- *Orange: 8 Counties totaling 1 percent of population*
  - One to four daily new cases per 100,000 residents, or test positivity between 2 percent and 5 percent
  - More businesses, but not most, are allowed to resume indoor operations in modified form
  - Risk is considered “moderate”
- *Yellow: 3 Counties totaling .1 percent of population*
  - Less than one new daily case per 100,000 residents, or test positivity less than 2 percent
  - Most businesses are allowed to resume indoor operations in modified form
  - Risk is considered “minimal”

Higher Risk → Lower Risk of Community Disease Transmission				
	Widespread Tier 1	Substantial Tier 2	Moderate Tier 3	Minimal Tier 4
Measures*				
New cases**/100,000 population per day (7 day average; 7 day lag)	>7	4-7	1-3.9	<1
Testing % Positivity (7 day average; 7 day lag)	> 8%	5-8%	2-4.9%	<2%

To determine what tier your county falls into, visit the state’s redesigned COVID-19 website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/> and <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>.

You can find a complete breakdown of what business operations and social activities are permitted in each tier here:

[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Dimmer-Framework-August\\_2020.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Dimmer-Framework-August_2020.pdf).

CSBA will keep you updated on further developments related to reopening schools and encourages you to submit any questions to our online FAQ at:

<http://covid19.csba.org/covid-19/#ask-questions> or [csba@csba.org](mailto:csba@csba.org).



California School Boards Association | 3251 Beacon Blvd., West Sacramento, CA 95691

Phone: (800) 266-3382 | Fax: (916) 371-3407

[Website](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)