



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services
4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

May 13, 2020

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Alameda County Public Health Department

1. The plan that Tesla submitted late Monday--how is it different from the plan that the company published on its blog post on Saturday? What additional safety recommendations have county health officials asked Tesla to include? What new safety measures do you expect to be implemented at Tesla Fremont, now?

A: The plan Tesla published over the weekend is their playbook for all their sites. The guidance issued by the State for manufacturing operations includes development of a site specific plan (see: <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-manufacturing.pdf> and here: <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/checklist-manufacturing.pdf>.) The plan Tesla submitted to the County on Monday, May 11 was specific to their Fremont location in Alameda County.

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) requested that Tesla improve its employee health screening to include screening of employees before boarding the shuttles that transport them to the facility; Tesla had previously only screened employees upon arrival at the plant location. HCSA also provided recommendations and clarifications regarding how to notify local public health of cases and exposures at the plant, ensuring exclusion from work and quarantine protocols align, and strengthening mandated universal face coverings for all employees and other persons in the facility (per [Alameda County Health Officer Order](#)).

2. The public health indicators that the county is monitoring include testing, contact tracing and supply of PPE. On Friday during a Zoom call, Dr. Pan made it clear that we are only 1/4 of the way where we need to be in terms of testing.

Have you seen progress on indicators? Has something drastically changed? Can you clarify where the county stands in terms of meeting all of the indicators?

A: The indicators are a distillation of complex data, none of which alone provides a bright-line determination. As the pandemic evolves, we continuously examine the indicators in the aggregate. We have created a color scale that progresses from red to orange to yellow to green to help visualize progress in the indicators. Currently, we have two indicators that are green, one yellow and two orange. We are using the indicators to note progress to ensure that we take careful steps in moving forward through phases of reopening. Currently, we are 1/3 of the way toward meeting the testing benchmark with >1000 tests/day.

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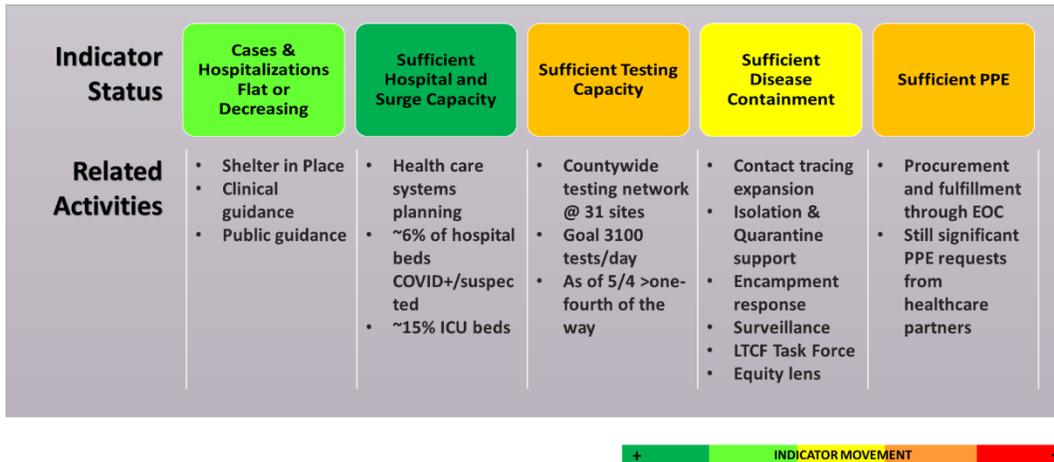
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3. Which ones from what starting date?

A: The Alameda County Public Health Department, in concert with the six other Bay Area jurisdictions, developed and released these indicators for the most recent Health Officer order on May 4, 2020. A detailed description of those indicators are available online at:

<http://www.acphd.org/media/573022/bay-area-health-officer-indicators-2020.04.29.pdf>

The situation with COVID-19 continues to rapidly evolve.

Our data indicate that we are making progress, made possible by the early shelter-in-place Order and its effect on case rates and demand on our health care systems.

We have been tracking cases, deaths and hospitalizations as part of our usual public health surveillance and investigation role since confirming our first case on March 1st.

Hospital capacity has been a part of our planning since January 20, 2020 in preparation for a “peak” during this pandemic, but it was formally added to our indicators, along with sufficient PPE supply, a testing goal, and a disease investigation, contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine goals when we issued the May 4th Order, which loosened some restrictions around low-risk outdoor activities and businesses and construction.

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Green:

While case and hospitalization numbers continue to fluctuate daily, the overall curve of infection is flattening. These data have been trending in a neutral-to-positive direction over the past two to three weeks and we feel comfortable loosening restrictions for activities like curbside retail in alignment with the State’s early Phase 2 plan, as soon as May 18. We are not out of the woods yet, but the data is showing us we are heading in the right direction.

Based on this trend, we are also shifting from catastrophic surge planning to readiness planning. This is due in large part to the cooperation of our residents with sheltering in place. We will continue to closely monitor hospital capacity in the county and are prepared to work with the hospitals if the data shows us that a surge appears imminent. We also run modeling data weekly to project the potential range of hospital surge based on our actual hospitalized cases of COVID-19.

Yellow:

We are meeting our goals for case and contact investigation based on current caseloads. We are also continuing to build a large team that will be necessary to effectively investigate, trace, and isolate/quarantine an increased number of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases as we slowly loosen shelter-in-place restrictions. Based on some population-based estimates for staffing, we could need as many as 300 staff dedicated to this work. Under normal circumstances, we have seven people who perform these functions for the more than 80 diseases that are required to be reported to the local public health department (e.g., tuberculosis, measles, Hepatitis B). We have already increased that workforce to 60 people and are working on a plan to achieve our goal of 300.

Orange:

The PPE indicator reflects the relationship between the number of cases in the County and PPE supply shortages beyond our control. Currently, healthcare facilities, including the acute care hospitals, are still heavily reliant on the County for the procurement of PPE.

The biggest identified challenge for PPE procurement has been a consistent and robust supply chain. Some vendors have indicated concern that PPE supply levels may not be adequate until near the end of the year.

For testing, case, and hospitalization indicators we are also showing progress, although we have not yet met our optimal levels. Just this week we increased the number of tests being conducted across the County daily by 750, bringing us a giant step toward meeting our goal of 3,100 tests daily.

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4. Given the county health department's equity lens, are the demographics of the plant a concern at all? Many of the workers are older men with pre-existing health conditions, and many are African American and Latinx. Tesla does not release data on the demographics of the plant, but we are seeing via the dashboard that these groups are at higher risk in terms of impact/deaths.

A: Because Tesla does not share its workplace demographics with us, we cannot speak to those demographics. Equity considerations are fundamental to the work of the Public Health Department, although the primary driver of our involvement with Tesla has been the well-being of the thousands of employees working at the Fremont plant.

This pandemic underscores health disparities and socioeconomic vulnerability experienced by many in our communities of color. Latinx, African American and Pacific Islander communities in our county have higher rates of chronic disease and may be more likely to work and live in conditions that make it difficult to maintain physical distancing or sheltering in place. We have known for some time that COVID-19 is widespread and we expect that with the increasing availability of testing, we will see increases in the number of infections not only among these groups, but across the County.

We are using available data to tailor specific messaging and interventions to address the multifaceted needs in our most affected communities. We are working hard to improve awareness and testing in heavily impacted communities, and better support people through physical distancing, and isolation and quarantine.

5. What operations will be allowed & not allowed at the Tesla Fremont plant this week?
A: We are allowing Tesla to ramp up Minimum Basic Operations in order to prepare for operations next week.
6. Does the county know how many employees at Tesla were previously infected with COVID-19? How many, if yes?
A: To protect privacy and comply with HIPAA, we do not disclose cases at any businesses.
7. Is Tesla required to disclose when infections occurred to employees? How rapidly upon receiving results?

A: Traditionally, we receive case reports from testing labs, health care providers, and other public health departments. The labs and providers report test results to the health department in the person's county of residence. If that person lives outside of Alameda County, that county's Public Health Department would communicate with our Health Department if they discover concerning exposures in our jurisdiction.

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8. Will the health orders apply to transit arranged by Tesla for employees? (Many were concerned about crowding into company shuttles.)

A: We came to agreement on safety practices including protocols for transport, which we are satisfied will protect against the spread of infection during transport. We cannot speak to details due to the proprietary nature of Tesla's plan.

9. Is Tesla receiving special and secret treatment?

A. No. We have and will continue to offer technical assistance to businesses seeking to open with modifications to keep employees and visitors safe. We are seeking to align with state-issued guidance where possible.

10. On Monday, Elon Musk tweeted that "Tesla is restarting production today against Alameda County rules. I will be on the line with everyone else. If anyone is arrested, I ask that it only be me." Given that the CEO acknowledges that production has restarted against the county health order's guidelines, why does your statement indicate that there may be a "possible reopening next week"?

A. We have met with Tesla representatives and have confirmed that Tesla is not engaged in full operations, contrary to media reports. Tesla has confirmed that its operations require a substantial lead time to become fully operational, and their current operations are only slightly above Minimum Business Operations. The City of Fremont Police Department – which had done multiple site-visits at the plant over multiple years, and which has knowledge of what Tesla's normal operations look like – will conduct a site visit today to confirm Tesla's claims.

Given the unique nature and scale of automobile manufacturing and the safety measures agreed to by Tesla, we concluded that ramp up activity with a minimal increase in minimum basic operations can occur safely.

11. Given that Tesla has been given an exception, what does that do to the moral authority of the county when other businesses try to open before they're allowed? I think the question of equal enforcement of the law is an important public policy issue.

A. Tesla has not been given an exception. The role of the Public Health Department is to protect our residents and the individuals who come to work in Alameda County. We do that by reviewing safety plans and working with local law enforcement, who hold the authority to enforce the Health Officer Orders. We hope and expect that other businesses see the value of continuing to abide by the Health Officer Order, as it applies to them, in order to protect their workforce, our most vulnerable residents, and our health care systems in general. Because of the hard sacrifices of our local businesses, we anticipate another phase of reopening as early as next week.

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