



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

New COVID-19 risk level will loosen safety restrictions on businesses, activities in Malheur County

The Oregon Health Authority's newly released [COVID-19 Risk Levels Summary](#) indicates that starting Friday, Feb. 26, Malheur County's risk level will go from extreme to moderate based on data reported Feb. 7 through Feb. 20. It is the first time that Malheur County will be at a risk level other than extreme since Dec. 3 when the state's four-level guidance system went into effect following a two-week statewide freeze.

"We offer our thanks to everyone in Malheur County who has worked together to make this change possible. It's been a long time coming and we applaud this community. We should celebrate this milestone, but we should also keep things in perspective. We are moving into moderate risk, which is a lot better than extreme risk but still a clear indication that we are not out of the woods yet," Malheur County Health Department Director Sarah Poe said. "We need to continue to follow the safety guidelines that have gotten us to this point: Wear a mask, limit gatherings, practice physical distancing, stay home if you feel unwell, wash your hands regularly, and get tested if you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19. The reality is, one outbreak could put us right back into the extreme level."

The change in risk level is based on two indicators: new case counts and test positivity rate. The new moderate level allows Malheur County's restaurants and bars to reopen their doors to indoor patronage - although some restrictions still apply - and other businesses, services and activities to host larger gatherings.

"This is great news for our business community," said Craig Geddes, Malheur County's Director of Environmental Health. "We appreciate the cooperation we've had from our local businesses in following risk level guidance and look forward to continuing in that effort together."

In short, the moderate risk level will allow:

- Eating and drinking establishments to open their doors to indoor dining, not to exceed 50% capacity or 100 people, whichever is smaller. Indoor seating: 6 people per table maximum. Outdoor dining allowed with a capacity of 150 people maximum. Outdoor seating: 8 people per table maximum. 11 p.m. closing time.

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- Faith institutions*, funeral homes, mortuaries, and cemeteries to increase maximum occupancy to 50% or 150 people total, whichever is smaller. Outdoor Capacity: 250 people maximum. (*Capacity limits for faith institutions are recommended only.)
- Indoor and outdoor shopping centers and malls to increase maximum occupancy to 75%. Curbside pick-up is still encouraged.
- Indoor entertainment establishments, such as aquariums, theaters, arenas, concert halls, indoor gardens, museums, and other entertainment activities to increase maximum occupancy to 50% or 100 people total, whichever is smaller. 11 p.m. closing time.
- Indoor recreation and fitness, including gyms, K-12 sports, collegiate sports, fitness organizations, recreational sports, and pools to increase maximum occupancy to 50% or 100 people total, whichever is smaller. Indoor full-contact sports are still prohibited.
- Long-term care communities to offer inside visitation.
- Offices to open to the public. Remote work is still recommended when possible.
- Outdoor entertainment establishments, including zoos, gardens, aquariums, outdoor theaters, and stadiums to increase maximum occupancy to 150 people.
- Outdoor recreation and fitness, including gyms, fitness organizations, K-12 sports, collegiate sports, recreational sports, pools, and parks to increase to a maximum of 150 people. Outdoor full-contact sports are also allowed.
- Retail stores, including street fairs/markets, grocery stores, convenience stores and pharmacies, to increase maximum capacity to 75%. Curbside pickup is still encouraged.
- Social and at-home gathering size (indoor) to increase to a maximum of 8 people. Recommended limit of 2 households remains.
- Social and at-home gathering size (outdoor) to increase to a maximum of 10 people with no recommended limit on number of households.

For more detailed information on risk levels and associated guidance for counties, visit [Living with COVID-19](#).

Read Oregon Governor Kate Brown's announcement regarding today's new risk level determinations: [State of Oregon Newsroom : NewsDetail : State of Oregon](#)