

How does coronavirus hit a state? First slowly, and then very fast.

California was one of the first places in the U.S. to be hit with the coronavirus, and also one of the earliest to take action. Here's a timeline, with some national events for comparison:

January

[Jan. 25.](#) First California coronavirus case reported.

February

[Feb. 10.](#) President Trump: "Looks like by April, you know, in theory, when it gets a little warmer, it miraculously goes away."

[Feb. 25.](#) San Francisco declares coronavirus emergency.

[Feb. 28.](#) First confirmed case of community spreading in California.

March

[March 4.](#) First coronavirus death in California. Gov. Newsom [declares](#) a state of emergency.

[March 10.](#) Trump: "We're prepared, and we're doing a great job with it. And it will go away. Just stay calm. It will go away."

[March 9.](#) UC Berkeley ends in-person classes. Trump [tweets](#): "The Fake News Media and their partner, the Democrat Party, is doing everything within its semi-considerable power ... to inflame the CoronaVirus situation."

[March 14.](#) Trump declares national emergency and tweets "SOCIAL DISTANCING!" At that point, there are 2770 confirmed coronavirus cases and 57 deaths in the U.S.

[March 16.](#) The six Bay Area counties issue "shelter in place" orders.

[March 20.](#) Governor Newsom issues statewide "shelter in place" order. The action comes one hour after L.A. [issues](#) its own order.

[March 24.](#) Trump: "I'd love to have the country opened up and just raring to go by Easter."

[March 29.](#) California death toll reaches one hundred. [Trump](#): U.S. will be doing well if it can hold U.S. deaths to 100,000.

[March 31](#). Bay Area counties tighten restrictions, closing parks; shutdown extended to 5/3.

April

[April 3](#). 12,831 confirmed California coronavirus cases to date, 285 total deaths. U.S. [reports](#) 278,000 cases, over 7000 total deaths. Trump [says](#) remaining states without social distancing are “not in jeopardy,” leaving restrictions up to them.

[April 14](#). 23,371 confirmed California cases, with 731 deaths. Nationally, 587,815 confirmed cases, 23,654 deaths. As of April 6, [seven states](#) still did not have stay-at-home orders.

[April 15](#). One model predicts that California cases will peak on this date, while other models predict a peak sometime in May with a gradual reduction thereafter.

Observations

There are a couple of obvious takeaways. First, California announced social-distancing measures more quickly and with a much more consistent message than the federal government. Second, “slowly, then suddenly” is really true. Almost nothing visible happened in January and February. Then in March, events came rushing.

We’ll find out later this month how well California’s public health response has worked. Some models project that new cases here may be peaking, others are less optimistic. I’ll issue updates of this timeline as we see how things progress.