



Contra Costa County

County Administrator's Office • 651 Pine Street • Martinez, CA 94553 • www.contracosta.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Susan Shiu, PIO, 925-313-1180 or
313-1183; Susan.Shiu@contracostatv.org

Contra Costa County Passes Urgency Ordinance to Establish Fines for Health Order Violations

(Martinez, CA) – On July 28, 2020, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors used its emergency powers under state law to pass Urgency Ordinance No. 2020-21 that establishes administrative fines for violations of public health orders pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board unanimously determined the ordinance, effective immediately, is necessary to provide an alternative to criminal enforcement of public health orders that will augment the ability of the County and other local agencies to ensure compliance with public health orders and combat the spread of COVID-19.

“Many people are following the Health Orders, but we need to increase our efforts together to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community,” said Board Chair, Supervisor Candace Andersen. “To further our progress to protect lives and reopen more local businesses and activities, we need a tool to send a fair message that everyone has to adhere to health orders to prevent the spread of the virus.”

For health order violations involving non-commercial activities, the amount of the fine is \$100 for a first violation, \$200 for a second violation, and \$500 for each additional violation within one year of the initial violation. For violations involving commercial activity, the amount of the fine is \$250 for a first violation, \$500 for a second violation, and \$1,000 for each additional violation within one year of the initial violation. If a violation continues for more than one day, each day is a separate violation.

Throughout this pandemic, Contra Costa leaders and law enforcement have encouraged “educational enforcement” before issuing penalties. Before issuing a Notice of Fine, an enforcement officer can first issue a Notice of Violation, which gives a person or business up to two days to correct a violation. In cases where the enforcement officer determines that issuing a Notice of Violation is unnecessary or ineffective, the enforcement officer can immediately issue a Notice of Fine.

Because Public Health Officer orders apply countywide, this ordinance also applies countywide under Government Code section 8634. The ordinance may be enforced in cities and special districts by officials designated by those agencies to enforce the ordinance.

For more information, read [Ordinance No. 2020-21 \(PDF\)](#) available on the County website.

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