



May 7, 2020

Norco Residents and Businesses:

As the Governor begins to relax restrictions for lower-risk, non-essential businesses to reopen, the Norco City Council has received several requests for clarification from the community. At its regular meeting on Wednesday, May 6, the City Council approved an emergency agenda item to discuss several important considerations for local business operations as we continue to battle the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The City Council first and foremost acknowledges that protecting public health and the long-term viability of our local businesses are paramount considerations that must be carefully balanced. While many Norco residents feel frustrated that businesses have not yet been allowed to reopen, it is important to note that the City Council, as a local government body, has not issued any local Stay at Home Order and has no authority regarding the enforcement of violations or direction related to prescribing the timing for businesses to reopen.

Following the discussion of the emergency agenda item, the City Council provided the following guidelines for local business owners to consider before making decisions to reopen to the public:

1. The City of Norco does not have specific authority to enforce State or County Orders. In addition, Sheriff Chad Bianco of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, which provides law enforcement services to the City, has stated that the department will not enforce violations of the existing Orders.
2. Safety standards of wearing face masks/coverings, washing hands and social distancing are strongly recommended.
3. Those with compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions should remain home and continue to shelter in place.
4. Those businesses or independent contractors with a state license, permit or certification should carefully consider and understand the potential of opening and operating a business that could be in violation of State and County Orders and ultimately make their own decision.
5. Those businesses, including places of worship, that choose to allow large gatherings or plan to reopen indoor eating areas should carefully consider and understand the current provisions of State and County Orders and ultimately make their own decision.

Throughout the last several months, local residents and businesses have performed remarkably by abiding to the State and County Orders. While this is a proud accomplishment, these are uncertain and challenging times, and for those who want to go back to work—even more so for those who need to go back—these are also frustrating times.

“We represent our residents and their needs,” stated Council Member Robin Grundmeyer during Wednesday’s meeting. “It is not right that their ability to earn a paycheck has been taken away without the resources to feed their families and maintain their shelter. We need to treat our residents like adults and business owners who have the freedom and ability to make their own decisions. We need to have the courage to represent our residents in full faith and without fear.”

Like every community, the City of Norco has been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the related State and County Orders. Throughout this time, the City of Norco has maintained essential services and has remained available to assist the community. The City will continue to provide frequent updates and information regarding COVID-19 via the City website, official City social media sites and other City-verified communication platforms.

The Norco City Council and City staff will continue to support residents and local businesses in a practical way to ensure the protection of the health of our community and the long-term viability of our business community.

To watch the City Council Meeting, visit www.vimeo.com/cityofnorco. To sign-up to receive official City news and alerts, visit www.norco.ca.us/newsroom. For more information, contact the City Manager's Office at (951) 270-5611 or info@ci.norco.ca.us.

Sincerely,

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Mayor Mayor Pro Tem Council Member Council Member Council Member