



A.R.A.N.A



American River Area Narcotics Anonymous

Resumption of In-Person Meetings within the America River Area of Narcotics Anonymous

May 20, 2020

The American River Area of Narcotics Anonymous (ARANA) in conjunction with the Northern California Regional Service Committee (NCRSC) has been dedicated to providing the most updated and accurate information in regards to the current “Stay at Home Order” and future Social Distancing requirements due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on our fellowship and ability to meet.

The Narcotics Anonymous service structure places the Groups as the highest level of service, and as such neither the Area Service Committee nor Regional Service Committee can direct what a Group can or cannot do. The role of those bodies are to provide additional services to the Area or Region, allowing Groups to focus on their Primary purpose of ‘Carrying the message to the addict who still suffers’.

In that spirit, the ARANA Public Relations and Administrative Committees have developed this document as a guide for groups to follow to resume in-person meetings, what guidelines and protocols would look like in practice, and what would put a group in defiance of the Public Health Order. We have received information from Dr. Beilenson, Director of the Sacramento Department of Health, stating “... [ARANA] can hold [its] meetings as long as [they] comply with ‘Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol’ of the Public Health Order.”

The ‘Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol’ guidelines include measures to:

- Post Signage
- Protect Health
- Prevent Crowds From Gathering
- Keep People at Least Six (6) Feet Apart
- Prevent Unnecessary Contact
- Increase Sanitation

As a result, the ARANA Public Relations and Administrative Committees have reviewed the “Appendix A” protocols for **Sacramento County** and created a Social Distancing Protocol tailored to Narcotics Anonymous meetings that will ensure compliance with the State and County Orders that groups may use. ***Please be advised, this is for meeting locations located within Sacramento County. At this time, American River Area meetings located in Yolo County are still prohibited under the current Yolo County Public Health Order.*** As more information becomes available, we will notify the area and provide additional documentation for Yolo County meetings.

The protocol must be followed as per the directive for Sacramento County, and a record must be kept for every meeting. Public Health Officers will have the right to request, observe, and where violations occur, cite our meetings, or the facility they are held in, ultimately leading to the possibility of fines. If a

group is not in compliance with the mandated Social Distancing Protocol and issued a citation or fine, the **American River Area of Narcotics Anonymous and Northern California Region Service Committee will not be financially responsible nor be held liable for any and all fines as a result of a group's non-compliance of the Public Health Order and Social Distancing Protocol.** Financial responsibility and liability will fall to the individual group (e.g. the GSR and other service members of the group) as well as the facility or meeting location.

It's important to note, the company that provides insurance for NA meetings regionally has indicated that our policy covers only the meeting space listed on our schedules and DOES NOT cover the Coronavirus. Groups must be prepared to handle liability for any claims that arise as a result of Coronavirus, or lack of compliance with "Appendix A".

Recommendations and steps for considering if resuming in-person meetings is right for your group:

- Conduct a group level business meeting to get group conscience regarding resuming meeting and review the required Social Distancing Protocols to determine if compliance is feasible for the group.
- Contact meeting facility to determine if they are able to host the group with adherence to the Social Distancing Protocols and advise that the current Narcotics Anonymous insurance policy will not cover the Coronavirus.
 - Items to consider/discuss - Does the facility have extra cleaning charges? Can the group provide cleaning supplies needed for sanitizing twice per meeting and service members to perform such actions? Will the facility be able to accommodate extra time allowed before and after the meeting to allow for social distancing setup and sanitation? Any additional requirements from the facility?
- Complete the "Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol" (groups may use the suggested version for NA meetings **or** thoroughly create their own **or** complete the blank Sacramento County version) and return a copy of the completed Social Distancing Protocol to the ARANA PR Committee (prchair@sacramentona.org) to have the meeting listed on the current meeting schedule.

Please keep in mind that meetings (located inside of a facility) will have a capacity limit in order to be in compliance with the 6-foot social distancing requirement (for example, a 400 square foot room can accommodate approximately 11 people, including trusted servants, properly spaced). Therefore, it is encouraged that **groups discuss how they will stay in compliance if more members show up to the meeting than space allows and how they may potentially have to turn members away.**

If groups are considering temporarily meeting in a different location other than their previously listed meeting space at the facility (lawn areas or patios at facility, parks, parking lots, etc.), groups **MUST** get permission from the location and contact the ARANA Public Relations Committee as insurance limitations may apply.

As meetings reach out to Public Relations with a completed "Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol" form to confirm understanding and compliance with Appendix A of the Public Health Order, they will be added to the ARANA in-person meeting schedule.

In recognition and respect to our 4th Tradition, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.” ARANA has a long standing policy of not including groups on the meeting schedule who may adversely impact the NA reputation in the Sacramento area. If at some point it becomes clear that a meeting is no longer in compliance and including it in the meeting guide then endangers NA, it may necessitate removing it.

The following are attached to this document for reference and use by groups is desired:

- A copy of the letter from the Northern California Regional Service Committee (NCRSC) Public Relations Committee Regarding the Future of Opening Meetings During Pandemic.
- “Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol” for Sacramento County (Modified for in-Person Meetings of Narcotics Anonymous) ***This protocol is a suggestion for groups to use if they wish in order to be in compliance. It is not a directive.*** If groups choose to fill out their own “Appendix A” and list all measures being taken to ensure compliance they may do so.
- Signage that groups may use, if they wish, in order to be in compliance. Groups may choose to create their own signage as long as it meets the requirements listed in “Appendix A” of the Public Health Order:
 - COVID-19 Symptom check for anyone that enters the meeting facility.
 - Sacramento County Social Distancing Signage stating Maximum Capacity Allowed in Facility.
- A copy of the email from the Sacramento County Department of Health Services stating ARANA can hold meeting as long as they are in compliance with “Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol”.
- Original “Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol” released by the Sacramento County Public Health Office.

It is recommended to have a copy of this document, the completed original “Appendix A” groups are using, a copy of the email from the Sacramento County Department of Health Services, and any other documentation that may be required at each meeting in the event it is requested by Public Health, the facility, or an individual.

The American River Area of Narcotics Anonymous Administrative Committee is dedicated to assisting our area and groups safely return to meeting while limiting the risk of public health, controversy, liability, and the protection of our members and fellowship as a whole. We will continue to monitor the progression and re-opening of Sacramento and Yolo Counties, changes to Public Health Orders, and recommendations from NCRSC. As new information is released we will update the groups and make amendments to this document as needed. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times.

Thank you for letting us be of service.

American River Area of Narcotic Anonymous Service Committee

**Northern California Public Relations
Regarding the Future of Opening Meetings During Pandemic**

May 16, 2020

It is important to know this document is not a directive, rather it is a tool for your areas to take into consideration to protect the health and safety of everyone. As members of Narcotics Anonymous we have a vested interest in protecting the fellowship from the possibilities of litigation, or public controversies. As members, though our personal positions regarding the directives and how it has affected our fellowship may differ, it is important to know where the fellowship's liabilities end and where individuals may put themselves at legal risk.

Though Public Relations has no right to tell groups how to run their meetings, the Department of Public Health does have the right to make sure the recommended guidelines as set forth in the [Social Distancing Protocol](#), are followed. Adopted by every county, the Social Distancing Protocol is the means by which any location where public gatherings can occur, are following measures created to minimize the risk of infection. The protocol must be followed as per the directive in every county in our region, and a record must be kept for every meeting. Public Health Officers will have the right to request, observe, and where violations occur, cite our meetings, or the facility they are held in, ultimately leading to the possibility of fines. Though most counties use the same document in terms of defining and recording your protocol activities, some have created their own version based on the state version; you may want to check your county public health page to see which one is being used in your county. A copy of a typical Social Distancing Protocol form is included in this document, and should be saved for your records.

We took the time to visit the public health web page of every county in our region and cite the location of current directives that directly affect us. Please take the time to familiarize yourselves of where to find the directives and updates in your county. In each of these links, members may need to search out specific information, however if you follow the state directive, you will be over and above the directives of your county. Please note there is little difference between your county directive and the state directive. Also note for your records, a directive in writing is more valuable than a directive given over the phone. We recommend each area to keep a printed copy, as things change.

In terms of interpretation, some counties include a reference to Narcotics Anonymous in a FAQ related to the directive; whereas other counties refer to "meeting places", and some counties use the state's directive. We are advised that in cases where directions are not clear we should refer to the State's directive, as well in cases where directives are in conflict, the stricter of the two is to be followed.

The State of California has created a Pandemic Roadmap which is divided into four stages, to progressively open in a safe manner and minimize risk. There is already a shift in some counties in opening from Stage One to Stage Two, which lets lower risk activities take place. So too, we are seeing an increase of mask requirements. Though the requirements may be different from county to county, none fail to make the recommendation to wear masks especially in close proximity to others as well as enclosed spaces.

In terms of our liability insurance it is important to note that our policy covers only the meeting space listed on our schedules. The holding of a meeting in any other location upon the facility property is not covered.

The goal of the Northern California Public Relations Committee is to assure the best information for your areas to use, and is committed to helping all areas navigate through the information and provide support to safely begin to return to the meeting facilities with the attention to limiting the risk of liability, public controversy, and moreover the protection of members and the fellowship as a whole.

Thank you for letting me be of service
Edward G.
NCRSC PR Chair
rscpr@ncrsc.org

Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol

(Modified for In-Person Meetings of Narcotics Anonymous within **Sacramento County**)

Group name and number:

Facility Address:

Approximate gross square footage of meeting space open to the public:

Groups must implement all applicable measures listed below, and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is inapplicable to the group.

Signage:

- Signage at each public entrance of the facility to inform all service members and meeting attendees that they should: avoid entering the facility if they have a cough or fever; maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another; sneeze and cough into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into one's elbow; and not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.
- Signage posting a copy of the Social Distancing Protocol at each public entrance to the facility.

Measures To Protect Service Members and Meeting Attendee's Health

- All service members and attendees have been told not to come to the meeting if sick.
- Symptom checks are being conducted before service members and attendees may enter the meeting space. (Signage posted at meeting entrance for all participants to review before entering)
- All tables and chairs are separated by at least six feet.
- Meeting rooms, bathrooms, and other common areas are being disinfected frequently, on the following schedule:
 - Meeting rooms: Before and after designated meeting time.
 - Bathrooms: Before and after designated meeting time.
 - All tables, chairs, and surfaces are wiped down before and after designated meeting time.
- Disinfectant and related supplies are available to all participants at the following location(s):
- Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19 is available to all participants at the following location(s):
- Soap and water are available to all participants at the following location(s):

Copies of this Protocol have been distributed to all service members.

Optional—Describe other measures:

Measures To Prevent Crowds From Gathering

Limit the number of participants in the meeting room location at any one time to which allows for service members and meeting attendees to easily maintain at least six-foot distance from one another at all practicable times.

Post a service member at the door to ensure that the maximum number of participants in the facility set forth above is not exceeded and a plan in place if maximum occupancy is reached.

Optional—Describe other measures:

Limit meeting length to 1 hour with no break.

Discourage gathering in parking lot before, during, and after meeting.

Other:

Measures To Keep People At Least Six Feet Apart

Placing signs outside the facility reminding people to be at least six feet apart.

Placing tape or other markings at least six feet apart in meeting attendee line areas inside the facility (e.g. restrooms) and on sidewalks at public entrances with signs directing meeting attendees to use the markings to maintain distance if applicable.

Placing chairs and tables at least six feet apart in meeting facility and/or location.

All service members and meeting attendees have been instructed to maintain at least six feet distance from each other, except service members may momentarily come closer when necessary to accept payment, deliver goods or services (e.g. literature), or as otherwise necessary.

Preventing meeting attendees from circling up at the end of the meeting and holding hands to maintain six-foot distance.

Optional—Describe other measures:

Measures To Prevent Unnecessary Contact

Requiring meeting secretary and any other service member to wear gloves while handling any meeting materials, literature, meeting cards, or other items that may come into contact with another meeting attendee or service member.

Providing for contactless 7th Tradition donations by placing 7th Tradition basket in stationary location, sanitizing basket or container which holds donations before and after meeting, and requiring

service member responsible for collecting and handling donation to wear gloves and/or utilizing an electronic donation system.

Utilizing electronic copies of readings that meeting attendees can access from their personal electronic devices and/or providing laminated readings that have been sanitized before and after each use and requiring reader to wear gloves while handling the reading, and/or providing one-time use readings that will be discarded after each meeting.

Sanitizing all birthday chips and key tags prior to distribution and engaging in contactless presentation.

Preventing meeting attendees from self-serving any items that are food-related by not providing coffee, snacks, or other items.

Optional—Describe other measures:

Measures To Increase Sanitization

Disinfecting wipes that are effective against COVID-19 are available at meeting location.

Service member(s) assigned to disinfect high-contact surfaces frequently in addition to before and after designated meeting time (e.g. door handles).

Hand sanitizer, soap and water, or effective disinfectant is available to service members and meeting attendees at or near the entrance of the facility, near literature, and anywhere else inside the facility or immediately outside where people have direct interactions.

All surfaces (e.g. chairs, tables, door handles, light switches, etc.) are disinfected with wipes or cleaning materials effective against COVID-19 PRIOR to and AFTER the designated meeting time.

Optional—Describe other measures:

* Any additional measures not included here should be listed on separate pages, which groups should attach to this document.

You may contact the following person with any questions or comments about this protocol:

Group Service Representative (GSR):

Phone number:

WE ARE PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING

We are implementing the mandatory social distancing protocols, as per the Sacramento County Public Health Order until it is extended, rescinded, superseded or amended by the Health Officer.

Avoid entering the facility if you have a cough or fever

Maintain a distance of 6 feet from others

Sneeze or cough into a cloth or tissue, if not available, use your elbow

Do not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact

**Max # of people
allowed in facility at
one time:**

ATTENTION

For the health and safety of everyone attending this meeting or entering the facility, if **YOU** can answer **YES** to any of the following questions, **YOU** are **not to enter** this facility and not return until your symptoms are gone for at least 72 hours:

- Do you have a **fever**?
- Have you had a **fever within the last 72 hours**?
- Do you have a **cough**?
- Do you have **shortness of breath** or difficulty of breathing?
- Have you been to a **Level 3 country** listed on the CDC Alert list (www.cdc.gov) within the past 14 days? If so, you cannot enter this facility until the 14 days from re-entering the country have elapsed.
- Have you been in **direct contact with a person** who has, or is under examination or observation for having COVID-19 and **are you showing any signs of** symptoms as noted above?

We are requiring everyone in our meetings to self-police and be responsible members of society by answering these questions honestly and if **YOU** can answer **YES** to any of these questions, you are to leave the meeting facility until your symptoms have abated for 72 hours or the 14 day time period for travel and COVID 19 exposure elapsed.

Anyone in the meeting or facility exhibiting signs or symptoms as noted above will be promptly asked to leave.

In the event you have a random cough or sneeze, do so into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into your elbow; do not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

In accordance with state and local regulations **EVERY PERSON** entering this meeting and facility **MUST** maintain a six foot (6'-0") social distance.

Email from the Sacramento County Department of Health Services

From: **SacDHS** <SacDHS@saccounty.net>
Subject: RE: Sacramento county NA meetings
To: Brian B [REDACTED]

Mr. Bushta,

I spoke with Dr. Beilenson, and he said you can hold your meetings so long as you comply with "Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol" of the Public Health Order (attached).

Regards,

Michelle Gorre, Executive Secretary

On Behalf of Peter Beilenson, MD, MPH, DHS Director

To report a VIOLATION of the Public Health Order, call 3-1-1

For all other general COVID-19 inquiries, call 2-1-1

Or go to: <https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

From: **Brian B** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Sacramento county NA meetings
To: <sacdhs@saccounty.net>

Hello,

My name is Brian B [REDACTED]. I am the chairperson for the American river area of Narcotics Anonymous. Almost all of our meetings are in Sacramento County and we have some questions.

We are sure that you appreciate how vital narcotics anonymous meetings are, not only in getting people clean, but helping members stay clean.

We have shut down all meetings in our area since the stay-at-home order was enacted.

We are looking for some guidance in ways that we could start to have our meetings again.

I'm sure that every meeting would have to come up with an individual plan as far as social distancing, no hugging or embracing, no hand-holding at the closing prayer. And no coffee.

I would like to be able to present the groups a way to open up their meetings in a safe manner.

We of course wouldn't present this until either the county or the governor changed the current stay-at-home order, or if we are deemed essential.

In our minds meetings are essential. However we realize that we do not make that decision.

We would appreciate any guidance. My telephone number [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time

Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol

Business name: [redacted]

Facility Address: [redacted]

Approximate gross square footage of space open to the public: [redacted]

Businesses must implement all applicable measures listed below, and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is inapplicable to the business.

Signage:

Signage at each public entrance of the facility to inform all employees and customers that they should: avoid entering the facility if they have a cough or fever; maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another; sneeze and cough into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into one’s elbow; and not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.

Signage posting a copy of the Social Distancing Protocol at each public entrance to the facility.

Measures To Protect Employee Health (check all that apply to the facility):

Everyone who can carry out their work duties from home has been directed to do so.

All employees have been told not to come to work if sick.

Symptom checks are being conducted before employees may enter the work space.

All desks or individual work stations are separated by at least six feet.

Break rooms, bathrooms, and other common areas are being disinfected frequently, on the following schedule:

Break rooms: [redacted]

Bathrooms: [redacted]

Other [redacted]

Disinfectant and related supplies are available to all employees at the following location(s):

Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19 is available to all employees at the following location(s):

Soap and water are available to all employees at the following location(s):

Copies of this Protocol have been distributed to all employees.

Optional—Describe other measures: [redacted]

Measures To Prevent Crowds From Gathering (check all that apply to the facility):

Limit the number of customers in the store at any one time to Select (or other enter [redacted]), which allows for customers and employees to easily maintain at least six-foot distance from one another at all practicable times.

Post an employee at the door to ensure that the maximum number of customers in the facility set forth above is not exceeded.

Placing per-person limits on goods that are selling out quickly to reduce crowds and lines.

Explain: [redacted]

Optional—Describe other measures: [redacted]

Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol

Measures To Keep People At Least Six Feet Apart (check all that apply to the facility)

- Placing signs outside the store reminding people to be at least six feet apart, including when in line.
- Placing tape or other markings at least six feet apart in customer line areas inside the store and on sidewalks at public entrances with signs directing customers to use the markings to maintain distance.
- Separate order areas from delivery areas to prevent customers from gathering.
- All employees have been instructed to maintain at least six feet distance from customers and from each other, except employees may momentarily come closer when necessary to accept payment, deliver goods or services, or as otherwise necessary.
- Optional—Describe other measures:

Measures To Prevent Unnecessary Contact (check all that apply to the facility):

- Preventing people from self-serving any items that are food-related.
 - Lids for cups and food-bar type items are provided by staff; not to customers to grab.
 - Bulk-item food bins are not available for customer self-service use.
- Not permitting customers to bring their own bags, mugs, or other reusable items from home.
- Providing for contactless payment systems or, if not feasible, sanitizing payment systems regularly.
Describe:
- Optional—Describe other measures (e.g. providing senior-only hours):

Measures To Increase Sanitization (check all that apply to the facility):

- Disinfecting wipes that are effective against COVID-19 are available near shopping carts and shopping baskets.
- Employee(s) assigned to disinfect carts and baskets regularly.
- Hand sanitizer, soap and water, or effective disinfectant is available to the public at or near the entrance of the facility, at checkout counters, and anywhere else inside the store or immediately outside where people have direct interactions.
- Disinfecting all payment portals, pens, and styluses after each use.
- Disinfecting all high-contact surfaces frequently.
- Optional—Describe other measures:

* Any additional measures not included here should be listed on separate pages, which the business should attach to this document.

You may contact the following person with any questions or comments about this protocol:

Name:

Phone number: