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Los Angeles Times



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Hair salons, barbershops can reopen now, in Stage 3 of Newsom’s plan; L.A. also loosens some restrictions



Rosa Pedraza cuts Robert Nunez's hair at Rosa Hair Salon in Atwater, Calif., on Tuesday. Pedraza has owned the business for 17 years. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

By [TARYN LUNA](#), [STEPHANIE LAI](#)

MAY 26, 2020 | 12:29 PM **UPDATED** 7:51 PM

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Tuesday that counties can begin to reopen hair salons and barbershops, marking a transition to the third stage of a plan to ease his stay-at-home order as California [nears 100,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19](#).

With cases on track to nearly double in the month of May, the governor has pointed to steady hospitalizations and other metrics as proof that the state is bending the curve.

The shears will not be snipping immediately in Los Angeles County, however. The county, which accounts for the bulk of the state's COVID-19 cases and more than half of its reported deaths, is one of 11 the state has not yet allowed to push further in reopening.



At the Hair Event in Fullerton, Kristy Rana, far left, threads Maureen Harry's eyebrows, salon owner Zaharia Bala cuts Ahmad Bitar's hair, center, and Kylee Liu cuts Anthony Arevalo's hair on Tuesday. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

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Both L.A. County and city restrictions are more severe than the statewide ones.

Newsom's move to resume salon services, under a county-by-county approach, adds to a growing list of activities, including in-person shopping and eating at restaurants, that the governor has permitted at a regional or statewide level over the last month.

But even as the governor walked back his original March 19 stay-at-home order after some counties openly defied his rules, he warned that the coronavirus will remain a threat in California for months to come.

"The reality is, this has just begun," Newsom said. "It hasn't ended. And while we are moving forward because of stabilization, because of the good work that's been done by health officials all across this nation, all across the state of California, specifically, to suppress the spread of this virus, by no stretch of the imagination is this virus behind us."

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Dan Collins, co-owner of Skyline Barbershop in Temecula, cuts Gene Kelley's hair on Tuesday, the first day they could open. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

Newsom said counties that elected to reopen salons must meet the criteria to move ahead of the current statewide restrictions and require shops to take precautions to protect workers and patrons.

To date, Newsom said 47 out of 58 California counties had met the state's regional standards, which include preparations to increase hospital capacity, testing and supplies of protective equipment.

After a closed-session meeting on Tuesday, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors announced it would submit a variance application to the state, which if approved would allow the county to advance further into [Newsom's plan for reopening the state](#).

If granted the variance, the county could accelerate reopening some businesses, including

in-person dining at restaurants, which have been shuttered by the coronavirus outbreak.

"We have to express extreme caution," Supervisor Hilda Solis said earlier in the meeting.



Pedro Delafuente, co-owner of Old Town Barber in Temecula, gives 14-year-old Chris Kavanaugh Jr. a haircut Tuesday. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

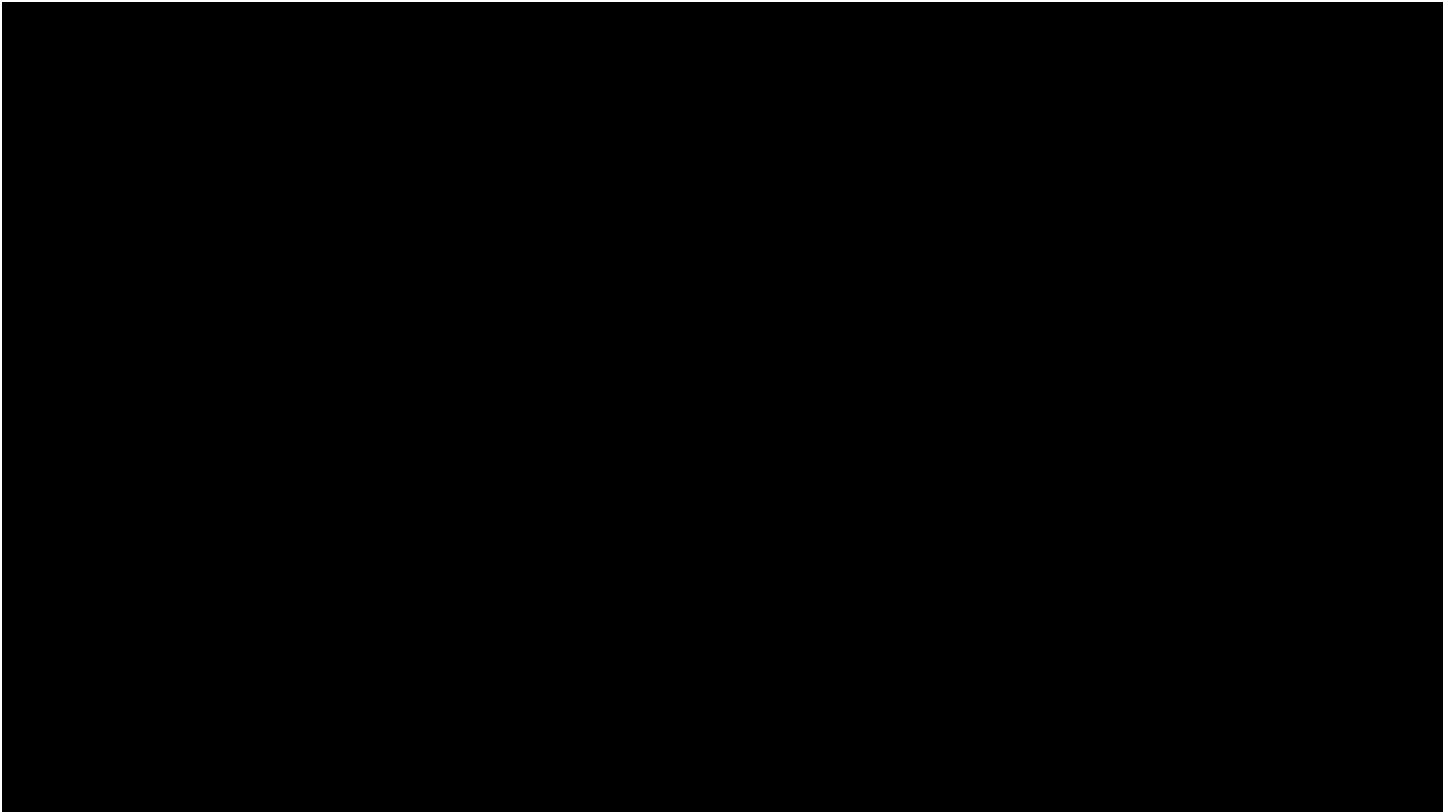
Late Tuesday afternoon, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [released a new order](#) that sets the stage for the variance request.

Under the shift, faith-based organizations can resume services, with the number of congregants limited to 25% of the building's capacity, or a maximum of 100 people, whichever is lower.

All retail establishments, including those in indoor and outdoor shopping centers, can open for business at 50% capacity; flea markets, swap meets and drive-in movie theaters can also resume operations. Pools, hot tubs and saunas that are in a multi-unit residence

or part of a homeowners association can also open.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti also announced Tuesday that all retail businesses in the city will be able to allow customers inside their stores starting Wednesday, as long as they adopt the county's safety protocols.



Despite the growth in coronavirus infections, the governor has eased many of the restrictions of his original stay-at-home order.

"We've earned the right" to do it, Garcetti said at a media briefing.

Churches and other houses of worship also will be allowed to reopen, he said, but must follow the state's guideline of limiting services to 25% of their normal capacity, or 100 people, whichever is smaller.

Restaurants are still restricted to take-out services, he said.

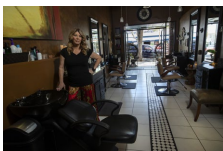
Hours after Newsom's news conference, salons were already open. Some businesses were taking more precautions than others, highlighting concerns that the state's decision to move forward could backfire.

A [10-page guidance document released by the state](#) said haircuts, weaves, extensions, braiding, wig maintenance, hair-relaxing treatments and color services could begin again. Other work that requires employees to touch a client's face, such as facials and eyelash and eyebrow services, will remain suspended.

The state's rules require customers and workers to wear face masks and advise shops to stagger appointments and create more physical distance between chairs.

At Old Town Barbers in Temecula, nearly a dozen people waited for haircuts. The owners sanitized the shop, but workers said they didn't believe that masks were necessary.

"Since we opened back up to the public, we've been slammed all day," said Nick Hernandez, a co-owner of the shop. "Everyone is thankful and glad we're here. They're ready to get back to real life."



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May 26, 2020

The barbershop had been forced to lay off workers and now faces bills for months of unpaid rent.

"Every day we were closed we were getting deeper in a hole," he said. "It's going to be rocky for a couple months, at least."

Barbers were wearing masks and wiping down surface at Legends Barber Shop in Murrieta. Owner Bryan de la Torre said some of his barbers were hesitant to return to work out of concern about catching the virus. That left him with just two workers on a

Tuesday afternoon shift that would have been staffed with 13 before the pandemic hit.

Dizan Perez, a regular at Legends, said it was his first haircut in three months and he missed having conversations with his barber. He said he wasn't worried about his safety.

"I'm young enough," Perez said. "I'm healthy. I take care of myself."

In California and in many parts of the country, barbershops have previously opened in secret or in defiance of stay-at-home orders, at some risk to employees and customers. In New York state, a barber who continued cutting hair in his home [ended up testing positive for the coronavirus](#).



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May 16, 2020

As of Tuesday, confirmed cases of COVID-19 in California had reached 99,308 while 3,817 people had died, according to The Times' [coronavirus tracker](#).

The governor unveiled the new directive for salons the day after his administration issued statewide [guidelines for religious services](#), calling on houses of worship to limit attendance to 25% of capacity, conduct health screenings of congregants and take other precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

[Amid mounting pressure](#) from protesters and President Trump, state health officials strongly recommended that churches continue remote services to protect the elderly and those with chronic conditions.

The Newsom administration on Monday also allowed retail stores to reopen in California, shifting away from an earlier patchwork approach that permitted in-person shopping only in counties that met the state's criteria.

Retailers are advised to limit the number of patrons in stores at one time, to urge the use of face masks by employees and customers, and to provide hand sanitizer, in addition to other guidelines.

Under Newsom's original four-stage reopening plan, hair salons, barbershops, nail salons and other grooming services, gyms, sports competitions in empty stadiums and religious services were set to open in Stage 3. A spokesman for the governor said sporting events, gyms and theme parks could receive the green light to return later on in the third stage.



California coronavirus cases: Tracking the outbreak

The [fourth and final stage](#) would mark the end of the stay-at-home order and all restrictions, allowing people to return to concerts and sporting events, which the governor previously noted was unlikely to occur until a vaccine became widely available.

The governor joked Tuesday that three of his young children did not properly sanitize their work space or respect physical distancing rules over the weekend when they cut his hair, which had grown noticeably long compared with his typically coiffed appearance.

"It was a family effort to remove what was described by my wife, forgive me, as a mullet," Newsom said. "Our family will have to read these guidelines as well and make sure we modify our family behavior accordingly."

Times staff writers Jaclyn Cosgrove and Sarah Parvini in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

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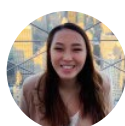
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Taryn Luna covers Gov. Gavin Newsom and California politics in Sacramento for the Los Angeles Times.



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Stephanie Lai was a 2020 summer intern for the Los Angeles Times. Hailing from Temecula, she covered Riverside County and the Inland Empire. Lai is an undergraduate student at Columbia University studying political science and serves as the news editor for her student paper, the Columbia Daily Spectator.

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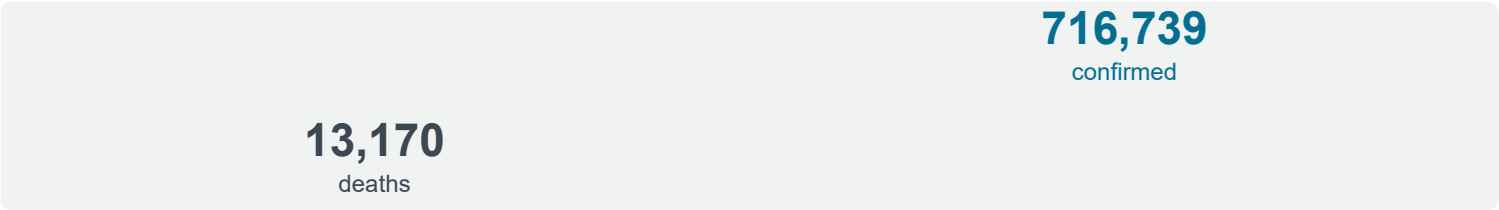
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