

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Residents Urged to Exercise COVID-19 Precautions Over Labor Day Weekend

MERCED—With Labor Day weekend approaching, Public Health officials are cautioning residents to exercise COVID-19 precautions by avoiding mass gatherings, wearing masks, and exercising good hand hygiene.

Data show holiday weekends consistently lead to spikes of COVID-19 cases (see chart below). This is mainly due to large group gatherings as family and friends congregate to celebrate the holiday. A lack of both physical distancing and face coverings also contribute to the spikes.

Holiday	Total Cases	14 days out Date	Total Cases	Number of New Cases	% Change in Cases
<b>Mother's Day 5/10</b>	169	5/24/2020	261	92	54%
<b>Memorial Day 5/25</b>	268	6/8/2020	367	99	37%
<b>Father's Day 6/21</b>	616	7/5/2020	1408	792	129%
<b>Fourth of July 7/4</b>	1372	7/18/2020	2457	1085	79%

This holiday weekend represents a critical juncture for Merced County. Active cases have consistently trended downward for several days. If this continues, Merced County will be able to begin progressing through the State’s economic reopening criteria. However, another spike in cases could set us back weeks.

“I understand the fatigue and exhaustion that the community is experiencing because of COVID-19. Nobody wants to be shut in, unable to go to parties or having to wear face masks,” said Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp, Merced County’s Director of Public Health. “Though Merced County continues to have one of the highest rates of infection in the State, we’ve been doing better and our numbers are trending in the right direction. It would be a shame to undo weeks of work over one holiday weekend.”

If the upcoming holiday weekend results in another rise in cases, Merced County will be at severe risk for an extended shutdown of various parts of the economy.

This extended shutdown can be prevented by avoiding crowds or large family gatherings, practicing physical distancing, washing your hands often with soap and water, staying home if you’re sick, and wearing face coverings when:

- Inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space;
- Obtaining healthcare services;
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or while in any private or ride-sharing vehicle including operators of the transportation;
- At the workplace or performing work off-site;
- Outdoors in public spaces where physical distancing is not possible.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 by preventing large group gatherings, the County’s regional parks (Lake Yosemite, Hagaman Park and Henderson Park) will be closed on

Saturdays, Sundays, and major holidays (including Labor Day) until further notice. The parks will remain open on weekdays, but physical distancing must be adhered to and large group gatherings will continue to be prohibited.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit Merced County Department of Public Health's resource website at [www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus](http://www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus).

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