

In an unprecedented move, Disney parks will remain closed until further notice

Disney originally aimed to reopen its various theme parks by April 1st, but in light of the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus and recommendations from both local authorities and health experts, Disneyland and Disney World will remain closed until further notice.

“While there is still much uncertainty with respect to the impacts of COVID-19, the safety and well-being of our guests and employees remains The Walt Disney Company’s top priority,” a tweet from an official Disney Parks account reads.

The company will continue paying its hourly parks and resorts employees through April 18th, the statement added. It’s unclear if this also applies to parks around the world, including in Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, but *The Verge* has reached out for more information.

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Disneyland and Disney World began closing on Sunday, March 15th. They were initially going to say closed through March 31st. Part of the resorts will remain open, including retail and dining experiences at Disney World Resort. Disney’s parks in the United States joined Paris, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Tokyo in closing, marking the first time in history that all seven resorts, including their various parks, were all closed at one time. Disneyland has only closed twice before: on November 23rd, 1963 in a day of national mourning for President John F. Kennedy, and on September 11th, 2001 because

of the attacks in New York and Washington, DC.

Disney's parks business generates approximately \$20 billion a year in revenue for the House of Mouse. Continuing to keep the parks closed will have a strong impact on the company's financial situation. Executives at Disney outlined as much in a recent SEC filing for investors, noting that "the impact of the novel coronavirus and measures to prevent its spread are affecting our businesses in a number of ways." Disney's parks have closed, cruises are suspended, and theatrical movies have been delayed. Production delays and sports leagues hitting pause have also affected content creation for both film and television and left ESPN in a bind.

"We expect the ultimate significance of the impact of these disruptions, including the extent of their adverse impact on our financial and operational results, will be dictated by the length of time that such disruptions continue," the filing reads.

Those disruptions will also depend on the "currently unknowable duration of the COVID-19 pandemic." Disney's SEC filing also notes that "the impact of governmental regulations that might be imposed" is something they'll have to keep in mind. For example, Florida and California governments could impose bans on large gatherings for an extended period of time, meaning that Disney World and Disneyland may have to operate within those guidelines.

While many entertainment companies are taking a hit, Disney is feeling it extra hard. Unlike NBCUniversal and WarnerMedia, owned by major telecom companies Comcast and AT&T respectively, Disney doesn't have a larger conglomerate it can rest on. Analytical firm MoffettNathanson issued a research note last week explaining just how hard extended park closures, production delays, and other forces could hit Disney in the months to come.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/27/21197449/disney-land-disney-world-park-closure-coronavirus-film-tv-streaming-espn-cruises>