



RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH JOURNALISTS CORONAVIRUS AND TRAVEL IN THE SANTA BARBARA SOUTH COAST

Last updated: June 9, 2020 Please note that worldwide and throughout the U.S., the conditions around coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to evolve. The best source for local conditions is the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department: <https://publichealthsb.org/>

CONTACTS FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES

For general questions around COVID-19-era travel, the Media Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) below and the FAQs for Frontline Staff in Visit Santa Barbara's COVID-19 Toolkit may provide guidance.

Feel free to direct any media inquiries about tourism in the Santa Barbara South Coast to Visit Santa Barbara. You also may reach out any time if you have questions around your response to a journalist.

For tourism questions:

Visit Santa Barbara:

- Media contact: Karna Hughes, director of media relations: Karna@SantaBarbaraCA.com, PR@SantaBarbaraCA.com or 805-966-9222 x112
- Public contact: Tourism@SantaBarbaraCA.com or 805-966-9222

For public health questions:

See below Media FAQs for general statements. If you need to refer a reporter for technical questions about Santa Barbara County's COVID-19 cases, please use:

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department:

- Media contact: Jackie Ruiz, public information officer: jacruiz@sbcpd.org or 805-896-1057 (cell)
- Public contacts:
 - o COVID-19 Public Information Portal: <https://publichealthsb.org/>
 - o County Call Center: 833-688-5551, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
 - o Recorded Information Line: 805-681-4373
 - o Community Wellness Line: 805-364-2750

For government questions:

County of Santa Barbara:

- Media contact: Gina DePinto, public information officer, gdepinto@countyofsb.org
- Public contact: 805-681-4200 or <https://www.countyofsb.org/>

City of Santa Barbara:

- Media contact: Nina Johnson, senior assistant to the city administrator, njohnson@santabarbaraca.gov (represents city officials, including Mayor Cathy Murrillo)
- Public contact: 805-963-0611 or <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/>

MEDIA FAQs

These answers to Frequently Asked Questions are intended to provide broad guidance to the South Coast hospitality industry. Please consult your own company's policies, procedures and preferred messaging first, in case they override the information below.

Is travel allowed in Santa Barbara right now?

Stage 3 response: Yes, Santa Barbara County currently allows overnight stays at hotels and lodging properties for leisure travelers.

What's the status of businesses in the Santa Barbara South Coast? What's open right now?

The majority of businesses and hotels have reopened in the Santa Barbara South Coast or are opening soon with adjustments to create more social distance. The main exceptions are large entertainment and sporting venues like theaters and stadiums, as well as events and festivals that draw large crowds, which will reopen later in Stage 4. You can go to Visit Santa Barbara's travel advisory for further updates:

<https://santabarbaraca.com/travel>

How has COVID-19 affected tourism?

Share your company's preferred message re: your business. You could also say something like: "While tourism was severely affected during the state's stay-at-home period, now that restrictions have lifted, we're hopeful that leisure travelers will return soon. The best way to support us and the Santa Barbara community is for visitors to come back, and we hope your story will encourage them."

Feel free to send any specific inquiries to Visit Santa Barbara: Karna@SantaBarbaraCA.com or 805-966-9222 x112.

How many cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases have there been in Santa Barbara?

Santa Barbara County public health officials have the most recent stats around COVID-19 cases. A greater percentage of these have been in the northern part of the county (Santa Maria and Lompoc). The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department website is the best source for up-to-date public health information: <https://publichealthsb.org/> Our community is taking extra precautions to keep visitors safe and healthy.

How do local residents feel about tourists?

Most residents seem to realize just how severely this crisis has affected our local shops and restaurants because of the extended closures. Like anywhere, there are some residents that are concerned about visitors. However, if visitors show they care, especially by wearing face coverings and keeping 6 feet apart in public, as recommended by the CDC and our local health department, it will go a long way to reassuring residents.

Be prepared to answer the following types of questions:

- Are you offering any special deals or promotions to attract visitors?
- How is your business ensuring that visitors are safe? What precautions have you and your staff taken?
- In addition to answering the above question, highlight ways that your business is offering a unique or novel approach or special amenities that stand out from other businesses or represent your brand.
- How much revenue did your business lose during the stay at home period?
- Did your business accept leisure travelers during the essential traveler period?

Tip: It's okay to decline to answer certain questions. An example might be if it's against your company's policy to divulge proprietary guest information.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO PARTNER WITH VISIT SANTA BARBARA

Press trips:

The Visit Santa Barbara PR team can provide resources and information for visiting journalists. During the recovery period, VSB's first priority will be media outlets from drive markets resulting in stories that encourage immediate travel.

- Let us know if you are planning to bring media into the region and would like to collaborate with us.
- Reach out if you are able to offer any stays, experiences, products or media passes as part of Visit Santa Barbara's hosted press trips.
- We can also help you vet inquiries from journalists who are interested in visiting.

Updates for pitching:

We invite you to submit news, events and packages to Visit Santa Barbara's PR team, which can help boost your own PR program. This information may be incorporated into VSB's media pitches and press releases that promote the region.

- Please send news, high-resolution photos and videos for consideration to Karna at Karna@SantaBarbaraCA.com. Feel free to add Karna to your PR email/press release list or consumer e-newsletter or simply send over an email with details.
- Note that since many media outlets work on long lead times, we appreciate as much advance notice as possible.