



# Frequently Asked Questions



## Q: What is CA Notify?

CA Notify is a free exposure notification system for smartphones—made possible by the California Department of Public Health—to alert you if you’ve been exposed to COVID-19. CA Notify is easy to use, private, secure, and 100% voluntary. It’s available for both iPhone and Android phones. CA Notify helps keep communities safe from COVID-19 by alerting people if they need to get tested or stay home.

## Q: Why do we need CA Notify?

Now that California’s economy is fully open, people are out-and-about again. CA Notify is an important tool in California’s toolbox to reduce COVID-19 (along with vaccination, masking, and handwashing). Going to a large event like a concert or sporting event? CA Notify can inform you if you are exposed to COVID-19 by another CA Notify user. If you test positive for COVID-19, CA Notify will enable you to anonymously inform others that they have been exposed (without sharing your identity). Exposure notifications help people stay safe and stop the spread.

## Q: Do exposure notifications work?

Yes! Research in other countries and states indicates that thousands of infections and hundreds of deaths can be prevented through the use of exposure notifications. Also, the more people that use it, the larger the benefit for all of us.

## Q: How do you activate CA Notify?

CA Notify is free and available on most smartphones. Activation is simple. iPhone users simply go to their settings, turn on Exposure Notifications, and select U.S. and California as their region. Android users download the app through the Google Play store and follow the prompts.

## Q: How does CA Notify work?

CA Notify works if you and others in our community activate it on your smartphones. If another CA Notify user who has been near you (for a certain amount of time or longer) tests positive for COVID-19, and then uses the system to notify others, you will get an alert telling you that you were exposed. The system can’t tell you who exposed you or where you were when the exposure occurred. CA Notify uses Bluetooth technology to estimate how close your phone was to other peoples’ phones and for how long. It does not use GPS, and it does not track your specific location.



**Need help activating your phone  
or have questions?**

**Call: 1 (888) 421-9457**

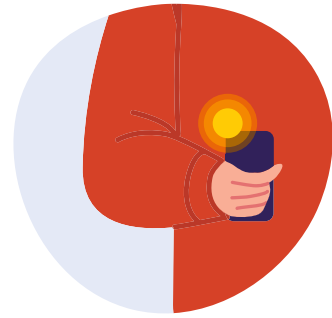
**Visit [CaNotify.ca.gov](https://CaNotify.ca.gov) for more information.**





### **Q: Do I need to keep Bluetooth ON for CA Notify to work?**

Yes! CA Notify uses low energy Bluetooth to measure how close you are to other phones (instead of your exact location). Your phone's Bluetooth exchanges random keys (like ABC123DGGG67) with the phones of nearby CA Notify users. It's like your phone giving another phone an anonymous high-five! Bluetooth must be on for CA Notify to communicate with nearby phones.



### **Q: What happens if I travel outside of California and come back?**

CA Notify only works in California. However, several other states in the US and many other countries use similar exposure notification systems to protect their residents against the spread of COVID-19. You can choose to activate other exposure notification systems that are offered within the locations you visit and then reactive CA Notify once you return to California.

### **Q: How is my privacy protected?**

CA Notify is designed to protect your privacy and security. Using Bluetooth technology, the system estimates how close you are to other users. CA Notify does not track your specific location. It does not use GPS. It does not know your immigration status. It does not share your identity or specific location with other users, or with the state of California. Your phone exchanges random keys (via Bluetooth) with other phones—keys that don't contain personally-identifiable information. You can't be identified by your phone's key because the keys change every 15 minutes. Visit our website for information on how your privacy is protected.

### **Q: Do I need CA Notify if I've already been vaccinated?**

Yes! California will be dealing with COVID-19 for some time. We are still learning many things about the virus, such as how long the vaccines are effective and how well vaccinations protect against new COVID-19 variants. Although the risk for vaccinated people is much smaller, it is possible that they may still contract and spread COVID-19. Also, we know that a large group of Californians are still unvaccinated. For all these reasons, we encourage all Californians to activate CA Notify on their phones—to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

### **Q: Is Google, Apple, or the State collecting personal information through CA Notify?**

No, the CA Notify tool itself does not use or store any personally identifiable information and is designed to protect your privacy. It uses your phone's Bluetooth to exchange randomly generated keys that are not associated with your phone number, name, or location. These keys change every 15 minutes. Keys are only stored on a user's smartphone until the user who tests positive decides to activate the notification system. After 14 days, or once an alert is activated, the keys are permanently erased from the smartphone. Visit our website for more information on how your privacy is protected.





## Q: Do I have to be 18 or older to use CA Notify?

No, people 13 years old and older may use CA Notify if their parent or legal guardian provides consent. If a parent has added CA Notify to the phone of someone who is 13 to 17 years old and the child tests positive for COVID-19, the parent will be provided a code. The parent would then enter that code in the CA Notify system via the child's phone, and the child's recent contacts would be informed of their possible exposure.

## Q: What does it mean if I get a notification that I've been exposed to COVID-19?

If you are exposed to COVID-19 by a CA Notify user who has tested positive and chosen to allow CA Notify to notify others about their possible exposure, you will receive a text notification on your smartphone. Within your settings (iOS) or app (Android), you will see your approximate date of exposure. Your notification will provide you with information and resources to help you stay safe, get tested, and seek care if needed.

## Q: What happens if I am a CA Notify user and I test positive?

You will receive a text message from the California Department of Public Health (from 1-855- 976-8462). You'll be given a unique URL link. If you click on that link, you'll start the CA Notify notification process on your phone. Any phones that had CA Notify activated and were within close proximity to your phone for a certain amount of time when you were likely infectious will receive an alert of possible exposure. The notification will tell users the approximate date of exposure but will not include any information about where, by whom, or exactly when they were exposed.

## Q: Does CA Notify replace contact tracing?

No, contact tracing works by interviewing people who test positive for COVID-19 to identify people they know they were close to while they were infectious. Public health contact tracing staff reach out to people by phone, email, and/or text to obtain this information and help people get the support they need to isolate or quarantine. CA Notify does not track or trace any personal information to assess your exposure: it only records how close different phones are to each other and for how long. It can alert people of an exposure to someone they were close to, even if those two people don't know each other and never realized they were near each other.

## Q: What languages is CA Notify available in?

CA Notify is available in 15 different languages: Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese, and Western Armenian.

