



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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URGENCY ORDINANCE FOR HEALTH ORDER VIOLATIONS PASSES

Responding to increasing infection rates and hospitalizations due to COVID-19, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved an urgency ordinance implementing infractions for violations of a state or local health order.

The ordinance allows law enforcement officers or designated administrative staff to issue citations rather than penalize violations through misdemeanors, which carry fines of \$1,000 and up to six months in jail. The citations will result in fines of \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second offense and \$500 for a third within a calendar year, and is effective immediately.

The ordinance covers all aspects of state and local public health orders, including the local order to wear face coverings. Residents are urged to continue to wear face coverings, maintain physical distancing, avoid gathering in groups outside your household, and practice safe hygiene including washing your hands with soap and water frequently.

English and Spanish versions of local health orders can be found on the www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus website under "Public Information." Questions should be directed to the Call Center at (831) 454-4242, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

The County's primary objective continues to be educating individuals on health order requirements. The lower level of enforcement allows law enforcement officers and administrative staff to support community health and safety by quickly addressing situations without escalating them into court cases or arrests.

The new ordinance applies only in unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. Any enforcement within cities is subject to future action by local jurisdictions.