

Garcetti issues stronger warning to Angelenos: ‘Hunker down ... cancel everything’

LOS ANGELES (KABC) — Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti is again asking Angelenos to stay at home and “hunker down” as the city experiences a dangerous surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

The city revised its “Targeted Safer at Home Order” late Wednesday. While the new COVID restrictions and allowable activities mirror those issued by Los Angeles County last week, the language and messaging is far stronger than before.

“Subject only to the exceptions outlined in this Order, all persons living within the City of Los Angeles are hereby ordered to remain in their homes,” the mayor’s order states.

MORE: LA County seeing ‘terrifying increases’ in COVID-19 cases



Los Angeles County continues to see “terrifying increases” in COVID-19 cases along with hospitalizations that are putting a growing strain on the region’s health care system, county officials said Wednesday.

That is not an absolute lockdown, however, as the order spells out a variety of exceptions.

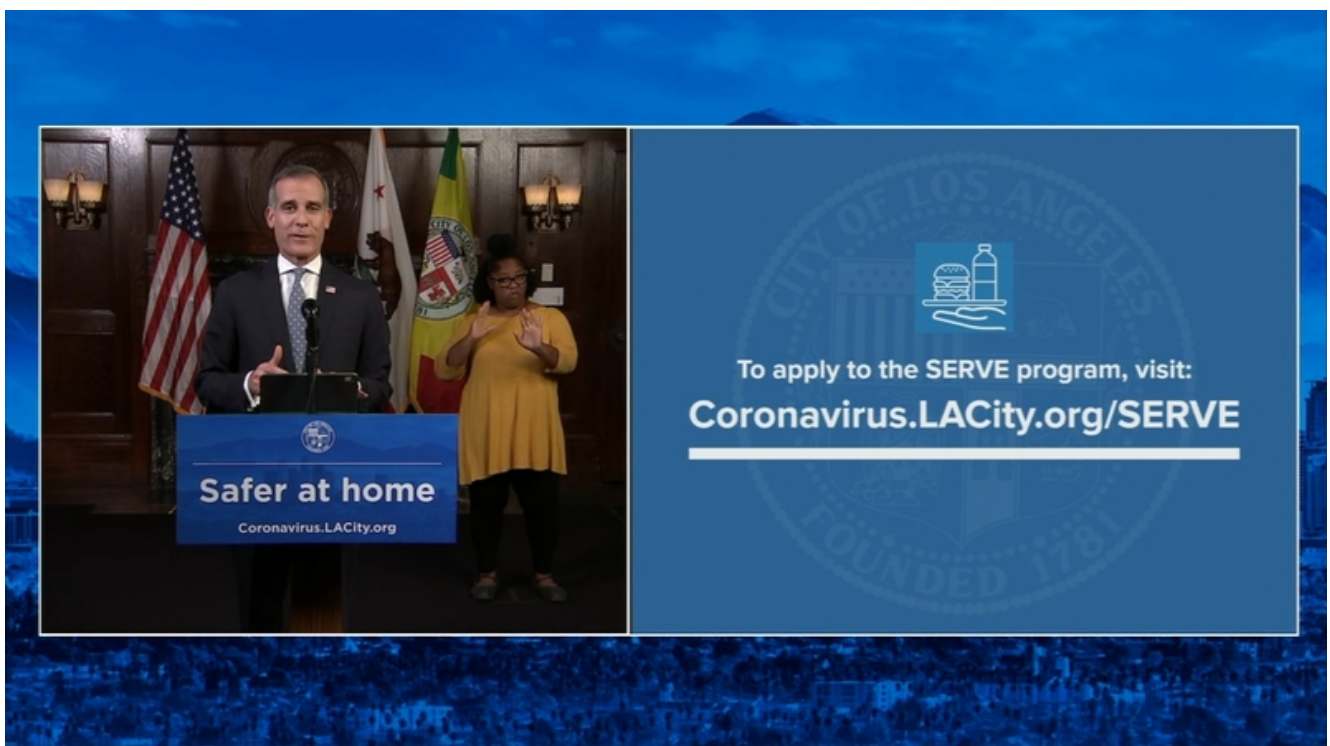
The mayor's office tells Eyewitness News the city order was revised Wednesday to match the county's latest language but the city did not add any additional restrictions.

The exceptions still allow people to conduct business such as buying food, obtaining medical care, and going to other essential businesses like automobile service.

Other businesses like film production and fitness centers that operate outdoors are allowed to remain in operation.

Many of the city's recreational activities remain open, such as beaches, parks, and public golf courses.

MORE: LA to pay \$800 to out-of-work restaurant employees, Garcetti says



With restaurants closed throughout the county, the city of Los Angeles plans to make \$800 one-time payments to out-of-work food-service employees who have been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic.

The main activity that the mayor and county health officials have been targeting to reduce or eliminate is gatherings that involve different households meeting in

close proximity.

“My message couldn’t be simpler,” Garcetti said during an afternoon briefing. “It’s time to hunker down. It’s time to cancel everything. And if it isn’t essential, don’t do it.”

“Don’t meet up with others outside your household. Don’t host a gathering. Don’t attend a gathering.”

“And following our targeted Safer at Home order, if you’re able to stay home, stay home.”

The new order also says travel whether by foot, bicycle, scooter, motorcycle, car or public transit is prohibited, again with multiple exceptions for specific activities.

MayorOfLA@MayorOfLA

The new year brings hope -- for vaccines and for stopping this pandemic. But here’s the truth: we’re in for a long, hard winter. As the worst hits us, stay home as much as you can. Cancel any non-essential activities. Hunker down, L.A. We’ll get through this together.

Violating the order is a misdemeanor, subject to fines and imprisonment, the mayor says. He is asking the Los Angeles Police Department and City Attorney’s Office to enforce it. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power can also shut off utility service for violations.

Thousands of Angelenos received a text message with a link to the city’s new emergency order that contains the line “... all persons living within the City of Los Angeles are hereby ordered to remain in their homes.” That caused a stir online, and sparked confusion over its meaning.

Meanwhile, L.A. County reported another 5,987 coronavirus cases on Wednesday, one day after reporting a record-high 7,593 new cases.

“If cases continue on this pathway, if they continue to increase at the pace that we’ve seen, the county expects we will run out of hospital beds here in Los Angeles by Christmastime,” Garcetti said.

MORE: Cities look to break away from LA County health department

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