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Governor Kate Brown Announces Change to Reopening Status for Malheur County

August 13, 2020

Effective Monday, August 17, Malheur County Moves Back to Phase 1

Salem, OR—Governor Kate Brown announced today that Malheur County will move from Phase 2 back to Phase 1 status, effective Monday, August 17. Malheur County was placed on the County Watch List on July 3, and COVID-19 has been spreading rapidly in the county since then, even with additional support from state public health officials.

“Over the past month, COVID-19 cases in Malheur County have risen so much that restrictions must be put back in place or we risk further illnesses and death in the region,” said Governor Brown. “I know this change is difficult, but immediate action is necessary in order to reduce the spread of the disease and protect all those who call Malheur County home.”

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Malheur County COVID-19 Information

- Malheur County has a case rate of 266 cases per 10,000 people—the third highest in the state.
- Over the past two weeks, the county has had a test positivity rate of 26%, which is far above the state average of approximately 5.8% for the last two weeks.
- The county has reported an average of 15 cases per day over the past two weeks.
- Over the past week, 55% of new cases were sporadic cases that could not be traced back to a known source.
- One larger long-term care facility outbreak (23 cases) and a few small workplace outbreaks have been reported.
- The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has provided assistance with messaging and masking requirements, and is also providing ongoing case investigation support for weekend coverage.

The county will remain in Phase 1 for at least 21 days. The Governor's office, along with public health experts, will review the situation and data on a weekly basis and remain in close communication with county leaders.

In Phase 1, recreational sports, swimming pools, and events and venues like movie theaters, bowling alleys, and arcades remain closed. Non-essential local travel is allowed. Personal services businesses are allowed to operate with health and safety measures in place. Restaurants and bars are open for dine-in service until 10 p.m. with health and safety measures in place. Indoor social gatherings remain capped at 10 people as long as physical distancing is maintained, while other gatherings are limited to 50 indoors and 50 outdoors. This means that indoor gatherings, including faith-based, civic, and cultural gatherings are limited to 50 indoors and 50 outdoors. Complete Phase 1 guidance is available here. (<https://govstatus.egov.com/or-covid-19#phase1Guidance>) And all statewide gatherings guidance is available here. (<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2351g.pdf>)

Governor Brown added, “A step back like this is a reminder for all of us that this disease will be with us for the foreseeable future. We must continue to take measures to slow its spread or we risk further restrictions. Oregonians must continue to wear face coverings, maintain physical distancing, and practice good hygiene.”

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