



Customer Service Contact:
(831) 425-8600

CUSTOMER ALERT

March 20, 2020

UPDATED APRIL 1, 2020

Santa Cruz METRO Announces COVID-19 Service Changes & Other Updated Changes

In response to the state's declaration of a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, and other recent federal, state and county guidance, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) is announcing sweeping changes, effective Monday, March 23, 2020.

On March 16, 2020 the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency directed all individuals living in the county to shelter at their place of residence except that they may leave to provide or receive certain essential services or engage in certain essential activities and work for essential businesses and government services until midnight on April 7, 2020. (extended on March 31, 2020 through May 3, 2020).

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/Coronavirus/Shelter%20in%20Place%20Order%20March%2016%202020.pdf?ver=20200318>

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/Coronavirus/PHO%20Order%20Extending%20SIP%20March%2031%202020.pdf>

On March 19, 2020 Governor Newsom ordered individuals living in the State of California to stay home or at their place of residence (shelter in place) except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors. Included in the Governor's 16 critical infrastructure sectors is the Transportation Systems Sector – Mass Transit and Passenger Rail. This order goes into effect immediately and shall stay in effect until further notice.

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/Coronavirus/Governor%27s%20Executive%20Order%20N-33-20.pdf>

Mass transit is identified as an essential service or critical infrastructure in the State of California. Therefore, **METRO will endeavor to provide fixed-route and paratransit service for as long as possible during this health pandemic.**

In an effort to further protect METRO employees and the public during this COVID-19 health pandemic, the following changes took place on Monday, March 23, 2020:

- In an effort to respond to the severe decrease in ridership, and in an attempt to reduce METRO bus operators' exposure, all service provided by METRO Monday – Sunday (seven days/week) **will run daily on the Saturday - Sunday schedule** until further notice.

This change will result in fewer buses running; less frequency of service; later start times and earlier end times.

For further schedule/timetable information, customers should consult the METRO Headways Bus Riders Guide or the METRO website: www.scmtd.com

- All School Term Service (ST) was suspended on March 18th until further notice.
- Except that, in an effort to continue to serve the County Emeline Complex, on March 27, 2020 METRO put back a modified Route 4 schedule - https://www.scmtd.com/media/bkg/20203/sched/rte_04.pdf

- In an effort to provide METRO bus operators with social distancing, METRO reduced/eliminated the interface with customers at the farebox by **suspending the collection of fares** on buses and ParaCruz paratransit services until further notice.
- In an effort to provide bus operators with social distancing, all customers, with the following exceptions, will **enter and exit through the rear door** of the bus until further notice:
 - This applies to buses with two or more doors and is limited to buses in which the bus operator can actuate the rear door (newer buses). In all other cases, customers will continue to board at the front door and will not pay a fare.
 - Buses that will allow customers to enter at the rear door will have a sign on the front door directing them to do so.
 - Any customer who wishes to continue boarding and exiting through the front door for ADA purposes will be allowed to continue doing so.
- In an effort to provide bus operators with social distancing, **flip seats at the front of the bus in the mobility securement area are restricted to ADA customers using mobility devices only** – no ambulatory or general seating. This applies on all fixed-route buses, including Highway 17 commuter buses.
- To provide operators with social distancing, customers are restricted from standing in the restricted securement area and will be required to sit in available seating toward the middle or rear of the bus, **keeping at least six feet of separation from other customers**.
- In an effort to provide social distancing for drivers and customers on ParaCruz services, on March 17th **ParaCruz paratransit services started prioritizing customers requiring service to/from essential services** such as doctor's appointments and dialysis. All other trips will continue to be served, but not necessarily on the schedule requested by the customer.
- Effective immediately, and until further notice, the METRO Customer Service window and private vendor food and mini-mart services, including restroom facilities, at both Pacific Station and the Watsonville Transit Center have been suspended and the transit center lobbies are closed. **However, bus operations will continue at these facilities**.
- Customer Service calls will continue to be received at **(831) 425-8600**.
- METRO Administration is closed to the public until further notice.
- Effective Monday, March 30th, customers **will not** be allowed to re-board the same bus route they arrived on at the end of the route. All customer must leave the bus at the end of the route.

How can customers help?

Customers should:

- Don't ride METRO if you are sick
- If you are not traveling for work related to an Essential Business, or Essential Personal Business like a medical appointment, do not use the METRO bus or ParaCruz. We need to keep our limited capacity available for people who must travel for Essential Activities.
- While onboard a bus, always observe "social distancing" (at least 6' between people). If there are too many people on the bus, consider taking the next bus.
- Do not stand near the bus operator or in the restricted securement area
- Consider adjusting trips to off-peak periods (non-commute periods)
- Limit carry-on items and keep aisles clear. No personal items are allowed in restricted areas and all items must be carried on one's lap.
- Be courteous to other riders and the bus operator by following the CDC COVID-19 Prevention tips posted on the buses and the CDC website
- Consider that on March 10, 2020, the California Department of Public Health stated in part, that high-risk individuals should "Avoid crowds, mass gatherings or large events, and public transit, and stay home as much as possible."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

<http://santacruzhealth.org/>

Effective March 30, 2020 - METRO has decided that in compliance with the March 16, 2020 County Health Services Agency Order, that:

(County Health Services Agency Order later updated on March 31, 2020)

TRAVEL IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PROHIBITED EXCEPT FOR ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES.

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/Coronavirus/PHO%20Order%20Extending%20SIP%20March%2031%202020.pdf>

7. Except for the purpose of Essential Travel, as defined below in Section 12.h, all travel is prohibited, including but not limited to, travel on foot, bicycle, scooter, motorcycle, automobile, or **public transit**. People may use public transit only for purposes of performing Essential Activities or to travel to and from work to operate Essential Businesses, maintain Essential Governmental Functions, or to perform Minimum Basic Operations at non-essential businesses. Transit agencies and people riding on public transit should comply with Social Distancing Requirements, as defined in Section 12.j, to the greatest extent feasible. This Order allows travel into or out of the County to perform Essential Activities, operate Essential Businesses, maintain Essential Governmental Functions, or perform Minimum Basic Operations at nonessential businesses.

12h. For the purposes of this Order, “Essential Travel” means travel for any of the following purposes:

- i. Travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Businesses, or Minimum Basic Operations.
- ii. Travel to care for any elderly, minors, dependents, or persons with disabilities.
- iii. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for remote learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
- iv. Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the County.
- v. Travel required by law enforcement or court order.
- vi. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside the County.
- vii. Travel to manage after-death arrangements and burial.
- viii. Travel to arrange for shelter or avoid homelessness.
- ix. Travel to avoid domestic violence or child abuse.
- x. Travel for parental custody arrangements.
- xi. Travel to a place to temporarily reside in a residence or other facility to avoid potentially exposing others to COVID-19, such as a hotel or other facility provided by a governmental authority for such purposes.

12j. For purposes of this Order, “Social Distancing Requirements,” means:

- i. Maintaining at least six-foot social distancing from individuals who are not part of the same household or living unit (except to the limited extent necessary to provide care, including childcare, adult or senior care, care to individuals with special needs, and patient care);
- ii. Frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer that is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as effective in combatting COVID-19;
- iii. Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into the sleeve or elbow (but not into hands);
and
- iv. Avoiding all social interaction outside the household when sick with a fever or cough.

PASSENGERS ENGAGED IN TRAVEL FOR ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES MAY ONLY BOARD THE BUS WITH EQUIPMENT, BAGS, BACKPACKS, ETC. THAT ARE NECESSARY TO THAT ACTIVITY, AND THAT CAN BE HELD IN THEIR LAP.

BAGS OR BELONGINGS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE ESSENTIAL ACTIVITY OR THAT CANNOT BE CARRIED ON ONE'S LAP ARE NOT PERMITTED ON THE BUS.

PASSENGERS WAITING TO BOARD THE BUS MUST BE SIX FEET BEHIND OR AWAY FROM OTHER PASSENGERS. SIX FEET OF SOCIAL DISTANCING MUST BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES, BOTH ON THE BUS AND OFF THE BUS.

TRAVEL FOR NON-ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES IS A VIOLATION OF THE COUNTY SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDER AND MAY BE REPORTED TO THE SHERIFF OR LOCAL POLICE.