



CALIFORNIA LAWS 2019

How will California's new laws affect...

the environment?

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Hundreds of new California laws take effect on Jan. 1, imposing a raft of new mandates on scores of issues, including rules dictating when plastic straws will be handed out at restaurants, that workplace sexual harassment settlements are disclosed and that set new limits on the ownership of guns.

Some laws were the direct result of recent events — among them proposals crafted following the national #MeToo discussion and rules aimed at avoiding a repeat of recent catastrophic and deadly wildfires. A few laws taking effect in 2019 are holdovers from years past, with delayed implementation designed to smooth the transition for the state's businesses and the public.

And some — including a new, official sport — are quintessentially Californian.

[See which laws went into effect in 2018 »](#)



The environment



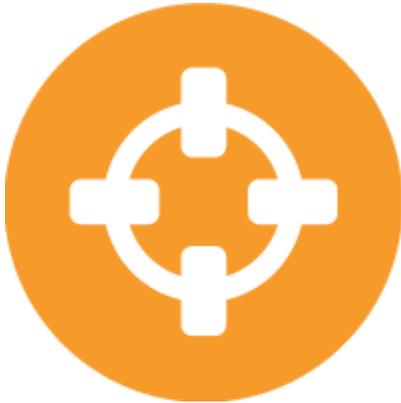
Plastic straws sit at the ready at a cafe in San Francisco. The state is considering barring dine-in restaurants from providing plastic straws unless they are requested by patrons. (Jeff Chiu / Associated Press)

In full-service restaurants, you'll only be given [a plastic straw](#) if you ask for one.

California officials won't be able to approve new onshore facilities to process additional offshore oil drilling in federal waters, ensuring no expansion of operations by the Trump administration.

California begins a historic effort to move toward 100% renewable energy.

After a federal effort was blocked, California enacts a state law to limit the use of certain refrigeration chemicals that are linked to climate change.



Gun rights



California lawmakers sent the governor a bill that would raise the minimum age for buying long guns in the state from 18 to 21. (Dmytro Tolmachov/Dreamstime/TNS)

No one [under the age of 21](#) can purchase a rifle or shotgun in California.

There will be a lifetime gun ban for anyone [convicted of serious domestic assault](#).

There will be a lifetime gun ban for anyone hospitalized more than once in a year for mental health problems.

The state requires new gun safety training for anyone who obtains [a concealed weapons permit](#).

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Criminal justice

[Many police misconduct records](#) will be available for public inspection.



A graduation exercise for new police officers at the Los Angeles Police Academy in April. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

More police body camera footage available for [public inspection](#).

An accomplice to a killing [can no longer be charged](#) with felony murder.

[For the first time](#), California has a minimum age — 12 years old — at which most children can be tried in court for a crime. Court would remain an option for those charged with violent crimes such as murder or rape.

Children under the age of 16 will no longer be tried in adult courts.



My workplace



Sexual assault victims and their supporters at a #MeToo Survivors' March in Los Angeles on Nov. 12, 2017. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

Secret settlements with employers for sexual assault or harassment are now prohibited.

There's now a ban on the use of non-disparagement settlements with employers for incidents that happened in the workplace.

State officials can't refuse a professional license to someone who has a low-level or nonviolent criminal record.

Any publicly traded corporation headquartered in California must have at least a small number of women on its board of directors.



Life online

It's now illegal for anyone to use an online "bot" for tricking Californians into thinking a real person is peddling a product or seeking to influence an election.

California will begin implementing [its own net neutrality rules](#) so that internet providers can't block content or alter the speed of internet traffic.



Lifestyle



Sidewalk vendor Maria Franco sells food along Maple Avenue in the Fashion District in downtown Los Angeles. (Wally Skaliy / Los Angeles Times)

Sidewalk food vendors will have new statewide protections while also being required to follow local rules.

The state will be required to help Californians clear marijuana-related convictions from their criminal records.

New and used cars must have a temporary, paper license plate before they are driven off the dealer's lot.

When requested, the California Department of Motor Vehicles will issue driver licenses that don't have a traditional binary gender preference, and will instead mark that space with an "X."

Hotel and bus company customer lists can't be given to immigration agents or others who aren't California peace officers without court action.

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Education and healthcare

Charter schools must implement similar safety plans to those at traditional neighborhood schools.

Charter schools must provide sex-education programs like those at traditional neighborhood schools.

State education officials must help develop media literacy programs to teach students how to spot fake news

Pharmaceutical industry must pay for collection of used medication and needles



Wildfire safety and funding



Llamas are tied to a lifeguard stand on the beach in Malibu as the Woolsey fire approaches. (Wally Skaliy / Los Angeles Times)

One billion dollars in state government funds will be spent on additional wildfire-prevention efforts, including tree- and brush-removal programs. Utilities will have new ways to mitigate the cost of fire-related payments.

New garage doors installed as of this summer must have a backup battery that can lift the door in the event of a power outage.

Homeowners will have new rules for creating defensible space, free of fire-prone brush or vegetation, to prevent more fires.

Wildfire victims have new flexibility in how to use insurance coverage for rebuilding their homes.

Wildfire victims will get an extra year — for a total of three years — to rebuild an insured home.



At the water cooler



A surfer rides a hug wave in Palos Verdes as high surf continues to pound the coast on Dec. 18, 2018. (Wally Skalij/Los Angeles Times)

Surfing is California's official state sport.

Kids meals in most restaurants must have a milk- or water-based beverage as the default choice and a parent must request a soda for the child.

Adults can legally ride a motorized rental scooter without a helmet.

New rules will dictate how divorcing couples determine who gets the family pet.

State parks must now make clear on their websites if dogs are allowed.

Pet stores must sell only animals [from shelter or rescue groups](#).